

# **Blossom Lower School and Upper House**



## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

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## ANTI BULLYING POLICY

### Definition

Bullying can be described as being *'a deliberate act done to cause distress solely in order to give a feeling of power, status or other gratification to the bully. It can range from ostracising, name-calling, teasing, threats and extortion, through to physical assault on persons and/or their property. It can be an unresolved single frightening incident which casts a shadow over a child's life, or a series of such incidents.'*

At Blossom House and Upper House School staff, parents and pupils work together to create a happy, caring, learning environment. Bullying, either verbal, physical or indirect will not be tolerated. It is everyone's responsibility to aim to prevent occurrences of bullying and to deal with any incidents quickly and effectively. Research has shown time and time again that the extent of bullying in schools is greatly underestimated.

An 'anti-bullying' ethos is embedded into the whole school approach. It is integral to the school's SMSC provision. 'Behaviour and Safety' are incorporated into the school's Evaluation and Development Plans.

Blossom House strives to provide pupils with a safe environment for learning, in terms of academic development, social awareness and wellbeing. All teachers and therapists ensure lessons and sessions do not tolerate or facilitate any discriminatory views, including those considered racial, sexist, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic. If pupils exhibit or demonstrate views or opinions of an offensive or concerning nature, these will be remediated/challenged immediately and reported via Schoolpod. The pupil/s will then be given access to 1:1 SLT or 1:1 discussions with a trusted adult to help broaden their views and reduce this behaviour. This may include referral to one of the school's own RSE mentors. Positive attitudes are supported through assemblies, displays, Group Times and SMSC days etc.

Bullying can be brought to the attention of staff either by the victim(s), their friend(s), their parent(s) or other associated people. Bullying will often be dealt with using our restorative justice approach to help the bully

take responsibility for their actions and have a chance to repair the situation. By using this approach we also help the children to think about what could be done differently next time and how the situation can be dealt with appropriately. If children are willing to engage with these restorative justice chats then their sanctions may be lessened.

The School's approach takes into account the latest DoE Guidance:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2021\)](#)
- [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges \(2021\)](#)
- [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people \(2020\)](#)
- [Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies \(July 2017\)](#)
- [Teaching Online Safety in School 2019](#)

This guidance defines bullying as (extract):

*Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet)... It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.*

### **Strategy for dealing with bullying in school**

The following is a list of actions available to staff depending on the perceived seriousness of the situation. The emphasis is always on a caring, listening approach as bullies are often victims too – that is why they bully. However, they should also be made clearly aware of the seriousness of their behaviour as well as the impact which it has/had upon the victim.

*Refer also to **Appendix A** for the use of the 'Not Sensible Book/Inappropriate Behaviour Book' which would usually precede referral to the Deputy, Head teacher and/or the Staff Member Responsible for Behaviour. This aims to illustrate and explain what 'hurting' and 'bullying' behaviour is, and the different*

forms it can take. This approach is also in line with our Restorative Justice approach:

- Discussions with the victim (as is appropriate to the pupil's level of understanding). This will require patience and understanding. Remember – listen, believe, and act. The events that led up to a bullying incident may need to be drawn out on paper in order to aid the pupil's understanding and recognition of his or her behaviour. It should involve a member of staff with whom the pupil feels comfortable as well as the person responsible for behaviour and/or the Headteacher.
- Identify the bully/bullies. Obtain witnesses if possible. Advise the Head teacher and/or the Staff Member Responsible for Behaviour. Record all details in the books and/or pupil logs. Ensure Schoolpod is updated where appropriate.
- Discussions with the perpetrator of bullying behaviour. Explain the details clearly and ask them to tell the truth about the situation/incident. Make it clear that bullying is not acceptable at Blossom House or Upper House School.
- N.B It is important to establish whether there was '**intent**' behind the behaviour/s. It is common for pupils with language and communication problems to experience confusion about the effect of their behaviours on others. This is continually targeted through a whole school, multi-disciplinary approach. However, once staff are sure that a pupil or pupils have been made explicitly aware of the unacceptability of certain actions/behaviours, anti-bullying policies will be implemented.
- If the pupil admits responsibility then follow the procedure outlined below and in the Discipline and Behaviour Policy and in *Appendix A*.
- If the pupil does not take responsibility, investigate further. If it is clear that they are lying, continue with the procedure. Pupils usually own up if presented with all the facts. It may be that the perpetrator is unaware of the seriousness of their behaviour and the impact that it has upon the victim, due to their social interaction and language problems.

