

# *Birkdale High School*



Birkdale  
High School

Aspire - Thrive - Succeed

## Anti-Bullying Policy



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<i>Date of Policy:</i>	<i>November 2015</i>
<i>Members of staff responsible:</i>	<i>Assistant Headteacher (Mr D Pryor)</i>
<i>Review date:</i>	<i>November 2017</i>

### **Statement of Intent**

Birkdale High School is committed to working with students and parents to provide a learning environment that is secure and supportive so that all individuals can develop academically and socially free from fear of ridicule, harassment or physical threat. We aim to create an environment where all members of the school community feel safe, respected and valued. All children have an absolute right to be protected from others who may wish to harm, degrade or abuse them. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. Bullying may be verbal, physical or psychological. In fact any action which makes a child feel uncomfortable, insecure or threatened may be defined as bullying. The school disapproves of bullying in all its forms and considers it a most serious offence. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a *telling* school. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff. The staff take the lead in creating a climate in which students will report immediately any bullying incident in the expectation that it will be dealt with urgently and firmly. Parents have an essential role to play in counteracting bullying. Where bullying is clearly established, parents of both victim and perpetrator will always be contacted and the school will seek to involve them in securing solutions.

### **Scope**

This policy applies only to incidents of bullying which take place on school premises. However, the school has an enduring interest in the welfare and conduct of its students and will respond positively to any information it receives about bullying outside school thus:

If it emerges that if a student is responsible for bullying other children outside school then this matter will be addressed.

If a child is found to be the victim of bullying outside school then help and support will be offered and advice given on how to avoid further incidents in future. The victim's parents/carers will be informed.

If there are more general concerns about children's safety outside school then the local police will be contacted and their help sought in making the area around the school premises more secure. If concerns arise in relation to school transport then the issue will be raised with the transport companies and their help sought in dealing with the problem.

If information is received that a child is being bullied by a sibling or parent/carer outside school this will initially be discussed with the parents. If concerns persist then the matter will be referred to social care to safeguard the student (see Child Protection Policy).

If children are being bullied by pupils of another school then pastoral staff of that school will be informed and invited to deal with the matter.

## **Definition**

### **What is bullying?**

There are five recognised features of bullying:

- It is deliberate, hurtful behaviour;
- It is repeated over a period of time;
- It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves;
- It is difficult for those who bully to learn new social behaviours;
- Those who bully have and exercise power inappropriately over others.

All forms of bullying can be damaging to the development of both the person being bullied and the person bullying. Bullying can take many forms, but the main types are:

<b>Physical</b>	Pushing, hitting, kicking, punching, taking belongings or an act of violence with intent to harm;
<b>Verbal</b>	Name calling, insulting, threats/intimidation or making offensive remarks;
<b>Indirect</b>	Spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion from social groups or being made the subject of malicious rumours;
<b>Cyber</b>	Tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted using text messaging, e-mail, instant messaging or any other type of digital technology e.g. social networking sites (BEBO, Facebook, MySpace, BBM, Twitter). Misuse of associated digital technology such as camera and video aids – refer to Safeguarding policy.

Bullying is not one off fall outs between friends.

**It is recognised that bullying can happen for a variety of reasons and we are mindful of these.**

**Bullying related to:**

- **Race, religion or culture**

The school has a statutory duty to log all incidents of racist or faith- based bullying. The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) defines racism as ‘conduct or words which advantage or disadvantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin.

- **Bullying related to special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities**

Public bodies have new responsibilities to actively promote equality of opportunity for all disabled people and eliminate disability-related harassment.

Where children with SEN and disabilities are themselves found to be bullying in most cases (except those related to specific conditions) schools should expect the same standards of behaviour as apply to the rest of the school community, having made the reasonable adjustments necessary.

- **Bullying related to gifted and talented children and young people**

Their talents and abilities may cause feelings of resentment and jealousy among their peers which may make them targets for bullying behaviour.

