



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY	
Reviewed by:	Andy Marshall – Deputy Head Pastoral
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Anti-Bullying Policy

INTRODUCTION

The aim of the Anti-Bullying Policy is to ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at Ballard; we have a zero tolerance of such abuse. It is a form of child-on-child abuse. It can happen both inside and outside of school and online. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will pupils be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at School. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports.

Bullying is repeated negative behaviour, which is intended to make others feel upset, uncomfortable or unsafe.

The main types of bullying are:

- physical (hitting, kicking, theft);
- verbal (name calling, racist remarks, homophobic remarks);
- indirect/emotional (taunting or spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups, singling out because of special needs or disabilities);
- sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments (see sexual harassment and sexual violence policy);
- cyberbullying where the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) particularly mobile phones (such as via social media) and the internet, deliberately upset someone else;
- prejudice-based and discriminatory - bullying behaviour may be a result of prejudice that relates to perceived or actual differences. This can lead to prejudice and discriminatory language or behaviour, including racism, sexism, homophobia, biphobia or transphobia;
- written – unkind notes/comments, pretending to send a note or disguising its author, graffiti.

If bullying has involved a serious physical assault or online communication that contravenes the Improper use of public electronic communications network – Communications Act 2003, section 127, the Police will be contacted. The Communications Act 2003, section 127 covers the sending of improper messages. Section 127(1)(a) relates to a message etc. that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character and should be used for indecent phone calls and emails. Section 127(2) targets false messages and persistent misuse intended to cause annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety; it includes somebody who persistently makes silent phone calls.

Staff should be aware of the signs and symptoms of bullying:

Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour such as:

- becoming shy and nervous;
- feigning illness;
- taking unusual absences;
- being more clingy than usual;

- there may be evidence of changes in work patterns;
- lacking concentration or truanting from school;
- feels ill in the morning;
- has damaged books or clothing;
- has possessions going missing;
- has unexplained cuts or bruises;
- is bullying other children or siblings;
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable;
- cries themselves to sleep at night/has nightmares.

All staff must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with School policy (please see Child-on-Child Abuse Policy). It is hoped that bullying will be minimised by following the guidelines below:

1. The ethos of the School should foster the idea that every individual is worthy in their own right and that every person has a vital part to play. Every individual has their own skills and assets, and these should be nurtured.
2. Staff on duty at break times will carefully monitor the playground situation ensuring that no child appears isolated, and that positive interaction is occurring.
3. Many opportunities should be given for pupils to express their viewpoints, in class and in social situations. Communication and listening skills need to be fostered so children develop an understanding that not everyone will agree with their point of view, but that they must show tolerance and understanding of the viewpoints of others. They should be encouraged to develop empathy, applying this in every aspect of their lives and to develop self-discipline in their behaviour towards others.
4. Form staff will monitor their own forms carefully, noticing if any child appears unhappy, withdrawn etc., or if there is a sudden deterioration in their work or a change in attitude (see the signs above).
5. Any concerns should be brought to the Pastoral Team immediately.
6. All incidents will be recorded and kept on MyConcern. It is at the discretion of the staff whether they ask the children involved to write down what has happened. If this is done, then these copies will also be filed.
7. Children should be made aware that they should care for the others in their School community and if they see someone else in distress, they should either offer help or find a member of staff to help. We have a culture of being an “upstander” not a “bystander” and this is emphasised in assemblies, form times and PSHE lessons.
8. Children should be made aware that there is always someone they can talk to (a trusted adult) if there is a problem of any sort and that their views will be listened to with respect and taken seriously and that help in whatever form will be given. They should be made fully aware that they will not be seen as complaining or fussy, but as doing the right thing. Some pupils would prefer to report anonymously their concerns. Pupils can do this via Speak Out, Stay Safe on Teams, an online reporting tool enabling pupils to safely and effectively disclose issues in confidence. These reports are monitored and assessed by the DSL and School Nurse (DDSL) and followed up appropriately.
9. The importance of taking a zero-tolerance approach.
10. Any abuse occurring online will not be downplayed and will be treated seriously.
11. Maintaining an attitude of “it could happen here” and “professional curiosity.”

12. Posters are displayed around the School giving advice to pupils and emphasising our anti-bullying stance.

Anti-Bullying Education in the Curriculum

The School raises awareness of the anti-social nature of bullying through a PSHE and tutorial programme, school assemblies, the Student Council and in department schemes of work as appropriate. Each year in November, Ballard supports Anti-Bullying Week and holds an “odd socks day” to celebrate every pupil's uniqueness. Our Ballard on Board programme supports pupils understanding themselves and each other regarding the complexities of friendship issues.

