

Bedales Senior School Anti-Bullying Policy (Student)

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Bedales School Anti-Bullying Policy (Student)

THE BEDALES COMMUNITY AND THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF ITS MEMBERS

The founding rules of the School were set out to ensure that 'everyone must try to carry out whatever has been found necessary or helpful for preserving order and promoting the health and wellbeing of all concerned'.

Self-respect and respect for others are fundamental to the community at Bedales. It follows from this that any behaviour which damages respect, replacing it with fear, will not be tolerated. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our students can develop their potential. Students and staff should treat one another with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed but orderly and safe atmosphere. All students should care for and support each other. Our strong mixed age culture helps encourage this concern for one another.

Bullying, harassment and victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. Anyone behaving as a bully is made aware of it and is required to stop.

Students are encouraged to tell any member of staff if they are being bullied. This is particularly important in our boarding setting. Houseparents and other members of the House team support students to adapt to living 'on Flat'. Students with English as an Additional Language also have the support of their EAL teachers who, in one-to-one teaching situations, may be made aware of a student's concerns.

We treat all our students and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the School. We investigate all accusations of bullying, whether on or off the School premises, including cyber-bullying.

If a student believes they or someone-else is a target of bullying or any behaviour that is making them unhappy at school or outside school, intervene if you can, show the target you care and call out the behaviour and tell a trusted adult as soon as possible so it can be stopped. **It is never acceptable for a student or adult to do nothing.**

Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting the School in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. Acceptance of this Policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions. If you are concerned that your child is being bullied or is bullying, please contact the appropriate Houseparents or the Deputy Head Pastoral immediately so that the situation can be investigated and resolved.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING¹

- 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 and can include:
 - physical assault
 - teasing
 - making threats
 - name calling

¹

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf

- cyberbullying - bullying via mobile phone or online (for example email, social networks and instant messenger)
- Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities or Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND). It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

(DfE July 2024)

Bullying often starts with apparently trivial events such as so-called 'banter', teasing and name calling. There is a difference between jokes shared equally between friends and bullying, which is when one person or group exerts more power than another, or makes them feel uncomfortable. Such abuses of power, if left unchallenged, can lead to more serious forms of abuse, such as domestic violence, racial attacks, sexual offences and self-harm or suicide.

It can be inflicted on a student by another student or an adult.

Cyber-bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying which can happen 24/7, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

To help prevent cyber-bullying, the School:

- Expects all students to adhere to its Student Acceptable Use Agreement for the safe use of technology. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our ICT Department monitors students' use and reports misuse by staff or students to the DSL.
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet
- Issues all students with their own personal School email address
- Adheres to the BECTA guidelines regarding E-teaching and the internet
- Offers guidance on online safety and cyber-bullying in Life Skills (PSHE) lessons
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe
- Does not allow the use of cameras, including on mobile phones, in washing and changing areas
- Does not allow images and videos to be taken of another person without their permission
- Does not allow images to be taken of students which may be viewed as indecent
- Keeps parents informed of current advice about cyber-bullying and online safety via the weekly bulletin, parent workshops and emails

THE STUDENT TARGET

Any student may be bullied, but bullying often occurs if a student has been identified, rightly or wrongly, as in some way vulnerable, different, has protected characteristics or is inclined to spend more time on their own.

Students living away from home are particularly vulnerable to bullying and abuse by their peers.

The damage inflicted by bullying can often be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to students, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes depression and self-harm.

Students are often held back from telling anyone about their experience either by threats or by a feeling that nothing can change their situation.

Parents, carers and agencies need to be alert to any ongoing or changes in behaviour such as refusing to attend School or a particular place or activity, becoming anxious in public places and crowds and becoming withdrawn and isolated.

Signs of bullying

Staff, parents and students should be alert to ongoing or changes in behaviour that may indicate that a student is being bullied. These may include:

- Unwillingness to return to School or go to a particular activity or lesson
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Diminished levels of self confidence
- Frequent visits to the Health Centre with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Being alone and separate from peers/other students
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiences nightmares
- Talking of suicide or running away

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying, should be investigated by parents and teachers and addressed.

A STUDENT WHO EXHIBITS BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Students who bully have often been bullied themselves and suffered considerable disruption in their own lives. The bullying behaviour may occur because the student is unhappy, jealous or lacking in confidence. Work with students who bully should recognise that they are likely to have significant needs themselves.

PRINCIPLES FOR PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS OF BULLYING BY STUDENTS

All members of the community should show through actions and words that bullying is not acceptable; it is never the victim's fault that they are bullied. Students should feel confident to address issues and incidents of bullying.

It is important that we all try to be conscious of our behaviour, putting ourselves in the other person's shoes, so that we are aware of effects which may have been unintentional on our part.