- **Bullying related to appearance or health conditions**

Perceived physical limitations, such as size and weight, and other body image issues can result in bullying, and obvious signs of affluence (or lack of it), can also be exploited.

- **Bullying related to sexual orientation or gender identity**

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying is perhaps the form of bullying least likely to be self-reported, since disclosure carries risks not associated with other forms of bullying. The young person may not want to report bullying if it means “coming out” to teachers and parents before they are ready to.

- **Sexist or sexual Bullying**

Sexist and sexual bullying affects both genders. Boys may be victims as well as girls, and both sexes may be victims of their own sex.

- **Bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise linked to home circumstances**

Some bullying at school may arise from trauma or instability at home related to issues of domestic violence or bereavement or from the experience of being part of a refugee family. Siblings of vulnerable children may themselves be the subject of bullying by association.

### **Bullying of and by school staff**

Concerns relating to a member of the school staff or other person in a position of trust will be investigated thoroughly (see child protection policy). Likewise verbal and physical abuse directed from students towards members of staff will also be dealt with severely (see consequences policy). The Principal reserves the right to insist that abusive parents leave the site and take steps to ensure the safety of students, staff and other stakeholders. This could include taking out an injunction against the offending parent to prevent them from accessing the school site in the future.

### **The effects of bullying**

Young people who are being bullied are being denied the opportunity to reach their full potential. Effects may be long term and include:

- Absenteeism
- Fall in academic performance
- Poor self-esteem
- Health problems
- Isolation and failure to develop socially
- Depression and suicide
- Relationship difficulties.

### **Signs of bullying occurring**

These include:

- Change of friendship groups
- Lack of friends
- School rejection
- ‘Illness’ at certain times or on certain days
- Change in standard of work
- Withdrawal/sudden lack of confidence
- Severe cases of depression.

Although the above list is most likely to apply to victims, changes in behaviour could indicate that someone has developed anti-social traits and may be bullying.

## **Reporting and Recording Incidents**

### **Reporting Incidents of Bullying - Students**

The school encourages and equips the whole school community to report all incidents of bullying, including students who have experienced being bullied and bystanders who have witnessed an incident. We are a 'telling' school.

The school endeavours to provide clear, accessible and confidential incident reporting systems, which include access to:

- Staff including teachers and support staff who are aware of the importance of listening to students' concerns. We encourage all students to think about significant members of the school community that they can go to when they have a problem. This will generally be the child's Form Tutor or Head of Year *but* students can approach any member of staff in the school community to discuss issues of bullying.
- In addition, in the school's Haven provision, there are members of staff designated to support students with any social or emotional issues, notably the behaviour mentor and the wellbeing mentor.
- There are Designated Safeguarding members of staff (see Child Protection Policy and the Stay Safe, Stay Well PowerPoint on the students desktop and website).
- A buddy system to support younger/vulnerable students in school.
- Student prefects.
- Internal school procedures ensure a concern reported through any of the above channels will be filtered to the students' SM to be dealt with as soon as possible.
- The School Council are always assessing and developing alternative ways for students to report bullying – this may involve worry boxes or the use of electronic reporting systems

## **Reporting – Parents/Carers**

### **Concern or Complaint?**

If a concern is raised and not dealt with it becomes a complaint. Concerns and routine queries should be raised to Form Tutors. We place great emphasis on the role of the Form Tutor as they have the most regular contact with your child, monitoring attendance, academic performance and the general welfare of your child. **If you have a query or a concern please contact the Form Tutor first.** Complaints of a serious nature should be made to the Assistant Headteacher (Behaviour and Safety), or if the complaint refers to the Headteacher to the designated Governor. **Please raise your concerns before they become complaints.** In some circumstances it is necessary for the line manager to pass down an issue to another member of staff. This does not mean that the school is taking your concern any less seriously. Through delegation we are trying to ensure that your concern is dealt with as quickly as possible.

