

Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Behaviour Policy
- Expulsion Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

and the following guidance:

- Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022
- Preventing and tackling bullying July 2017
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges 2017

Aims and Objectives

At Bedford Modern School, our community is based upon respect, good manners and fair play. 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 his/her full potential. We expect our students to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed but orderly atmosphere. All students should care for and support each other.

Bedford Modern School prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting Bedford Modern 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. This policy is available to parents/guardians of students and prospective students on our website and on request. It is also available and known to staff.

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated (See Appendix A). We treat all of our students and their parents/guardians fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the School. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable. This policy applies to all students in the School.

Definition of Bullying

"Bullying may be defined as: *Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally*".

Bullying is the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person by physical (including sexual), verbal (including email, social media and text messages), and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory.

Bullying may involve actions or comments that are related to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, inappropriate sexual behaviour, sexual orientation or other physical attributes

(such as hair colour or body shape). Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve everyone - students, staff and parents/guardians.

Bullying can be so serious that it causes psychological damage, eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide, and whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

Cyber-Bullying – Definition

Cyber-Bullying is any form of bullying which takes place online or through smartphones and tablets.

For more information see below

<https://www.familylives.org.uk/search?q=cyberbullying>
<https://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/bullying/cyberbullying/what-to-do-if-you-re-being-bullied-on-a-social-network>
https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/11_13/Need-advice/Cyberbullying/

What is Cyber-Bullying?

The 8 Types of Cyber-Bullying...

The 8 different types of cyber-bullying are listed below:

Flaming: Online fights usually through emails, instant messaging or chat rooms where angry and rude comments are exchanged.

Denigration: Putting mean online messages through email, instant messaging, chat rooms, or websites set up to make fun of someone.

Exclusion: Intentionally leaving someone out of a group such as instant messaging, friend sites, or other online group activities.

Outing: Sharing secrets about someone online including private information, pictures, and videos.

Trickery: Tricking someone into revealing personal information then sharing it with others.

Impersonation: Pretending to be someone else when sending or posting mean or false messages online.

Harassment: Repeatedly sending malicious messages to someone online.

Cyber stalking: Continuously harassing and denigration including threats of physical harm

The School's Response to Bullying and Cyber-Bullying

At Bedford Modern School, we always treat bullying, including allegations of bullying, very seriously. This complements the School's policy on equal opportunities, as well as its social and moral principles.

Signs of Bullying

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a student is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to school
- 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
- Changes to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Diminished levels of self confidence
- Frequent visits to the Nurses' Department with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- 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/guardians and teachers.

Preventative Measures

'Where reference is made to the Deputy Head Pastoral this should also be taken to mean Deputy Head (Pastoral) (Junior School) where this is clearly more relevant or appropriate'.

We take the following preventative measures in order to ensure that bullying does not become a problem which is associated with Bedford Modern School:

- All new students are briefed thoroughly on the school's expected standards of behaviour. They are told what to do if they encounter bullying. Any student who reports bullying will be supported.
- All new members of staff are given guidance on the school's anti-bullying policy and in how to react to allegations of bullying in their first weeks at Bedford Modern School. They are required to read the School's policy as part of their induction. We use appropriate assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying. Our PSHE 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, particularly RS, English and Drama, 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.
- All our students are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place in line. For youngest Junior School students there are signs encouraging them to report any incidents of bullying displayed around the building.
- All reported incidents are recorded on CPOMs and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents. Records of any incidents are kept securely passed on to the Deputy Head Pastoral in order that patterns of behaviour can be identified and monitored.
- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team of Form Tutors, Heads of Year, Assistant Heads of Year, Senior Tutors and other Pastoral staff who will deal with any incidents as an immediate priority and are always 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 confidential 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.
- Staff are always on duty at times when students are not in class and patrol the school site, including areas where bullying might occur. They are alert to inappropriate language or behaviour.
- Our Nurses' Department displays advice on where students can seek help, including details of confidential help lines and web sites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline.
- We provide training to our Head Boy/Girl and their team of Senior Monitors, Monitors & House Captains which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable students.
- We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the school, involving our students.
- We welcome feedback from parents/guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.

