Bedford High School

A specialist Business and Enterprise College

To Care To Learn To Achieve

Anti-bullying Policy

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Document control

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Governing Committee	
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Review/Changes History

Version	Date	Description	Changes
4.0	Sept 2019	Full review, inclusion of 'hazing'	Y
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Introduction

Bullying is not tolerated at Bedford High School. The school recognises the extremely detrimental effects that bullying can have on young people's lives and takes the issue very seriously. Whatever the motivation of the bullying, whether related to prejudice, ignorance or a combination of both whatever its character; racial, sexual, religious, appearance related or other and whatever its manifestation; emotional, physical, online bullying or other means, it is unacceptable in our school community. The school seeks to provide a safe and happy learning environment and bullying is clearly counter productive to this. The school has an anti-bullying policy which forms part of its overall behaviour policy and is regularly reviewed. The policy has a disciplinary aspect but also a supportive and pastoral aspect for both perpetrators and victims.

Definition of bullying
The DfE's 'Safe to learn-Embedding Anti-Bullying work in schools' guidance:

'Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally'.

Forms of bullying/Bullying behaviour
Bullying can take many forms and include:

- **Online bullying:** e.g. instant messaging via Facebook, Instagram etc, chatrooms, blogs, message boards, email, gaming consoles, social network sites, video hosting sites, webcams etc.

- **Damage to property:** e.g. graffiti on personal property.

- **Hazing**. Ie the practice of rituals, challenges, and other activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group including a new fraternity, team, or club. Hazing is seen in many different types of social groups, including gangs, sports teams, schools, military units, and fraternities. The initiation rites can range from relatively benign pranks, to protracted patterns of behaviour that rise to the level of abuse or criminal misconduct. Hazing is often prohibited by law or prohibited by institutions such as colleges and universities because they may comprise either physical or psychological abuse. It may also include nudity or sexual assault.

- **Inciting others to bullying behaviour** e.g. encouraging students with special educational needs to bully others so that they receive the consequences rather than the instigator.

- **Literature:** e.g. distribution/possession of posters/leaflets, literature or material, e.g. pornography, wearing or display of offensive insignia.

- **Physical hurt/attack:** e.g. physical intimidation, mimicry, unwanted or inappropriate touching.

- **Psychological:** e.g. damage to reputation (sexual, denial of identity, gender / ethnicity), extortion of belongings, identity theft / impersonation, isolation / refusal to work / play with other student, revealing personal information, threats.

- **Verbal:** e.g. 'joke' making, mimicry / ridicule, name calling, spreading rumours, swearing, verbal abuse.

- **Victimisation after previous complaint** e.g. bullying due to either victims or bystanders speaking out as a result of a past bullying incident.

Types of bullying

Bullying can happen for a large number of reasons but the most common are listed below:

- **Homophobic** (any incident perceived by the alleged victim or any other person to be targeted around being lesbian, gay or bisexual. People do not have to be lesbian, gay or bisexual to suffer homophobic bullying).

- **Racist** (any incident perceived to be racist by the alleged victim or any other person. Incidents related to religion, culture or those involving students who identify as Gypsy/Roma traveller come under this heading too).

- **Related to disability, special educational needs or health** (behaviour perceived to be insulting to people with a range of medical, mobility, sensory, mental health or learning impairments. Incidents related to other health or Special Educational Needs come under this heading too).

- **Related to home circumstances** (e.g. young carers or children in care)

- **Sexist** (incidents perceived to be demeaning to a gender in general. If unchallenged this can eventually lead to domestic violence).

- **Sexual** (incidents include intrusive language, damage to sexual reputation, inappropriate touching and other behaviour perceived to involve unwanted sexual attention).

- **Transphobic** (incidents are those perceived to be insulting to someone's gender identity or to transgendered people).

Signs and Symptoms of bullying
Signs of bullying can be extremely variable and will very much depend on the individual but some of the more common signs include:

Physical signs e.g. Physical injuries, damaged clothing with no convincing explanation and general ill-health due to stress.

Emotional signs e.g. mood swings, apparent changes in personality, constant anxiety/nervousness, depression or tearfulness for no apparent reason, lack of confidence, negative self-image, hostility and defensiveness.

Behavioural signs e.g. withdrawn, frequent, unexplained absences, poor concentration, eating disorders, alcohol/substance misuse, evidence of self-harming and disruptive/challenging/bullying behaviour.

General e.g. frequently "lose" money/possessions, appears tired and lethargic, avoids entering/ leaving school with others.

Procedures / responding to bullying accusations and incidents (also see flowchart at end of policy)
In the event of bullying the school has the following procedures:
Investigate the situation by talking to all the:
• Children and young people involved.
• Witnesses
• Appropriate staff members

Record
In oral, written or picture form, the situation from
• Children and young people involved.
• Staff involved.
• Witnesses.

Respond to the child or young person who is bullied, hurt or upset by:
• Actively listening to their concerns.
• Offering support and strategies to deal with unacceptable behaviour.
• Protecting the child and ensuring their safety as and when necessary.
• Involving parents.
• Involving external agencies to support child as appropriate.