At Birkdale High School, we firmly believe in a circle of communication between parents, students and the school. Without this students' needs are not best met. With a large school community all kinds of queries arise on a daily basis. If you have a concern or complaint we would like you to tell us about it. We welcome suggestions for improving our work and want to know if you have any concerns. If you have a concern, please let us know as soon as possible. It is difficult for us to properly investigate an incident which happened some time ago.

Staff at the school will make every effort to respond to your call/letter within 48 hours. More serious issues will be responded to within 24 hours. Due to the complex nature of some issues it is not always possible to resolve matters within this time frame, but staff will at the very least acknowledge your concern and indicate who is dealing with the matter.

When telephoning, please be aware that most staff will be teaching and that on many occasions you will be asked to leave a message. If the matter is urgent then you can ask the reception staff to find you a senior member of staff who will be able to help you. If you are not sure of the name of the person you want to speak to, please refer to the school website or ask the reception staff who will be able to help you. **Please note it may not be possible to come into school without a prior appointment and expect to see a member of staff.** To avoid disappointment, please book an appointment with your child's Student Manager or Progress Leader in the first instance.

## **Recording**

Bullying incidents will be systematically recorded and used to identify patterns of behaviour. Data will be used to identify trends with specific groups (e.g. cyber-bullying) or within particular areas of the school site to allow preventative programmes to be planned. By taking the positive action of recording incidents of bullying we are giving a clear message to parents, staff and the wider community that we take these incidents seriously and can become essential evidence if there is a dispute between the parties about how an incident of bullying has been handled.

Data regarding bullying will be monitored and acted upon by the Pastoral Team at the school.

## **Prevention of Bullying**

Birkdale High School believes that the whole school community should work together to reduce bullying as part of our efforts to promote a positive and inclusive whole school ethos and create a safe, healthy and stimulating environment. Alongside the school's responsive strategies for dealing with incidents of bullying, the school adopts as part of our pastoral support system, a whole school approach to implementing proactive and preventative interventions at a school, class and individual level to reduce bullying.

Through the tutor period, assemblies, PSHCE activities and National Anti-Bullying week annually, aspects of personal and social behaviour will be taught so children can:

- Recognise bullying behaviour
- Know that they should speak out
- Have the confidence to do so if they are being bullied
- Know who to speak to
- Feel confident that they will be listened to and supported
- Make them fully aware that bullying is a serious breach of the school rules and will not be tolerated.

The school will also strive to:

- Adopt positive behaviour management strategies as part of the school's Behaviour Policy and Code of Conduct.
- Ensure that the school's Anti-Bullying statement is actively promoted in assemblies and other formal occasions, as well as displayed around the school.

- Provide training on behaviour management and anti-bullying for all relevant staff including lunchtime staff.
- Provide social skills groups for vulnerable individuals and groups.
- Provide a transition programme to support students moving across year groups and key stages.
- Provide information on support agencies such as ChildLine, Kidscape and Beatbullying including telephone numbers for help lines and addresses for supportive websites.
- Ensure adequate supervision of pupils before school, at breaks and lunchtimes and after school. Use CCTV when applicable to review any incidents in open areas.
- Allocate outdoor areas to specific year groups.
- Provide a range of opportunities at lunchtimes so that pupils have positive activities in which to engage.
- Use the HUB to offer alternative provision for vulnerable students at unstructured times.
- Through the School Council the policy will be reviewed and the effectiveness of the school's measures in counteracting bullying assessed.
- Use prefects and peer mentors to pro-actively reduce bullying and act as a student voice. Publish activities and lead assemblies/whole school activities.
- Identify and use opportunities within the school curriculum to discuss aspects of bullying to emphasise that the school does view bullying as a serious issue, and to explore the appropriate ways of behaving towards each other e.g. within PSHCE days and as part of the assembly schedule.
- Teachers will ensure that they do not use teaching materials or equipment which portray a bad or negative view of any group because of their ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability/disability etc.
- Teachers will encourage pupils to treat everyone with respect through:
  - modelling the behaviour they expect through their own dealings with pupils
  - always challenging inappropriate responses from pupils towards other individuals or groups
  - implementing the school's guide to rewards and sanctions (see Behaviour Policy)
  - promoting the school's peer mentoring and transition programme at the start of Year 7 to highlight the issue and to encourage pupils to take a positive stand against bullying.
  - promoting positive and caring attitudes towards minorities through the curriculum, assemblies and charity work
- The school will, through staff and partner organisations restrict access to certain websites on the school intranet and monitor email traffic through security software.
- Regulate the use of mobile phones during the school day.
- Work pro-actively with community groups to respond to and help eradicate anti-social behaviour in the community. Liaising with members of the community e.g. PCSO, transport service providers and engaging in community initiatives and safer school partnerships.

