

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Matthew 7 v12

So, in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

1 Policy Statement

At Birkdale School, our community is based upon the biblical principle of treating one another with respect, humility, integrity, courage and compassion along with the fundamental British Values. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can develop their full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed; but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other.

Birkdale School is proud to be a community founded on respect and acceptance for one another. Ours is a diverse community, with pupils from a variety of cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds. Some pupils require additional support and help. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting the school in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions.

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination are serious acts and will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate this towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable. Where necessary, we will apply the sanctions described in our Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy for behaviour that constitutes bullying or harassment of any kind.

2 Definition of Bullying

Bullying may be defined as the intentional hurting of another pupil or group of pupils physically or emotionally that is repeated over time. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability or because a child is adopted or is a carer – it may occur directly or online (social media websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email). Recognising the current KCSIE and being mindful of child-on-child abuse, it could involve physical (including sexual) intimidation, verbal, and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle; it can also be overt and intimidatory. Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time. It can cause serious and lasting psychological damage and even suicide. Harassment and threatening behaviour are criminal offences; we always treat it very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the school's stance on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles.

3 Signs of Bullying

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to school
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly going missing, or being damaged

- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Psychological damage and diminished levels of self confidence
- Frequent visits to the Sick Bay with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches etc.
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, nightmares
- Talking of suicide or running away.

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers.

4 Preventative Measures

The Prep School has in place the following measures:

- Staff are vigilant in watching the behaviour of children towards each other, in picking up comments made by other children and in detecting changes in a pupil's attitude, behaviour or standard of work
- We use assemblies to raise pupils' awareness of anti-bullying and develop their awareness of their social and moral responsibility as they progress through the school, specifically telling pupils whom they should inform if they are being bullied or are worried about another pupil being bullied.
- Playground supervision by teaching staff to maintain consistency and offer support within the playground.
- Shepherd system for new pupils which offers peer support on the playground.
- Sharing of information between staff through Form Meetings, informally and via Wellbeing Manager.
- Pupils are encouraged to speak to their form tutor or, indeed, any member of staff with whom they feel confident, about concerns they might have.
- Pupils are encouraged to use the 'Comments' box outside the school office if they prefer to communicate in writing.
- We ensure that all pupils know they should speak out against bullying; this is not seen as "telling tales" (see Appendix B for Advice to Pupils and Parents).
- Programmed training/awareness, including cyber-bullying and e safety takes place in P1 and P4 through PSHE.
- We ensure that cyber bullying does not take place through the rigorous enforcement of our "ITC user agreement contract"
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported

- incidents and check for patterns of behaviour using Wellbeing Manager and the detention log.
- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team consisting of Form Tutors, school councillor and the Chaplain, who support the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority and are alert to possible signs of bullying. We encourage staff to have listening ears and to pass on information about any suspected bullying to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) but also to act immediately themselves when called upon to prevent any acts of bullying.
- Sick Bay displays advice on where pupils can seek help.
- We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the school, and (as appropriate) online, involving our pupils.

In the Senior School:

- We use appropriate assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying. Our PSHE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. The programme is structured to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other. It specifically tells pupils whom they should inform if they are being bullied or are worried that another pupil is being bullied.
- Pupils can report that they or another pupil are being bullied using the Pupil Concerns Google form. This can be completed anonymously and is monitored by the Deputy Head (Pastoral).
- Other lessons, particularly RE but also English and History amongst others, highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing social skills.
- Any pupil who is being bullied or who knows bullying is taking place should tell a member of the teaching or pastoral staff at once. Every member of staff is trained on how to respond to such allegations as part of their induction training.
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents and check for patterns of bullying behaviour.
- A bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is at risk or likely to suffer significant harm.
- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team consisting of Form Tutors, the Chaplain, and Heads of Section who support the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority and are alert to possible signs of bullying. We encourage staff to have listening ears and to pass on information about any suspected bullying to the pastoral Heads of Section and/or Deputy Head (Pastoral) but also to act immediately themselves when called upon to prevent any acts of bullying.
- Our pastoral team gives support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies.
- The School has its own school counsellor.

- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site, particularly areas where bullying might occur. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour.
- Sick Bay displays advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential helplines and websites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline, NSPCC, Golddigger, Door 42, Kidscape, Get Connected, Samaritans, Footprints, Mind and Papyrus.
- We provide leadership training to our School Prefects which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and vulnerable pupils. School Prefects are encouraged to speak to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) as soon as they develop concerns about any individual within the school.
- There is no tradition of initiation ceremonies at Birkdale School. Initiation ceremonies designed to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation will not be tolerated or permitted.
- We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the school, and (as appropriate) online, involving our pupils.
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.

5 Cyberbully - Definition

“Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.” (W. Belsey, <http://www.cyberbullying.org/>)

Cyberbullying can involve social networking sites, like Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram etc. emails and mobile phones (used for messaging and as cameras).

6 Cyberbullying – Preventative Measures

In addition to the preventative measures described above, Birkdale School:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its ‘Acceptable Use Agreement’ for the safe use of ICT equipment and the internet. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our ICT Department monitors pupils’ use.
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying which covers blocking and removing contacts.
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.

7 Cyberbullying and Mobile Devices

In the Prep School, pupils are not permitted to carry mobile phones or any such devices. Where a pupil has permission to bring such technology into school it must be handed to the office upon entering the building and collected at the end of the day.

In the Senior School, pupils in S1-S5 are not permitted to carry their mobile phone during the school day and should have it switched off and locked in their locker. Sixth Form pupils can carry their mobile phone but can only use it in their Common Rooms. Mobile phones are not permitted in classrooms, except where pupils have received the express permission of the member of staff taking the class or activity. On such occasions the use of a mobile phone is permitted for the sole purpose of assisting the pupil's learning. The use of cameras on mobile phones is not allowed except where express permission has been granted by a member of staff.

The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 so that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff, who has been formally authorised by the Head, that staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone. For further details see DfE 'Screening, Searching and Confiscating' Document.

If an electronic device that is prohibited by the school rules has been seized and the member of staff has reasonable grounds to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must give the device to the Police as soon as it is reasonably practicable. Material on the device that is suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, or that is a pornographic image of a pupil or an extreme pornographic image, should not be deleted prior to giving the device to the Police. If a staff member finds material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, they can decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of school discipline.

If a bullying incident directed at a pupil occurs using email or mobile phone technology either inside or outside of school time, staff will:

1. Advise the pupil not to respond to the message
2. Refer to relevant policies including e-safety/acceptable use, anti-bullying and PHSE and apply appropriate sanctions
3. Secure and preserve any evidence
4. Notify parents of the children involved
5. Consider informing the Local Authority or the Police depending on the severity or repetitious nature of the offence.

If malicious or threatening comments are posted on an internet site about a pupil or member of staff.

1. Inform and request the comments be removed if the site is administered externally
2. Secure and preserve any evidence
3. If appropriate, send all evidence to CEOP at www.ceop.gov.uk/contact_us.html
4. Endeavour to trace the origin and inform the Police as appropriate.
5. Inform the e-safety officer.

Children should be confident in a no-blame culture when it comes to reporting inappropriate incidents involving the internet or mobile technology: they must be able to do this without fear.

8 Procedures for Dealing with Reported Bullying

If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedures are adopted.

In the Prep School:

- We take any complaints about bullying seriously and deal with them as soon as we receive the complaint.
- At some point, usually early on, we bring together both “bully” and “victim”. In our experience, often it is the case that there has been a misunderstanding between the parties, and this has resulted in one or both being upset. Both parties are helped to move on from the situation.
- On the rare occasion when there is a clear case of bullying we will appropriately sanction the bully and contact the parents of both bully and victim.
- Where bullying is not proved but behaviour is considered unacceptable, some form of punishment will be given following the school behaviour policy.
- Where an incident of bullying is determined, the school will devise an Action Plan employing a choice of strategies using reactive approaches to restore relationships.

