

Policy: Anti-bullying Policy

Approval: Headteacher

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Next review: Annual



**CHELTENHAM
BOURNSIDE
SCHOOL**

Policies

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. What is bullying?	1
3. Dealing with bullying	3
4. Links to other policies	4

1. Introduction

Cheltenham Bournside School is dedicated to ensuring that our school environment supports the learning and the wellbeing of students and staff through a strong sense of community. All members of the school community have the right to feel respected, valued and safe. Bournside's vision of empowering lives through learning can only be achieved in a safe, secure and supportive environment.

Bournside is fundamentally opposed to bullying in all of its forms. It entirely conflicts with the values and principles we work and live by. We aim to raise the profile of the impact that bullying has on the lives of children and young people through our curriculum, and work to create a climate in which no member of our community tolerates bullying.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all members of the governing body, staff, students, and parents/carers understand what bullying is, how it can affect individuals and what to do if bullying happens.

2. What is bullying?

There is no legal definition of bullying. However, the Department for Education defines it as behaviour that is:

- repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally
- often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation

At Cheltenham Bournside School we adopt the Anti-Bullying Alliance definition of bullying which is: *'The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online'* and use the mnemonic STOP - Several Times On Purpose, to help identify and respond to bullying behaviour.

It is important that bullying is not confused with the usual childhood/teenage squabbles and arguments where individuals "fall out" with one another or with one off acts of unkindness which, although unacceptable, are not persistent and therefore not "bullying".

Bullying can take many forms and can be:

- Emotional – including being unfriendly or unkind, behaviour or actions that exclude people, tormenting behaviour (e.g. hiding books, damaging possessions or threatening gestures).
- Verbal – including name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing because of appearance etc.
- Physical – including pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence. Physically intimidating someone or using unwanted physical contact towards someone.
- Cyber – including all areas of internet use, including and not limited to e-mail, text, social media to write or say hurtful things about someone online or share unpleasant things on groups chats and social media platforms.
- Racist – including racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- Religion or beliefs – including religious taunts.
- Sexual – including unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive/suggestive comments or gestures.

- Gender and gender identity
- Sexual orientation – including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic prejudice
- SEND - including learning or physical disabilities.
- Home circumstance – targeting individuals who are looked after children or because of a particular home circumstance.

No form of bullying will be tolerated and all incidents will be taken seriously.

Why is it important to act against bullying?

Bullying can hurt both physically and mentally. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Students, parents/carers and staff should be aware of the warning signs and symptoms that through changes in behaviour may highlight that someone is being bullied or is bullying.

The signs that someone is being bullied can take many forms and it maybe that some of these are observed at home or school or both. It may be that someone:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- does not want to go to school by public/school transport
- insists on being driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school after previously enjoying being part of the school community
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in schoolwork
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions that are damaged or unexpectedly go missing
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually 'lost'
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home hungry (lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying/ harassing other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous and jumpy when a text message or social media alert is received
- becomes withdrawn and is over reliant on their mobile device
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated. Other signs not listed here may also manifest themselves.

Any child in any setting can be bullied. It is therefore vital to understand why the bullying started in the first instance and create a culture where it is not accepted. The school will respond to all allegations of bullying, working together with parents/carers to find a positive

outcome for all parties concerned. If your child is being bullied it can be incredibly upsetting, and an emotional response can be to blame the school, but please remember the best way to deal with an incident of bullying is to work together.

3. Dealing with bullying

Reporting incidents of bullying:

Students should report all incidents of bullying either directly to any member of staff, and/or through the Anti-Bullying Ambassadors (ABA). The ABAs are student ambassadors who are trained to support students who are unfortunate enough to encounter bullying. An ABA can be a person who will listen, offer advice or be a voice for students who may not be confident enough to use their own. They do not replace the teacher and will always encourage students to tell an adult. ABAs meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team, and discuss concerns, improve their training and to plan Anti-Bullying events at Cheltenham Bournside School. Students can also use our 'It's Ok not to be Ok' portal that is available on the home SharePoint screen to report any concerns. This is an electronic referral site that is monitored daily by our Safeguarding and Welfare team.

If a parent/carer wishes to report an incident of bullying they should contact their child's tutor or Head of House.

If bullying is reported to the school, the incident will be taken seriously and dealt with as quickly as possible. Heads of House, will coordinate and investigation of the incident by interviewing all concerned and work to establish the facts. They will record the outcomes on the files of those students involved and on our safeguarding log.

Form tutors and subject staff will be kept informed and asked to monitor the behaviour of the students concerned in lessons and around the school.

Parents/carers will be kept informed throughout and are discouraged from taking matters into their own hands and should not approach a suspected 'bully' or their family. They should always work with the school to resolve matters. Each incident will be unique. Therefore, it is important that the school is given the opportunity to tailor a strategy to address the situation and to support the bullied student according to the particular incident/s.

Responding to incidents of bullying:

Students who are victims of bullying will be offered the opportunity to discuss their experience with their form tutor or another appropriate member of staff. They will have access to our House Welfare team, counselling (when appropriate) or our peer mentoring programme.

In agreement with all parties involved there will be an opportunity to rebuild relationships, involving a discussion mediated by a member of staff as a way of resolving conflict. This use of 'restorative practice' is a way of working to resolve conflict that puts the focus on repairing the harm that has been done.

For any potential 'bully' or student demonstrating bullying behaviour it will be made clear that it will not be tolerated through the use of sanctions corresponding to our Ladder of Consequences (see Behaviour Policy here). These may include:

- Official warning to cease offending
- Exclusion from certain areas of the school premises or certain activities
- Detentions
- Isolation
- Referral to senior staff and/or external agencies
- Internal fixed term exclusion
- External fixed term or permanent exclusion.

Any child the demonstrates repeated bullying type behavior will be placed on an Anti-bullying Action plan with the Head of House and receive and escalated sanction.

Preventing incidents of bullying:

As a school we take bullying seriously. We use a range of proactive strategies to prevent bullying.

These include:

- Effective school leadership that promotes an open anti-bullying culture
- Use of curriculum opportunities, in particular tutor periods and Education for life classes where issues of diversity are discussed and anti-bullying messages are drawn out.
- Use of opportunities throughout the House tutoring and Assembly calendar and at certain times of the school day to raise awareness of the negative consequences of bullying
- Taking part in the National Anti-Bullying Week in November
- Pupil surveys
- House events
- Peer mentoring and ABA schemes.
- Review of general and specific staff induction and continuing professional development to ensure staff training reflects the anti-bullying policy and practice of the school.

Confidentiality

Staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality if approached by a student for help. Staff must make this clear to students. Safeguarding procedures must be followed at all times when any disclosures are made. An underlying principle in supporting students in our school is that all children are listened to sensitively and objectively and all incidences of alleged bullying will be taken seriously.

4. Links to other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- [Behaviour Policy](#)
- [E-safety and Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy.](#)