### **Responding to Incidents of Bullying**

All staff have a responsibility to tackle bullying. The school endeavours to ensure that teachers and other adults working with students are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to identify and address all types and forms of bullying effectively and safely. Training will include recognising the signs of bullying in children and how to identify vulnerable young people who may be susceptible to being bullied or becoming actively involved in bullying and bullying type behaviour. Training for staff is provided to ensure that they feel competent and confident in appropriately challenging bullying. Training also provides staff with a clear understanding of the school's policy and procedures on preventing and responding to incidents of bullying including providing short and long term support to those affected by bullying. The school's approach to anti-bullying work is included within induction programmes for new staff (including temporary and supply staff).

When a member of staff receives information, either directly or indirectly, that a child may have been the victim of a bullying incident, this report will be taken seriously and investigated. If bullying is suspected staff will talk

to the suspected victim, the suspected bully and any witnesses and take written statements. It is recognised that in some situations 'victims' may exaggerate or invent bullying incidents and members of staff need to be aware of this.

The school will offer a proactive, sympathetic and supportive response to children who are the victims of bullying. The exact nature of the response will be determined by the particular child's individual needs and may include:

- Immediate action to stop the incident and secure the child's safety
- Positive reinforcement that reporting the incident was the correct thing to do
- Reassurance that the victim is not responsible for the behaviour of the bully
- Informing/informing parents at the earliest opportunity
- Strategies to prevent further incidents
- Sympathy and empathy
- Counselling
- Befriending /creation of a support group
- Extra supervision/monitoring
- Peer mediation/peer mentoring
- Adult mediation between the perpetrator and the victim (provided this does not increase the victim's vulnerability)
- Arrangements to review progress.

Social networking websites are sometimes used for bullying and any threats made on such a site and acted on in school will be classed as pre-meditated and are likely to result in a more severe sanction. It should be acknowledged that it is very difficult for the school to take action on cyber bullying which has occurred outside of school time.

#### **For the Bully:**

- Talking about what happened, to discover why they became involved
- Informing the bully's parents/guardians
- Continuing to work with the bully in order to modify attitudes, this can include changes to class groupings or school travel arrangements
- Taking one or more of the disciplinary steps described in the behaviour Policy to prevent further bullying

#### **Monitoring and Review**

To seek opinion of the effectiveness of anti-bullying strategies in place, the school will survey/obtain information from a range of stakeholders. This will include:

- Meetings with the School Council. This may include members of teaching and support staff, students, governor and parents/carers.
- Parental survey at Parents' Evenings (to ascertain how effectively the school cares for students and deals with bullying).
- Opportunities for parents/carers to contact the school via the website.
- Student Voice.
- Informal meetings and discussions with parents/carers and students such as coffee mornings.



Data will be used by the Senior Management Team to review strategy and celebrate success. The policy will be reviewed by the student council group annually at the first meeting at the start of each academic year.