Our Head of PSHE is responsible for developing with appropriate colleagues the anti-bullying programme in the PSHE programme delivered to all year groups from 3 to 11. In PSHE lessons pupils are given advice on where they can seek help, including details of confidential helplines and websites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline, Kidscape, Get Connected, Samaritans.

Heads of Department are responsible for introducing anti-bullying material in their programmes of study as appropriate. In the Senior School, in Drama lessons, the theme of bullying is regularly explored through role play and discussion. In Lower Prep and Upper Prep, particularly in RS and English lessons, the issue of bullying is highlighted by the teaching of moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable. Across the whole School, bullying, and related issues, are regularly re-visited. When a major problem is identified with bullying in a particular year group, the tutorial programme will be rescheduled so that the issue is specifically addressed at that time. Bullying and related issues are also regularly covered in assemblies, where pupils are encouraged to be “upstanders” and not “bystanders.”

Changing the attitude and behaviour of bullies plays a major part in the strategies we use.

Implementation

The following steps may be taken when dealing with incidents:

- If bullying is suspected or reported (even if it appears innocuous), the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached and if this is not possible the issue will be passed to a member of the Senior Management Team/Pastoral Team;
- A clear account of the incident will be recorded and put on MyConcern. In the case of cyberbullying any texts, emails etc. should be saved and kept as evidence;
- Depending on the seriousness of the incident a member of the Leadership Team may interview all concerned and will record the incident;
- Form tutors will be kept informed and if it persists the form tutor will advise the appropriate subject teachers and Leadership Team;
- Parents will be kept informed;
- Punitive measures will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned. (See the Behaviour Policy – Assertive Discipline.)

Pupils

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a form tutor or a trusted adult of their choice;
- reassuring the pupil that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting a concern. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report;
- offering continuous support and education;
- restoring self-esteem and confidence.

Certain circumstances may mean some pupils are at greater risk of being bullied. This may include:

Bullying related to ethnic groups, religion or culture

A high proportion of bullied pupils have experienced racist or faith-based bullying. When black and ethnic minority children experience bullying it is more likely to be severe bullying.

Bullying related to SEN and disabilities

Children with SEN and disabilities are more at risk of bullying than their peers. Children with SEN do not always have the levels of social confidence and competence, and the robust friendship bonds, that can protect against bullying. Where children with SEN and disabilities are themselves found to be bullying, we apply the same standards of behaviour as we would to the rest of the School community.

Bullying related to appearance or health conditions

Those with health or visible medical conditions, such as eczema, may be more likely than their peers to become targets for bullying behaviour. Perceived physical limitations, such as size and weight, and other body image issues, can result in bullying.

Bullying related to sexual orientation

Evidence of homophobic bullying suggests that children who are gay (or perceived to be) face a higher risk of victimisation than their peers. Homophobic bullying is perhaps the form of bullying least likely to be self-reported, since disclosure carries risks not associated with other types of bullying. A pupil 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 boys and girls equally. All may be the victims of sexist or sexual bullying by members of their own sex. Sexual bullying may be characterised by name-calling, comments and overt 'looks' about appearance, attractiveness and emerging puberty. In addition, uninvited touching, innuendos and propositions, pornographic imagery or graffiti may be used. Pupils identifying as transgender or experiencing gender dysphoria (feeling that they belong to another gender or that they do not conform with the gender role prescribed to them) can also be targeted by bullies.

Bullying related to parents or parental circumstances

On occasion, pupils are bullied because of their parents' behaviour or origins. There are incidents where some pupils come from relatively poor home lives, in contrast with other pupils and this needs to be noted in any dealing with related incidents. Equally, different families have different arrangements at home, including mixed-race, mixed-faith, single and same sex parents. Staff who deal with pupils in such circumstances should seek advice from any pupils' Head of Year (Senior School) or Senior Teacher (Prep School).

Bullies

Changing the attitude and behaviour of bullies is part of the responsibility of the positive procedures used by the School. However, the School recognises that sanctions will also have to be used against bullies.

Pupils who bully frequently receive sanctions for their behaviour and these might range from a detention (for low-level incidents) to an exclusion. When pupils return to School following a temporary exclusion, they will have a readmittance meeting with the Headmaster and Deputy Head Pastoral. In these meetings, pupils returning to School are encouraged to reflect on what they did, give reasons as to why such behaviour will not occur again, and be reassured that any punishment served is now spent and that they move forward in their time as a member of the School community.