- Separate discussions with parents of bully and victim. This may involve phone call/s and/or meetings in school also.
- Sanctions for the bully may include withdrawal from favoured activities, loss of playtimes, exclusion from playground during lunchtimes, exclusion from school, depending on the perceived severity of the incident(s). These sanctions may decrease if the child is willing to participate in out restorative justice chats and 'repairing' the situation
- Continue monitoring the situation by observing and monitoring at lesson times, playtimes/ lunchtimes and having discussions with victim to ensure no repetition
- As the behaviour of the bully (hopefully) improves, then favoured activities etc. can be reinstated, and the child should be praised for good behaviour. This will help rebuild the pupil's self-esteem, which may have been damaged after being caught bullying, or could have been low anyway, hence the bullying.

In order to identify incidents of bullying and the identities of bullies, at Blossom House and Upper House School we have agreed to carry out the following strategies:

- All staff watch for early signs of distress in pupils
- All staff listen, believe, act
- Circle times, Group Times, assemblies, SLT sessions and PSHE are used to talk about bullying.
- All incidents/concerns/misconceptions leading to an act which may be perceived or thought of as bullying are carefully logged by relevant staff member

DfE's Anti-bullying pack '*Don't Suffer in Silence*' provides the basis for the Blossom House strategy. This has been further added by to by the advice and direction given in DfE's (2011) '*Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies*' and '*Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies*' (October 2014).

- Anti-Bullying week.
- All staff aware of the process for acting upon bullying.
- All staff aware and confident in implementing policies specific to a given cohort relating to specific issues and able to seek help from senior staff.
- Support for both the victim and perpetrator through onsite resources such as speech and language therapy input (with regards to social interaction/communication issues) and arts therapy provision (for emotionally related issues).
- Liaison with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Refer also to **Appendix B** for use of methods such as the 'Sensible Book' and 'Appropriate Behaviour' books which are used throughout the Primary and Secondary schools (in forms appropriate to the groups' age and levels of maturity and understanding) in order to promote appropriate interactions between pupils and reduce incidents of bullying.

## **Cyber Bullying**

The school also takes Cyber Bullying very seriously.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/374850/Cyberbullying\\_Advice\\_for\\_Headteachers\\_and\\_School\\_Staff\\_121114.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/374850/Cyberbullying_Advice_for_Headteachers_and_School_Staff_121114.pdf)

The school recognises the importance of teaching pupils about online safety, and helping them to be clear about what is expected of them online as offline. We follow the latest Government guidance: [Teaching online safety in school 2019.](#)

The school's policy with regards to Anti-Bullying also includes any form of *Cyber Bullying*. Refer also to the **Online Safety Policy** which sets out a clear process for tackling issues related to digital devices and social networking sites (e.g. Xbox chat, Snap Chat). This process needs to be supported by parents in the home.

Cyber Bullying could include use of text messaging, email, Messenger, BBM, 'Facebook', Internet, chat rooms and online games. The latest DoE guidance states that:

*“Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click”*

- The school will ensure that the curriculum teaches pupils about the risks of new communications technologies, the consequences of their misuse, and how to use them safely. Some of these applications are not available to the pupils in school.
- Internet blocking technologies are continually updated and harmful sites blocked (overseen by the I.T. manager in liaison with staff).
- Clear policies are set about the use of mobile phones at school and at other times when pupils are under the school's authority.
- Pupils will be given key guidance on:
  - personal privacy rights; material posted on any electronic platform; photographic images.*
- The curriculum will cover the value of e-communications and the risks and consequences of improper use, including the legal implications in lessons such as Life Skills, PSHE, assemblies with local police and ICT lessons.