Common excuses made about bullying include:

- It is only a bit of harmless fun
- It is all part of growing up
- Students just have to put up with it
- Adults getting involved make it worse

We:

- do not tolerate instances of minor bullying or misbehaviour of any kind – staff and students

have a responsibility to create a calm and respectful environment throughout the School and to stop any incidents which appear inappropriate at the earliest sign

- never ignore victims of bullying and always show an interest/concern
 - publicly acknowledge the bullied student's distress
 - organise group discussions which allow students to work together to identify their own problems, the causes and the solutions, usually with members of House teams and other pastoral staff

When addressing bullying behaviour by another student, we avoid accusations, threats or any responses that will lead to the student being uncooperative, and silent.

The following techniques are advisable when a member of staff is speaking with anyone involved in possible bullying, whether bystander(s), aggressor(s) or target(s): listen patiently and attentively to encourage, clarify, restate, reflect and summarise what is said; investigate the situation sensitively and patiently; see the student's side, acknowledging and allowing them to express their feelings; establish what help is being asked for and offer practical and realistic help.

The focus is on the bullying behaviour rather than the student and where possible the reasons for the behaviour are explored and dealt with. A clear explanation of the extent of the upset the bullying has caused should be given and encouragement to see the bullied student's points of view and apologise.

The voice of the student experiencing the bullying behaviour is key and staff will work hard to be guided by the student while outlining proposed next steps to best support them.

ADVICE FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE EXPERIENCING BULLYING OR KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS

Whether the bullying concern relates to an adult or a student, we hope that students who feel they are being bullied will tell a trusted adult so that the matter can be resolved as soon as possible. They could also tell a trusted friend, one of the student peer listeners, a parent, any member of staff, or the Counsellor/Independent Listener, as well as using the anonymous reporting tool 'Whisper'.

Students who know that someone is being bullied should act immediately to stop it. Students are responsible for each other's welfare and can be very effective in stopping bullying behaviour and supporting the target(s) as well as aggressors.

In addition to any help a student feels able to give, they should tell a trusted adult as soon as possible, so that the best way of stopping the bullying can be quickly found and the person being bullied can get support and feel safe. Whilst students may be concerned about telling an adult about bullying or think it may make things worse, they must do so as soon as possible to ensure that those involved can be supported so that it stops.

What to do if you are concerned that your behaviour may be causing distress to others

Talk about your concerns with your parents/guardians, Houseparents or another trusted adult or peer. They can advise you as to how you could change your behaviour, if needed. You could also seek anonymous advice online or on the phone – contact details are available in Houses or in the Student House Handbooks.

STAFF PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH REPORTED BULLYING

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as 'banter' or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. Early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that

is and isn't acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating. Staff should always prevent or stop low level disruption and offensive language between members of the School community.

The member of staff who witnesses possible bullying or concerning behaviour of any kind between students, or the person to whom it is reported should immediately:

- 1) stop the behaviour if it is still going on, either by yourself or by seeking assistance
- 2) 'call out' any inappropriate behaviour in a calm way that shows your disapproval, reassure and support the students involved (whether actively or as bystanders)
- 3) take the names of any students involved
- 4) seek medical assistance if required
- 5) confiscate any items believed to be associated with the behaviour (such as electronic devices or weapons)
- 6) Any confiscated items are to be given to 'On-Call' with relevant details so these can be searched, if needed, in accordance with the School's Search Policy.
- 7) if you believe you have witnessed a bullying incident or violence, call the On-Call Senior Team for support and get a message to Houseparents (Senior Team can get a message to them easily, or Reception).
- 8) Students should then be separated and asked to either say (this should be written down by the staff member) or write a statement of what they have experienced/witnessed (this can be done by those listed below but the students must be taken to a place where this can happen and not be sent on their way). See advice above about how best to respond to gain the most intervention of speaking with those involved.
- 9) If the incident is a bullying concern, please alert the Deputy Head Pastoral and DSL within 24 hours via CPOMS.
- 10) Houseparents monitor iSAMS for patterns and any concerns are shared at weekly pastoral meetings with the Deputy Head Pastoral.

The Deputy Head Pastoral or Assistant Head Pastoral and pastoral staff involved will either meet to agree next steps or, if the situation is clear, agree via email or phone what actions should be taken to conclude the investigation and action plan. The following actions will be taken as appropriate:

Pastoral staff investigating the bullying concern should do the following as soon as possible (ideally within one school day):

- 1) inform parents of any apparent aggressors and targets about the matter
- 2) tell parents what they are going to do and when the investigation is likely to be concluded
- 3) ask parents if they would like the police notified if the incident may involve physical violence or discrimination
- 4) inform the DSL or deputy if parents want police involvement, who will inform the police on the same day and adhere to their advice before the investigation continues
- 5) separate apparent aggressors from targets, including overnight and in lessons, until the investigation is concluded, if appropriate and practical to do so
- 6) ensure all involved have been separated and either said (and this has been written up by a staff member) or written an account of what happened
- 7) allow any students who are not implicated following the initial investigation to return to normal activities
- 8) advise the alleged target(s) not to take revenge or communicate broadly about the matter and give them strategies to deal with the situation, such as being with trusted others, identifying a safe place or places to go to at any time, arranging a call with parents
- 9) advise the alleged aggressor not to communicate with others (apart from pastoral staff and parents), agree where they may go around School and elsewhere and establish if there are any discriminatory beliefs underlining alleged actions
- 10) Contact the Deputy Head Pastoral, or Assistant Head Pastoral, providing the accounts, to

agree next steps.