In the Senior School:

- The member of staff to whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the pupils involved.
- They will inform an appropriate member of the pastoral team (usually Form Tutor or Head of Section) as soon as possible.
- The victim will be interviewed on their own and asked to write an account of events. The interview will be conducted by two members of staff.
- The bully, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events. The interview will be conducted by two members of staff.
- Staff should be informed as appropriate. In serious incidents, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) will be informed.
- The victim will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, with regard to offering support to develop a strategy to help him or herself.
- The alleged bully will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, and it will be made clear why their behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. They will be offered guidance on modifying his or her behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions.
- The parents/guardians of all parties will usually be informed and invited into school to discuss the matter as appropriate; their support should be sought.
- A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling, should be agreed. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures.
- A meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode.

- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place.
- In very serious and persistent cases, and only after the Head has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to the Social Services. However, it is the school's view that it is better to resolve such issues internally under the school's own disciplinary procedures where possible, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely.
- Records of bullying incidents are kept enabling patterns to be identified and to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's approach.

9 Review and Development

9.1 Procedure

This document, together with the effectiveness of the inclusive practices at Birkdale School, is reviewed annually by the Policy Committee and Governing Board and as events or legislation change requires.

9.2 Links with other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Agreement
- CCTV Policy

Appendix A – Cyber-Bullying and Online Safety Resources

ChildNet International: Specialist resources for young people to raise awareness of online safety and how to protect themselves. Website specifically includes new cyberbullying guidance and a practical PSHEE toolkit for schools.

Digizen: provides online safety information for educators, parents, carers and young people.

Internet Matters: provides help to keep children safe in the digital world.

Think U Know: resources provided by Pupil Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) for children and young people, parents, carers and teachers.

The UK Council for Pupil Internet Safety (UKCCIS) has produced a range of resources for schools, colleges and parents about how to keep children safe online, this includes advice for schools and colleges on responding to incidents of ‘sexting.’

The School upholds its responsibilities to teach online safety through the DfE principles outlined in the June 2019 document ‘**Teaching Online Safety in Schools**’

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-online-safety-in-schools>

...and the framework, ‘**Education for a Connected World**’

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/759003/Education_for_a_connected_world_PDF.PDF

Appendix B – Prep School Advice to Pupils and Parents

If you are the one being bullied:

- **DON'T** just put up with bullying. Not telling is playing by the bully's rules
- **DON'T** buy off the bully with presents or money
- **DON'T** hit back. This might encourage the bully and gives him an excuse to hurt you
- **DON'T** blame yourself for what has happened
- **DO** look him in the eye and say forcefully "I don't like you doing that. I want you to stop it NOW"
- **DO** get away from the situation as quickly as possible
- **DO** report the incident to a member of staff straight away
- **DO** tell your family

When you are talking about a bullying incident with an adult, be clear about:

- **What** has happened to you
- **How often** it has happened
- **Who** was involved
- **Who else** saw what was happening
- **Where** it happened

If you see or know about bullying happening:

- **DON'T** smile or laugh or join in
- **DO** tell the bully to stop what he is doing
- **DO** show the bully that you disapprove of what he is doing
- **DO** tell a member of staff immediately
- **DO** invite the victim to join in with your activity or group

Advice to parents

Your role as parents is to urge your son or daughter to keep us informed of any worries they may have. We will take them seriously and investigate and deal with them as well as we are able. At the same time, please encourage your son or daughter to always treat others with kindness and respect.

If you have any concern that your son or daughter is being bullied at school you should talk or write to his/her form tutor, the Deputy Head or the Head of the Prep School, as soon as possible. Sometimes parents wonder if their concerns are unimportant, or they do not wish to make a fuss, but at school we are experienced in working with children and are therefore able to respond to concerns appropriately.