- A dialogue will be kept up with parents about emerging technologies their child might be using, as well as reminding parents are the support the school requires in order to implement policies.
- The school will ensure that parents know what steps to take if they suspect that their child is being cyber-bullied or is bullying someone else. Parents are invited to a talk at the school on this subject by a specialist national charity. Letters are sent home by the Principal.
- Internet safety week involving in school activities with the pupils and after school training sessions available for all parents.
- Liaison with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Refer also to the **Online Safety Policy** for more detail.
- Updated guidance for preventing cyberbullying at home has been placed on the Parent Portal of the school website.
- Annual awareness training sessions delivered by Childnet UK Safer Internet Centre (September 2018)

An example of home-school partnerships regarding bullying may be drawn from that of Tim Shepard (P16) and a group of parents who worked on a plan for addressing cyber-bullying awareness with a group of five particularly vulnerable young adults

### **Bullying outside school premises**

The D.o.E's October 2011 guidance states that:

*Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises "to such an extent as is reasonable". This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.*

### **Peer on Peer Abuse (Including Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment)**

At Blossom House School we recognise the possibility that children are capable of abusing their peers (including online). **Blossom House School has a zero-**

**tolerance approach to peer on peer abuse, and it should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys”** as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children. We recognise the gendered nature of peer on peer abuse; whilst it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators, all peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

We aim to reduce the risk of peer on peer abuse by teaching pupils about positive, healthy and respectful relationships (both on and offline) in RSE and PHSE sessions, along with an awareness around ‘being safe’ and how to recognise and report abuse.

Where peer on peer abuse is suspected, or where an allegation has been made, **the DSL should be informed immediately**. If a potential criminal offence has taken place, the Police will also be contacted. If the allegation is not accepted by Children’s Social Care or the Police, the school is responsible for managing the situation internally. **Where child on child sexual violence or sexual harassment is suspected, or where an allegation has been made, please refer to the flow chart in Appendix 3. In such circumstances, [Part five of Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2021\)](#) should also be followed.**

As part of the DfE’s response to sexual abuse in education, including the [Ofsted review into sexual abuse in schools](#), Blossom House School recognises the importance of the victim’s voice and reporting. Any victims, perpetrators and any other children affected by peer on peer abuse will be offered a high level of pastoral support from a team of trusted adults, and any reports made will be taken seriously and dealt with swiftly and appropriately. A victim will never be given the impression they are creating a problem, or be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

The NSPCC has a dedicated helpline to support children and young people who have experienced abuse at school, and for adults and professionals who need further support and guidance: [0800 136 663](tel:0800136663) or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

On occasion, some pupils will present a safeguarding risk to other pupils. The school is responsible for creating individualised risk assessments to ensure that the other pupils are safeguarded; and that these pupils are also kept safe from malicious allegations.

### **Approach to supporting diversity awareness:**

Blossom House School is committed to being an anti-racist and diversity aware school. The LATS aims for 2020-21 are:

1. To further develop the pupils' and staff's understanding of discrimination in society
2. To develop meaningful changes that contribute to BHS becoming a more actively antiracist space

In line with these we have put in place a specific protocol when dealing with racist or homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) behaviour. Along with the assistance of the Diversity Strategy Coordinator (Sadaf Khan) we have adapted SchoolPod to include racist and HBT behaviours within behaviour logs as well as creating a flowchart in order to deal consistently with any incidents of racism. This flowchart is saved in the 'Diversity' folder within Shared Files and all staff are aware of this document. The flowchart clearly lays out how to deal with the incident depending on the root of the behaviour and the understanding and knowledge of the pupils involved. The incident will then be dealt with accordingly with follow up restorative justice and 1:1 work where necessary.

### **Approach to behaviour and bullying during Covid:**

There has been an increased emphasis on emotional wellbeing as pupils returned to school fulltime. This has been to support anxiety in pupils due to the changing covid regulations and uncertainty of the future. Secondary children attended an assembly by Joey Burgess to discuss the following expectations:

- Not deliberately coughing or spitting towards other pupils or staff
- Not pretending to have symptoms
- Remembering to be aware of other peoples anxieties around Covid
- Supporting pupils to remember to wash their hands regularly and to social distance

If these rules are not followed then staff should liaise with behaviour leads to consider appropriate consequences.

'Covid-related behaviours' has been added within behaviour logs so that data around it can be collected each term. A risk assessment for the Behaviour Department has been written and will be shared with staff.

## Anti-Bullying Policy-Appendix A

### 'Not Sensible' and 'Inappropriate Behaviour' Books

*(Taken from the 'behaviour management induction training' information).*

As a school we need to take a stand against any sort of bullying behaviour. However, 'bullying policies' cannot be implemented in a similar manner to mainstream schools as the nature of speech, language and communication difficulties mean that the vast majority of our pupils need to be 'taught' what 'bullying' or 'unkind' behaviour is as well as how to deal with it.