- 11) Upload all information (including scanning and uploading handwritten notes, images or videos) to CPOMS with linked students. The record should include any follow up action, such as sanctions, restorative justice and communication with parents. The Deputy Head Pastoral (or Assistant Head Pastoral) and pastoral staff involved will either meet to agree next steps or, if the situation is clear, agree via email or phone what actions should be taken to conclude the investigation and action plan.

The following actions will be taken as appropriate.

- 1) If bullying behaviour is identified then, after any necessary further interviews with other pastoral staff to clarify any matters outstanding, the following will happen on the day or day after the conclusion of the investigation (involving the Deputy Head Pastoral/Assistant Head Pastoral as required):
- 2) Agreement of an appropriate sanction by the pastoral staff and Deputy Head Pastoral/Assistant Head Pastoral, which may range from suspension pending consideration of the place in the School to a gating or community service
- 3) Agreement on any actions to support all involved (a staff mediated apology, safe places identified, agreed actions for the students if they find themselves in a similar situation again, peer mentoring, group discussion, counselling)
- 4) Houseparents will explain to the aggressor(s) why their behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress and any actions and support for the aggressor and phone parents to explain the outcome of the investigation and any actions. Parental support will be sought.
- 5) Houseparents will meet with target(s) and explain the result of the investigation and agree what support and monitoring will happen. Parents will be contacted with this information and their support sought.
- 6) Houseparents of all parties to organise a mediated apology meeting on the day or day after the conclusion of the investigation if appropriate
- 7) A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place
- 8) The Deputy Head Pastoral, in consultation with Houseparents, will decide if the nature of bullying meets the threshold to report to external agencies – i.e. is or may be criminal, discrimination or a child protection concern. Advice is sought from the Local Authority if needed.
- 9) Bullying will be treated as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to the suspect that the child is suffering or likely to suffer, significant harm'. In such cases, the School's procedures will be followed, as set out

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH ALLEGED BULLYING BY A MEMBER OF STAFF

Any allegation must be shared immediately with the Head who will seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The School's Reasonable Force Policy (which is included in the Staff Code of Conduct) should be strictly adhered to.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH ALLEGED BULLYING BY SOMEONE FROM OUTSIDE SCHOOL

The Deputy Head Pastoral should be informed and an action plan will be agreed. This will normally entail speaking with any students or staff who may be involved, contacting parents and, where appropriate, police. Pastoral support will be offered to any students involved.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

- Incidents that take place involving our students will be investigated by the School, no matter when and where they occur.
- Bullying incidents are logged confidentially on CPOMS and patterns/repeated behaviour monitored in weekly pastoral meetings.
- All staff are trained in safeguarding and are required to intervene immediately to stop so-called

'banter', where it is possible that one or more person may not feel happy, due to bullying behaviour or physical violence or insults. All staff in regular contact with students are required to do online anti-bullying training, which is refreshed when any statutory changes are made. In addition, staff are advised by means of the termly safeguarding newsletter and minutes from staff meetings or the Safeguarding Committee when appropriate.

- There are staff on Duty at all times. They encourage and model good behaviour, as set out in the staff code of conduct, and are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour.
- We use appropriate assemblies to explain the School policy on bullying. Our Wellbeing programme is structured to give students an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the School. The programme is structured to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other.
- Other lessons highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing social skills.
- Positive strategies and ways to combat social isolation and loneliness are led by Houseparents and with a strong student voice.
- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team who work with the Deputy Head Pastoral and are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and are alert to possible signs of bullying.
- Our pastoral team gives support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies.
- Our trained School Counsellors are an important part of our pastoral support service, providing specialist skills of assessment and counselling. They are available to give advice and counselling support to students who can refer themselves to them when they have social, emotional or behavioural concerns. On occasion, a member of our pastoral team may refer a student to them. The counselling service is confidential, unless there are safeguarding concerns, in which case the School's Child Protection Policy will be adhered to.
- In Boarding Houses, teams of Tutors support the Houseparents and the House Assistants, who act *in loco parentis*. The informal House environment is important in reinforcing a student's standards and values, providing the opportunity for friendly, informal discussion of matters of concern to the individual student outside the formal classroom. We encourage close contact between the Houseparents and parents/guardians and always make contact if we are worried about a student's wellbeing.
- We display advice in Boarding and Day Houses and on the intranet, including the Student House Handbook, where students can seek help, including details of confidential help lines and web sites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline, Kidscape, Get Connected, Samaritans.
- All students have access to a telephone helpline, enabling them to call for support in private.
- Feedback from students, staff, parents and guardians is used to review and improve the effectiveness of our anti-bullying measures.

NB: All School Policies are available to staff and students and can be found here:

[Whole School Policies - Whole School Policies Home \(sharepoint.com\)](#)