Parents/carers will be consulted/informed of reviews via posts on the school website and opportunities to contribute via the Anti-Bullying Ambassadors. Success will also be celebrated through the school newsletter. Advice/parents' guides will be posted on the website to ensure parents/carers are kept informed of the latest trends. This will enable the school and parents/carers to work together to minimise and prevent bullying in our community.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

**Governor for Inclusion**

Mrs R Pickett

**Assistant Headteacher (Behaviour and Safety)**

Mr D Pryor  
(Designated Safeguarding Lead)

## **Anti-Bullying Policy - Summary for Parents/Carers**

No school is immune from bullying and no school should be complacent. If bullying occurs at Birkdale High School it is vitally important that all of us should know what action to take. We have produced three guides to deal with any occurrence: one for parents, one for staff (who all have a copy) and one for students written in conjunction with the Anti-Bullying Ambassadors.

Please read your guide carefully and act on it if necessary. Staff at Birkdale High School recognise bullying behaviour as all forms of physical and psychological abuse systematically directed at victims who find this hurtful. We take responsibility for helping all students to understand what bullying is and the harm it can do. We believe that adults can set an example in their own behaviour. We hope that the ethos of the school will help to instill mutual respect and civilised behaviour.

We recognise that in our preventative approach to bullying we should provide pupils with the opportunity to discuss the topic through form tutor periods and assemblies. We will also ensure that every student knows where, when and to whom they can talk about any bullying incidents. This may be staff at school or parents at home. Pupils must feel confident that talking to adults is the proper course of action if they witness or experience bullying.

If you discover that your child is being bullied do not encourage him or her to 'hit back'. It may be contrary to your child's nature and may be just what the bully wants. Emphasise to your child that there is nothing wrong with him or her and that he or she can be helped. Contact the School. Incidents of bullying should be immediately referred to the Student Manager. Senior staff may then be called in to help. Although the nature of the response will depend on the circumstances, we have a standard procedure to follow which does not necessarily involve punishment in the first instance. Staff are experienced and use tact and discretion in their follow-up.

The whole school community (parents, pupils, teaching and support staff) has a role to play in combating bullying. All pupils should be aware that there is no such thing as an innocent bystander and the school neither condones nor ignores bullying, while all adults should be familiar with this policy to avoid inappropriate action being taken. We should all be committed to ensuring that every student receives his or her education in a safe environment free from humiliation, oppression or harassment.

Please refer to the full policy for more detailed information.

## **Anti-Bullying Policy - Advice for Students**

Bullying can ruin a student's school life and education, so we treat it very seriously. It is a form of anti-social behaviour that has no place at Birkdale High. Bullying can take many forms: physical, psychological or verbal. It can affect the happiness and achievements of the victims, the on-lookers and the bullies themselves. Remember that there may be others being bullied so you will be helping them as well as yourself by talking to someone.

**The following advice has been suggested and approved by Birkdale High School students:**

- Do not respond to the comment/behaviour of the person who is attempting to bully you.
- Tell someone what has been happening, even if you have been warned not to. You may go to any adult in school, but particularly your Form Tutor or Head of Year or your parents. They will want to know and to help.
- Do not retaliate (try to get even) in a physical or verbal way. Walk calmly away from the situation.
- Do not blame yourself.
- If you see someone else being bullied find an adult in school and explain what you have seen and heard.
- Do not just ignore bullying. Think about how you would feel in the victim's position. Remember that bullying doesn't go away by itself.
- Make sure that you do not get involved in the bullying as an 'easy' option out of the situation – don't help the bully, help the victim.

**Some advice on how to avoid being bullied:**

- Be friendly. Friends help you avoid these situations.
- React calmly, walk away to avoid further reaction.
- Think positively about yourself. Be confident.

**Some advice on how to avoid being a bully:**

- Talk about problems, rather than taking them out on someone else.
- Don't make unpleasant remarks about anybody – even if you intend them as a joke.
- Try to avoid confrontations: find some way and somewhere to cool down.

**We all have a responsibility to make sure that bullying has no place at Birkdale High School.**