Therefore, we aim to incorporate this into all aspects of the pupils' experience at Blossom (Primary) and Upper House (Secondary); providing social skills input as part of their speech and language therapy provision, in order to 'break down' incidents and work out antecedents, consequences and the resulting feelings of all involved; in a safe and secure environment which aims to prevent such a situation from happening again.

However, it is often the case that this process may need to be repeated several times. This accumulative approach tends to be more meaningful to the individual than simply being 'punished' and is more effective in the long-term.

#### **In such situations it is vital to:**

- (a) Remain calm and clear.
- (b) Avoid using a lot of language and lengthy verbal explanations.
- (c) Ask for help from senior staff where necessary.
- (d) Use drawings, visual aids, modelling etc in order to explain exactly what happened in a given situation. It is important to try to help them to understand the sequence of events.
- (e) Provide short and clear examples of what each person could have done differently in order to avoid the situation and to deal with it more successfully in the future.
- (f) Always be aware of what the pupils that you are responsible for are doing, in order to aim to intervene before a situation becomes a problem. ***This is extremely important on the playground, but is also relevant during lessons, lunchtime and moving around the school (transition times) as this is often when difficulties may arise.***
- (g) Take a proactive role in the pupils' social interactions in order to continually model and reinforce positive and successful strategies and communication.
- (h) Ensure that you inform the Group Leader and Primary or Secondary Behaviour Coordinators. For significant incidents, also inform the Head of Behaviour/Deputy Head and Principal.

- (i) For significant incidents, record the information in the pupil log as well as in the class book.
- (j) Where the incident involves Safeguarding concerns, ensure that you also inform the CPO and CP team.

We have found that there is still a need for the pupils at BHS to have unkind, hurtful and anti-social behaviour labelled for them. This is why we list behaviours in the '*Not Sensible*' book under '*hurting*' and classify these into '*actions*' and '*words*'. The aim of this is to define what sort of behaviour is socially unacceptable, but in a calm, clear and directive manner. This also enables the pupil who has been 'hurt' to feel 'heard' and also to understand their role in a given situation, if appropriate.

Each Primary class should have a 'Not Sensible Book' with a page at the back for 'Hurting'. In Secondary this is called the 'Inappropriate Behaviour Book'. The same process applies, but behaviour is labelled and described in a more age-appropriate way (according to the individual's language levels).

#### **Rules for recording 'hurting':**

***FOR: Incidents involving 'hurting with words or actions' (our pupils tend to need to be continually reminded that we can 'hurt' another person with our words and gestures, as well as physically.***

- Any unkind or hurtful behaviour towards another pupil (and sometimes adult depending on the situation and that particular pupil's behaviour policy – *it is usually only applied to behaviour towards other pupils*) is recorded in the Not Sensible book under hurting besides their name. Try to record any mitigating circumstances or contextual notes if they occur, so that the Group Leader has a clearer idea of what happened if they were not present at the time.

*E.g. X called Y a 'stupid pig' and made Y feel very sad. X did say sorry afterwards.*

Or

*E.g. X laughed at Y when another child was unkind to him, which made Y feel upset. X said that she did not know that this would hurt Y's feelings.*

Or

*E.g. X and Y hurt Z when they chased him around the playground calling him names and then tripped him over. They did not stop when an adult asked them to.*

It is very important to choose the language that you use carefully, so as to reflect the age, maturity and language levels of the pupil/s involved.