Respond to the child or young person who acted in a bullying way by:
• Ensuring that he/she recognises his/her behaviour and how it affects others.
• Applying appropriate sanctions.
• Guiding, supporting, advising and offering strategies to change behaviour.
• Encouraging responsibility is taken for wrong actions and helping them to actively make amends.
• Involving parents;
• Involving external agencies when necessary.

Respond to the situation and prevent other situations by providing a foundation for
children and young people to explore issues through the curriculum.
Review the situation with:
• Children or young people involved.
• Parents and others where appropriate.

Incidents of bullying with appropriate outcome, actions and sanctions / support are recorded using the online behaviour system which is regularly checked by staff.

Appropriate sanctions are applied in appropriate proportion to the event. These include detentions, time in Inclusion, letters of apology, restorative justice work. In the event of all other avenues being exhausted or in particularly serious cases this may lead to exclusion in line with the DfE Revised Guidance of September 2007, Improving Behaviour and Attendance: Guidance on Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units, (Section 17) states:

"In cases where a head teacher has permanently excluded a pupil for persistent and defiant misbehaviour (which would include racist or homophobic bullying)….the Secretary of State would not normally expect the

governors' Discipline Committee or an Independent Appeal Panel to reinstate the pupil."

However, governors would need to examine the evidence that a wide range of strategies had been tried and failed to affect a positive change in the bullying behaviour.

Bullying of staff by students, parent/carers or other staff
An incident of this nature would be reported to the headteacher, investigated and appropriate staff suffering from or concerned about bullying can also contact their trade union or professional association for support and advice.

Investigations
The school always seeks to deal with bullying in a robust way, and with sensitivity to the victim. Parents often worry about bullying and can feel 'out of the loop' when their children reach secondary school so the school policy is one of being as open as possible with all stakeholders. When a first bullying incident is reported, the protocol will always be:
1. Interview the victim, assure them that you will help them
2. Contact the victim's family to inform them that an allegation has been made and it is being investigated
3. Interview the alleged perpetrator, impressing on them that damage has been done and they may in part or in whole be responsible for that damage
4. Interview any witnesses
5. Update the families concerned
6. Put in place mediation between victim and perpetrator, overseen by a skilled pastoral colleague

If clear fault is present on one side, the student will receive a sanction. If there is no clear fault, the relationship will be repaired through mediation alone. If there are repeated incidents, either the process is repeated (if no fault) or sanctions are escalated (if clear fault identified), up to a possible permanent exclusion in extreme cases.

Incidents on Social Media
While most incidents of poor behaviour between peers occurs off site, the school recognises that communication is usually confined between peers at the same school and 'fall out' is often seen in school. This can undermine learning and students' ability to feel happy or safe at school. Where a student or parent complains of social media abuse, this will be investigated, and the same process followed. However, the school will also involve parents and support them in fulfilling their role in guiding their child around safer internet use.

NB: Most social media sites (Facebook, Messenger, SnapChat, Instagram, TikTok etc) are accessed by apps on mobile phones and providers insist that users should be 13 or over. What's App has a user age of >18. These rules are often overlooked by younger students and this can easily lead problems between peers. As a first action, the school will always advise any parent of an underage child to remove social media until they are old enough.

Incidents out of school
School staff members have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises. Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and

Inspections Act 2006 say that a school's disciplinary powers can be used to address pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff, but only if it would be reasonable for the school to regulate pupils' behaviour in those circumstances. This may include 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. Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The headteacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

Involving parents
The parents of the involved parties will be kept informed of investigations and the possible sanctions imposed. Parents will be welcomed into school to discuss the situation with the Learning Manager, PGO and / or a senior member of staff, as appropriate.

Anti-Bullying Complaints
In the first instance, parent/carer should contact their child's Learning Manager. This gives parents/carers an opportunity to voice their concerns and gain a resolution early in the process rather than it escalating to more formal concerns.

Strategies to Reduce Bullying
The school has adopted a range of strategies to prevent and reduce bullying, to raise awareness of bullying and support victims and those displaying bullying behaviour including:

- The support group approach/No Blame Approach
- Peer mediation
- Peer counselling
- Buddy systems
- PSHE programme
- Self esteem workshops
- Restorative approaches
- Schemes of work in subject areas
- Encouraging students to take responsibility for themselves and others
- Providing opportunities for students to discuss bullying and to contribute towards the school action on bullying during:
  - Citizenship
  - Form Time
  - PSHE
  - Assemblies
  - School council
  - Theatre groups
  - Anti-Bullying Week

Staff should question inappropriate behaviour and reinforce expected behaviour:-

- When an incident occurs
- At a specific time e.g. form period, assemblies
- Through curriculum studies e.g. Citizenship, Expressive Arts, English etc. Curriculum studies should also include programmes

that build self-esteem, self-confidence and responsible assertiveness

Staff should provide support and protection for any victim of bullying:-

- Identify signals – lateness, 'illness', lost money etc
- Interventions – treat seriously and support.
- Work out coping strategies and involve the support and inclusion of members of staff

<mark>Useful contacts</mark>
<mark>For a full list of contacts regarding all areas of bullying mentioned in this policy, go to the DfE's guidance 'Preventing & Tackling Bullying'</mark>

<mark>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying</mark>