

FAQs

1. What is bullying?

Bournside students have chosen to adopt the Anti-Bullying Alliance definition of bullying which is:

'the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or through cyberspace.'

A useful mnemonic for identifying bullying is '**STOP**'- **S**everal **T**imes **O**n **P**urpose.

2. I think my child is being bullied. What are the signs?

Bullying can hurt both physically and mentally. Students, parents and staff should be aware of the warning signs and a symptom through changes in behaviour that may highlight someone is being bullied.

This can take many forms (and this list is not definitive):

- 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- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence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 frightened to say what's wrong
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous and jumpy when a text message is received
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

3. Who do I contact if my child is showing signs of unusual behaviour and I suspect that they are being bullied. What is the first point of contact?

The first point of contact is your child's tutor, their contact details are on the website.

4. What happens after I report an incident of bullying? (process/steps/outcomes)

If an allegation of bullying does arise students, staff, parents and carers should feel assured that the school will:

- Take all reported incidents seriously
- Act as quickly as possible to establish the facts
- Record and report the incident carefully through our Pastoral Management system (PAM)
- Provide support and reassurance to the victim through well-established pastoral systems and the work of Anti-Bullying Ambassadors
- Support the victim
- Make it clear to students displaying bullying behaviour that it will not be tolerated
- Use sanctions that complement our school Ladder of Consequences
- Communicate effectively with the parents or carers of all of students involved.

5. What support will you give my child after they have been bullied?

The level and type of support given to your child after an incidence of bullying, will depend on the individual circumstances and is generally led by what your child wants and feels comfortable with. Please contact your child's tutor or Head of Year if you feel further support is needed.

6. What happens if my child has been identified as using bullying behaviour? (process/steps/outcomes)

The same initial process as above, after sanctions have been applied, staff will work with a student displaying bullying behaviour to try to prevent a repetition of such behaviour.

7. What do I do if I suspect my child is using bullying behaviour?

The first step is to contact your child's tutor; their contact details are on the website. They will advise you on what additional support is available for your child.

8. Are staff adequately trained to deal with bullying issues?

All staff are trained annually in how to deal with bullying issues. Individual staff are also supported by the student support and wider pastoral team. This means that when an incidence of bullying is reported there is a strong network of professionals able to respond to it.

9. What support is there for parents who don't know how to support their child?

There is lots of support available both within school and through external contacts. Your child's tutor, will advise you and help you to access the right support for you and your child.

10. What should I do if my child refuses to go to school because of being bullied?

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school. If there is a problem with bullying that is making your child reluctant to attend school, please contact the school and discuss this. There is support available and is important to work with the school to ensure that your child maintains access to their education. Absence from school in these circumstances will not be authorised.

11. Can I report bullying anonymously?

You can, but it is less helpful when done this way, particularly if it does not help us to identify and support potential victims of bullying. It can also make investigating incidents very difficult.

12. If an incident occurs out of school, can I raise it in school?

Yes. If the bullying involves students from other schools, we will need to pass on this information to the other school. We will continue to support the students at this school.

13. How can we guaranteed that we won't make it worse by reporting it?

There can unfortunately be no guarantees, that initially after reporting an incident there will not be some further issues. As a school, we follow our ladder of consequences consistently and rigorously and further incidences do attract further sanctions. Experience tells us that reporting an incident is far more effective at stopping bullying, than suffering in silence. By reporting it, staff are made aware of the issues and can be alert to them and the student experiencing bullying can be supported.

14. Is teaching children resilience and confidence part of the ambassador programme?

Yes, it is. It is also part of the wider PSCHEE programme. Parents can support their children in gaining confidence and resilience, by encouraging them to take part in extracurricular and group activities. There are lots on offer both through the school and external to the school.

15. How are you educating pupils about appropriate use of social media?

This is also done through PSCHEE, tutor time, assemblies, IT and the other curriculum subjects. There is also a continual dialogue with students over the ever changing world of social media and how it can be used more positively.

16. What do I do if I believe my child has been affected by cyber bullying?

Initially it is very important that you report any type of bullying. There is the E-Safety and Information Technology – Acceptable Use Policy, which offers additional guidance within school on this. The DFES has also published a useful guidance for parents document:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444865/Advice_for_parents_on_cyberbullying.pdf