



Anti-Bullying Guidance

Responsible post holder	Lucy Childs
Approved	Lucy Childs, September 2022
Reviewed	September 2023; September 2024

Introduction

At Belmont Academy we are aware that pupils may be bullied in any school or setting and recognise that preventing, raising awareness and consistently responding to any cases of bullying should be a priority to ensure the safety and well-being of our pupils.

In line with the *Equality Act 2010* it is essential that our school:

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

At Belmont Academy, we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Under the Children's Act 2004 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a pupil is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, the school staff should report their concerns to their local authority children's social care.

This policy is closely linked with our Behaviour Management Policy, our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, our Code of Conduct and the school's aims, visions and values.

Belmont Academy actively promotes positive interpersonal relations between all members of the school community. This policy has been developed through careful consultation which involved a whole school approach, including children/young people, parents/carers and all school staff.

Principles and Aims

It is the responsibility of the governing body and the Headteacher to ensure that all members of the school community work within a safe and enabling environment. We are determined to promote and develop a school ethos where bullying behaviour is regarded as unacceptable, to ensure a safe and secure environment is sustained for all pupils.

We aim for all pupils to reach their potential academically, socially and personally through learning and playing in a safe and secure environment.

- Pupils have a right to learn free from intimidation and fear
- The needs of the victim are paramount
- Schools will not tolerate bullying behaviour
- Bullied pupils will be listened to
- Reported incidents will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated

Bullying Definition

At Belmont, through consultation with parents, staff and pupils, we have agreed the following definition of bullying:

Bullying is an act of aggression, causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to someone. It can be a physical act or emotional in nature, such as verbal abuse, making gestures, and exclusion. It is an abuse of power. It can be planned and organised, or it may be unintentional. It may be perpetrated by individuals or by groups of pupils.

Types of Bullying

Cyber-bullying

The rapid development of and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual bullying', which can occur in and outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying which can happen beyond the school day into home and private space, with potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content.

Racist Bullying

This refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, both physical and psychological, that make the person feel unwelcome marginalised and excluded, powerless or worthless because of their colour, ethnicity, culture, faith community, national origin or national status.

Homophobic/Biphobic/Transphobic Bullying

This occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against lesbian, gay or bisexual people or people who are transgender.

Vulnerable Groups

We recognise that some groups of pupils may be more vulnerable to bullying, including:

- Looked after children
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children
- Children with Special Education Needs or Disabilities (SEND)
- Children from ethnic minorities
- Children entitled to Free School Meals – disadvantaged pupils
- Children for whom English is an additional language
- Children who are perceived to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.

Bullying may also present in the following ways:

- Physical violence such as hitting, pushing or spitting at another pupil
- Interfering with another pupil's property, by stealing, hiding or damaging it
- Using offensive names when addressing another pupil including homophobic or racist language
- Teasing or spreading rumours about another pupil or his/her family
- Belittling another pupil's abilities and achievements
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about another pupil
- Excluding another pupil from a group activity
- Ridiculing another pupil's appearance, way of speaking or personal mannerisms
- Misusing technology (internet or mobiles) to hurt or humiliate another person.

Bullying Prevention

Preventing and raising awareness of bullying is an essential to keeping incidents in our school to a minimum. Through assemblies as well as PSHE lessons, pupils are given regular opportunities to discuss what bullying is, as well as incidents we would not describe as bullying, such as two friends falling out, or a one-off argument. Pupils are taught to tell an adult in school if they are concerned that someone is being bullied.

At Belmont, the priority given to pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins all that we do and is embedded within the school. Our values of respect, resilience, responsibility, kindness and honesty permeate throughout the children's learning and underpin the aims and values of the school. We are committed to ensuring our policy effectively prevents and tackles bullying. As such, we engage in a number of ongoing consultation processes. These include:

- Awareness raising programmes (Curriculum & parent information evenings and workshops)
- Survey/questionnaires distributed to pupils, parents and whole school staff
- Obtaining the views of elected student representatives e.g. Belmont Parliament and Captains
- Seeking the views of parents at information evenings
- Monitoring evaluation and review
- Review of our Behaviour Policy including the sanctions and rewards.