- The Group Leader then checks the Not Sensible Book 'hurting page' /inappropriate behaviour book daily.
- A pupil who has been written into the Not sensible book /inappropriate behaviour book for 'hurting' or 'targeting' **THE SAME PERSON THREE TIMES** will then need to see **the Principal or Deputy**, who will talk through the incidents and decide upon the consequence. The Group Leader or other may also contact the speech and language therapist if this situation requires additional social support such as through group CT/LS sessions, individual sessions and/or social stories. The individuals involved may also be receiving input from the arts therapy team and it will be important to also liaise with those members of staff.
- It is very important to check with a member of staff who is very familiar with a given pupil, before telling him/her that you are going to write their name into the hurting book as different pupils respond differently. This should be done close to the time of the incident, although not until the pupil/s involved are calm and ready to reason through.
- Avoid using it as a threat e.g. "I might have to write that in the hurting book".....
- If this behaviour is continually targeting another pupil, the Principal or Deputy may decide with the Group Leader or other member of staff that the perpetrator's parents need to be contacted. For any physical aggression, then both the perpetrator and victim's parents should be called that same school day. It may be necessary to arrange for parents to come into school if the situation requires it. The Head of House should be kept informed of such incidents.
- On occasion it may be necessary to put in a place a rule and consequence relevant to a particular child/children, if it is felt that an individual is being regularly targeted and the perpetrator has been given considerable SLT and pastoral support in order to understand why this needs to stop. This might include working away from the group for the rest of the lesson (or longer, as is deemed appropriate to the situation), so that a clear boundary is established.
- Daily records are kept in the 'not sensible/inappropriate behaviour book' and more serious incidents and/or phone calls home/meetings should be recorded in the pupil logs.
- It is important that emphasis is also placed on the positive elements of an individuals or groups day e.g. through specific positive praise, the 'sensible book' or 'appropriate behaviour book', feedback to the Group Leader and Head of House, and in liaison with parents.

- As always, the rule of thumb is: if in doubt ask.
- Physical aggression: Incidents of physical aggression are closely monitored and parents are informed of such incidents via phone call, email or the planner/home-school book. The rule specific to Secondary is that if a pupil is significantly physically aggressive he or she will usually need to go home (depending upon the nature of the incident) and his or her parents will be warned. Sometimes parents request that pupils are internally withdrawn from lessons rather than stay at home. Pupils are regularly reminded of this rule by their Group Leaders. This consequence would be discussed with Joey Burgess or Vikki Langford. The variables involved would be considered and parents would be informed. It is important that the triggers for such situations are reduced or removed as much as possible through environmental factors and the high level of staff to pupil ratio throughout the school. If a Secondary pupil is sent home for physical aggression, this is recorded in the Sanctions Record.

#### **Key Stage Four 'Targeted Behaviour' Rule:**

As the pupils move into KS4, it is necessary to raise behavioural expectations and hence consequences. Therefore, a specific rule is in place for any targeted behaviour towards another pupil.

##### Rule:

This is defined as any behaviour which is deliberately targeted to upset, hurt, exclude or harass another pupil or pupils.

##### Consequence:

Any targeted behaviour should be addressed as soon as possible, depending on the context. The Secondary Behaviour Coordinator, Group Leader and Head of House should be informed. Also inform the Head of Behaviour/Deputy and Principal regarding significant or reoccurring incidents.

The individual/s responsible for the targeted behaviour will be withdrawn to work away from the group for two consecutive lessons. Details of the incident must be recorded in the pupil log.

The Head of House will also inform the parents of both the perpetrator and the victim.

## **Anti-Bullying Policy-Appendix B**

*(Taken from the 'behaviour management induction' training information)*

### **The 'Sensible' Book (Primary)**

This aims to balance against the 'Not sensible book' whereby any 'kind' behaviour towards other children and adults are recorded on a page at the back of the 'Sensible book' labelled 'kind things'. When the child has been written into the book three times for demonstrating kind behaviours he or she then goes to see Joey or Charlotte to be praised. He or she may also receive additional reinforcement from the Group Leader such as a certificate or writing to parents in the home-school book.

*E.g. Jane held the door open for a teacher and helped to carry her books.*

*Chris said that James was very good at art. This made James feel very happy.*

### **The 'Positive Comments' Book/Appropriate Behaviour Book**

Each class has their own book.

All positive behaviours, interactions and comments can be recorded into this book. It can be used to reinforce positive behaviour as well as achievements in lessons; academic, social, effort. He or she may also receive additional reinforcement from the Group Leader such as a certificate, writing to parents in the planner, a 'special mention' in assembly or a postcard home. This can also be used to support ASDAN targets and raise self-esteem.

*E.g. John tried very hard to ignore another child who was being unkind.*

*Pat has made very good progress whilst learning about fractions.*

These comments are often use for the weekly 'good things' display about each child.

### **Special Mentions**

This is specific to Secondary School. Teachers and therapists are asked to record any specific behaviours, efforts or achievements that a pupil has done throughout the term in a 'Special Mentions' document. This is then read out during the final assembly of term by the Principal, Joey Burgess.

Examples might be:

*Xxx has produced some effective creative writing in English.*

*Xxx has been able to take part in all of the Life Skills trips this term, showing growing respect and self-awareness.*