The School will provide, wherever possible, the alleged perpetrator with an education and safeguarding support, alongside implementing any disciplinary sanctions as is necessary.

Pupils who have bullied will be helped by:

- discussing what happened;
- discovering why the pupil became involved;
- establishing the wrongdoing and need to change;
- informing parents or guardians to help change the attitude of the pupil.

We understand that a child abusing another child may be a sign they have been abused themselves or a sign of wider issues that require addressing within our School culture.

If necessary other pupils should be aware that there are times when as bystanders to bullying, they may be thought of as 'accessories' and this will mean that they will be disciplined too.

Every effort will be made to bridge the gap between the children involved, to deal with the problem, give support and re-establish the unity within the group.

The following disciplinary steps can be taken:

- official warnings to cease offending;
- detention/removal from break times;
- interviews with parents;
- exclusion from certain areas of School premises;
- minor fixed-term exclusion;
- major fixed-term exclusion;
- permanent exclusion.

Involvement of Parents

Parents, as well as all staff and pupils, should know that the School will not tolerate bullying, and takes a positive approach to educating pupils to combat it. Parents of pupils who are being bullied and parents of the bullies will be involved in the solution to the problem as deemed appropriate by the Deputy Head Pastoral or relevant Head of Section. Parents are provided anti-bullying guidance via the School website.

Involvement of Pupils

Pupils are involved in positive strategy making in relation to bullying through both the Student Council and in tutor group discussions. A key part of the PSHE programme consists of educating pupils in how to cope with bullying.

Online Bullying

What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is the use of technologies by an individual or by a group of people to deliberately and repeatedly upset someone else. It can consist of threats, harassment, embarrassment, humiliation, defamation or impersonation. It may take the form of general insults, or prejudice-based bullying including hate crimes, for example homophobia, racism, sexism or other forms of discrimination.

There have been cases of school employees being cyberbullied by current or ex-pupils, parents and carers, and by colleagues, as well as by people who attempt to remain anonymous.

There are reported cases of cyberbullying involving a wide range of technologies and services, including social networking sites, apps, email, instant messaging (IM), learning environments, games and by mobile phone. Childnet guidance for Schools: <https://www.childnet.com/resources/cyberbullying-guidance-for-schools>

Cyberbullying – preventative measures

The School aims to ensure that all pupils feel safe online. The School takes a strong stance against all forms of cyberbullying, using the sanctions outlined in the Behaviour Policy.

Key advice to parents and carers on online bullying

When a child is the target of online bullying — bullying via mobile phone or the internet — they can feel alone and very misunderstood. It is therefore vital that as a parent or carer you know how to support your child if they are caught up in online bullying. This short guide will help you:

Preventing online bullying - where to start

The best way to deal with online bullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. Although it may be uncomfortable to accept, you should be aware that your child may as likely bully online as be a target of online bullying, and that sometimes children get caught up in online bullying simply by not thinking about the consequences of what they are doing. It is therefore crucial that you talk with your child and understand the ways in which they are using the internet and their mobile phone. In this guide there is an anti-online bullying code which contains seven key messages for children, which you may find a helpful starting point for a discussion with them about issues, such as being careful about posting images on personal websites and where to go to get help.

Use the tools

Most software and services on the internet have in-built safety features. Knowing how to use them can prevent unwanted contact. For example, IM services such as MSN Messenger have features that allow users to block others on their contact list, and conversations can be saved on most IM services. Social-networking sites also have tools available, e.g. young people can keep their profile set to 'private' so that only approved friends can see it.

With bullies using text and picture messaging, it is also important to check with your child's internet or mobile phone provider to find out what protections they can offer, including whether it is possible to change their mobile number.

Responding to online bullying

It is vital that you have strategies to help your child if they come to you saying that they are being online bullied.

The anti-online bullying code

Start by teaching your children the seven key messages in the anti-online bullying code (see below). This includes advice on not replying or retaliating to online bullying, as well as not assisting an online bully by forwarding a message, even as a joke.

Keep the evidence

Keeping the evidence of online bullying is helpful when reporting an incident and may help in identifying the bully. This means keeping copies of offending emails, text messages or online conversations.

Reporting online bullying

There are a number of organisations that can help you if you need to report incidents of online bullying:

The School: if the incident involves a pupil, or pupils, at the School, then it is important to let the School know. All schools have a legal duty to have measures in place to support the person being bullied and to apply disciplinary sanctions to the pupil doing the bullying. If there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm the online bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern.