Responsibilities of all Stakeholders

The Responsibilities of Staff

Our staff will

- Foster in our pupils self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils

- Discuss bullying with all classes, so that every pupil learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is bullied and to the bully and the importance of telling a teacher about bullying when it happens
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying
- Listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them
- Report suspected cases of bullying to the Headteacher; Lucy Childs, Deputy Headteacher; Tom Lynch and our Leader of Pastoral Care; Tanya Knight)
- Follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying, and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken
- Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures

The Responsibilities of Pupils

We expect our pupils to:

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity
- Intervene to protect the pupil who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances

Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should:

- Not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets

The Responsibilities of Parents

We ask our parents to support their children and the school by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying
- Advising their children to report any bullying to their class teacher and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils
- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any forms of bullying
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken
- Keep a written record of any reported instances of bullying
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved
- Co-operating with the school, if their children are accused of bullying, try to ascertain the truth. And point out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are bullied and for the bullies themselves

The Responsibilities of All

Everyone should:

- Work together to combat and, hopefully in time, to eradicate bullying

Preventative Measures

- School leaders will promote an open and honest anti-bullying ethos, which secures whole-school community support for the anti-bullying policy
- PSHE lessons will be taught weekly and used to discuss issues around diversity and anti-bullying themes
- The curriculum will continue to offer opportunities for pupils to develop social and emotional skills such as empathy and resilience which are highly relevant to reducing bullying
- The use of creative learning through art, music, poetry, drama and dance to develop understanding of feelings and enhance pupils' social and emotional literacy
- Anti-Bullying Week events every November
- E-Safety Week every spring term
- Gathering information and data on views and experiences of pupils, staff and parents in relation to bullying to help the school to monitor, evaluate and improve its anti-bullying work
- Monitor and adapt the school environment to ensure pupils have enjoyable and rewarding experiences in both lessons and at unstructured times
- Encourage parents/carer involvement through an 'open door' approach for access to staff. Staffs are available to meet with parents/carers before and after school and Contact Books are used as a regular tool for information sharing
- Assemblies and the school's values and learning goals underpin a clear, anti-bullying message

- Restorative Approaches are used when dealing with incidents of conflict and reported bullying. Staff; including lunchtime supervisors have appropriate training in this area
- Classroom Charters are shared, understood and signed by all pupils and staff
- Having peer support schemes (including; Play Makers)
- The school has an Action Post (Worry Box) located outside the Leadership office which pupils can post concerns. This is locked to ensure confidentiality and a form for reporting concerns identifies level of concern the pupil feels
- Children are rehearsed in using a pro-active strategy for resolving difficult situations. T.A.G. (Tell them how you feel. Ask them to stop. Get help from an adult)

Additional measures used to promote positive behaviour can be found in our Behaviour Policy.

Procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour

Response to the needs of bullied pupils

1. Confidential routes to reporting bullying: class worry box, whole-school Action Post (pupils share their concerns and teachers will follow these up by at least the start of playtime the following day depending on when concerns are read)
2. Behaviour logs are in place and are completed by teaching staff. These are analysed by the Deputy Head to track and identify any patterns which may formulate into incidents of bullying behaviour towards a particular child.
3. An investigation will be followed up using the school's Incident Form and actions to be taken reported to the pupil (alleged victim) and parent. A report will also be made to the parents of any other pupils involved (within 24 hours)
4. Restorative Approaches used to discuss the issues and agree how these are to be resolved, for any pupils involved. A report will be kept on file of this and the agreements made. Parents will also receive a record of these agreements and any sanctions (between 2-3 days depending on length of investigation)
5. Follow up systems to ensure that agreements are sustained. These include; weekly informal reporting to key member of staff, allocate a Peer Mentor or Friendship Circle as appropriate (within 5 days of meeting)
6. A follow up form to be completed by pupils to identify whether improvements have been sustained and the impact of these (after 4 weeks)

Response to the needs of bullying pupils

Pupils accused of displaying bullying behaviours will

1. Have the opportunity to record what has happened using an incident form and discuss the allegations with a member of staff (within 24 hours)
2. Take part in a Restorative Approaches meeting to discuss the issues raised in a fair way. Proportionate sanctions are agreed and put in place (between 2-3 days)
3. Agree a behaviour contract with clear expectations around conduct. This will be reviewed weekly with a key member of staff (weekly)
4. Be allocated a Peer Mentor or Friendship Circle as appropriate (within 5 days of meeting)
5. Review the Behaviour Contract with parents and Head of School (after 4 weeks)

Sanctions for bullying intend to hold pupils who bully to account for their behaviour and ensure that they face up to the harm they have caused and to learn from it. They also provide the opportunity for pupils to put right the harm they have caused. Where change is not observed in the behaviour, a meeting will be called between parents and the Head of School. This may result in a fixed-term or permanent exclusion.

Continuous Professional Development of Staff

All staff will receive training annually through the school's programme of Continuing Professional Development and induction procedures for new staff.

Monitoring and Review

Pupil concerns posted in the school Action Post will be monitored by the inclusion team. Concerns will be flagged up by members of staff to the child's class teachers and these will then be recorded electronically on the school's behaviour logs; which are monitored regularly by the Deputy Headteacher with reports made to the Headteacher.

The central record will be monitored half termly by a member of the governing body with responsibility for Inclusion. The findings will be reported to the Head teacher and termly to the governing body.

The policy will be reviewed with pupils, parents, staff and governors through a process of consultation each year in the autumn term.