The provider of the service: most service providers have complaints and abuse policies, and it is important to report the incident to the provider of the service, i.e. the mobile phone operator (e.g. O2 or Vodafone), or the social network/IM/online chat provider (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Snapchat or Instagram). Most responsible service providers will have a 'Report Abuse' or a nuisance call bureau, and these can provide information and advice on how to help your child.

The Police: if the online bullying is serious and a potential criminal offence has been committed you should consider contacting the police. Relevant criminal offences here include harassment and stalking, threats of harm or violence to a person or property, and any evidence of sexual exploitation, e.g. grooming, distribution of sexual images, or inappropriate sexual contact or behaviour.

Key advice to children and young people on online bullying

Anti-online bullying code

Being sent an abusive or threatening text message, or seeing nasty comments about yourself on a website, can be really upsetting. This code gives you seven important tips to protect yourself and your friends from getting caught up in online bullying, and advice on to how to report it when it does happen.

1. Always respect others

Remember that when you send a message to someone, you cannot see the impact that your words or images may have on the other person. That is why it is important always to show respect to people and be careful what you say online or what images you send. What you think is a joke may really hurt someone else. Always ask permission before you take a photo of someone.

If you receive a rude or nasty message or picture about someone else, do not forward it. You could be assisting a bully and even be accused of online bullying yourself. You could also be breaking the law.

2. Think before you send

It is important to think before you send any images or text about yourself or someone else by email or mobile phone, or before you post information on a website. Remember that what you send can be made public very quickly and could stay online forever. Do you really want your teacher or future employer to see that photo?

3. Treat your password like your toothbrush

Don't let anyone know your passwords. It is a good idea to change them on a regular basis. Choosing hard-to-guess passwords with symbols or numbers will help stop people hacking into your account and pretending to be you. Remember only to give your mobile number or personal website address to trusted friends.

4. Block the bully

Most responsible websites and services allow you to block or report someone who is behaving badly. Make use of these features, they are there for a reason.

5. Don't retaliate or reply

Replying to bullying messages, particularly in anger, is just what the bully wants.

6. Save the evidence

Learn how to keep records of offending messages, pictures or online conversations. These will help you demonstrate to others what is happening and can be used by your school, internet service provider, mobile phone company, or even the police to investigate the online bullying.

7. Make sure you tell

You have a right not to be harassed and bullied online. There are people that can help: tell an adult you trust who can help you to report it to the right place or call a helpline like Childline on 0800 1111 in confidence.

- Tell the provider of the service you have been bullied on (e.g. your mobile phone operator or social network provider). Check their websites to see where to report.
- Tell your school. Your teacher at your school can support you and can discipline the person bullying you.

Finally, don't just stand there. If you see online bullying going on, support the victim and report the bullying. Be an "upstander."

Monitoring, evaluation and review

The School will implement a variety of measures:

1. Gather Pupil Feedback

- Conduct **open discussions** to assess pupils' experiences.
- Create **safe reporting mechanisms** for bullying incidents.
- Use the student council to gain deeper insights.
- Regular pupil surveys via MS Forms.
- Evaluation of results will inform the SIP.

2. Assess Incident Reports & Trends

- Track reported bullying cases over time. Daily triage meetings with the School Nurse/DDSL to look at incidents will enable any patterns and/or trends of issues with pupils.
- Deputy Head Pastoral will monitor how quickly and effectively staff resolve issues.
- Identify patterns—are certain groups or locations more affected- this will be picked up at daily triage meetings with Deputy Head Pastoral and School Nurse.
- Patterns and trends discussed at weekly Pastoral Meetings – minutes will outline actions to be taken.

3. Engage Parents and Staff

- Gather feedback from parents about their children's experiences.
- Evaluate staff training on handling bullying.
- Ensure staff actively promote a **positive school culture and a sense of belonging**.
- Regular staff and parents' surveys via MS Forms.
- Evaluation of results will inform the SIP.

4. Observe School Climate & Social Interactions

- Leadership Team conduct regular classroom and playground observations.
- Look for signs of inclusivity and respect in daily interactions and celebrate positive behaviours.

5. Review Policy Implementation

- Check if anti-bullying policies are clear and consistently enforced.
- Evaluate the accessibility and effectiveness of reporting systems.
- Ensure **disciplinary actions** focus on resolution and education.

The School will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the School.

Recommended sites:

www.kidscape.org.uk

www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services

safe to learn; embedding anti-bullying work in schools (DCSF, 2007)

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