Cyber-Bullying – Preventative Measures

In addition to the preventative measures described above, Bedford Modern School:

- Expects all students to adhere to its charter for the safe use of the internet. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department monitors students' use.
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- Issues all students with their own personal school email address.
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyber-bullying in PSHE lessons, assemblies and through visiting speakers which covers: sharing personal information, sending of inappropriate pictures of oneself, legal repercussions of cyber-bullying and technical issues about traceability and logging of texts and emails.
- Allows students to connect their own devices to the BMS Wi-Fi network, which is also filtered and usage logged.
- Tells its students not to respond to abusive emails, text messages or telephone calls and advises them to keep copies of any offensive material.
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- States that the use of cameras on mobile phones is not allowed without the express permission of any and every person that might appear in the resulting 'picture/video'. They must not be used in any way that might humiliate, demean or offend anyone.
- Students and/or parents/guardians who do not wish their photograph to be published may opt out.
- Unofficial photographing or recording of student images is not permitted.
- Keeps up a dialogue with parents/guardians about emerging technologies their child might be using via letters and publications.
- Ensures parents/guardians know what steps to take if they suspect their child is being cyber-bullied or is bullying someone else.

Procedures for Dealing with Reported Bullying

If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedures are adopted:

Senior School

- The member of staff to whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the students involved and reinforce that school take bullying very seriously.
- He/she will inform an appropriate member of the pastoral team as soon as possible.
- The alleged bully, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually and records will be made of the account of events.
- A decision will be made about appropriate next steps in order to resolve the issue. These may involve
 - resolution meetings between students;
 - further investigations which lead to more serious sanctions;
 - a discussion by the Safeguarding Team.
- Once the next step is agreed support will be offered to all involved and a monitoring review strategy put in place.
- If it is decided that the next step would be disciplinary proceedings appropriate disciplinary sanctions will be applied with reference to the following documents – the Bedford Modern School Senior School Behaviour Policy (website), the Bedford Modern School Sanctions System (website & Student Organiser), the Online Safety Policy (website), the School Code of Conduct. Reasonable adjustments will be made where appropriate.
- Parents/guardians will be informed at an appropriate time and may be invited into school to discuss the matter. Their support should be sought.
- In very serious cases, and only after the Head has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to the Social Services. However, it is the policy of Bedford Modern School to attempt to resolve such issues internally under the School's own disciplinary procedures, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely.
- The School may exclude a student, either temporarily or permanently, in cases of severe and/or persistent bullying and in the event that the support put in place for the bully does not result in the modification of behaviour to an acceptable level.
- The school will keep records of bullying so that trends can be identified and action taken if necessary.

Junior School

If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedures are adopted:

- The member of staff to whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the students involved and reinforce that school take bullying very seriously.
- He/she will inform the Form Tutor as soon as possible.
- The Form Tutor will inform the Deputy Head (Pastoral) (Junior School) as soon as possible if deemed a serious incident.
- The alleged bully, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually and records will be made of the account of events.
- A decision will be made about appropriate next steps in order to resolve the issue. These may involve
 - resolution meetings between students;
 - further investigations which lead to more serious sanctions;
 - a discussion by the Safeguarding Team.
- Once the next step is agreed support will be offered to all involved and a monitoring review strategy put in place.
- If it is decided that the next step would be disciplinary proceedings appropriate disciplinary sanctions will be applied with reference to the following documents –

the Bedford Modern Junior School Behaviour Policy, the Online Safety Policy, the School Code of Conduct, and the Junior School Behaviour Plan. Reasonable adjustments will be made where appropriate.

- Parents/guardians will be informed at an appropriate time and may be invited into school to discuss the matter. Their support should be sought.
- In very serious cases, and only after the Head has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to the Social Services. However, it is the policy of Bedford Modern School to attempt to resolve such issues internally under the School's own disciplinary procedures, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely.
- The School may exclude a student, either temporarily or permanently, in cases of severe and/or persistent bullying and in the event that the support put in place for the bully does not result in the modification of behaviour to an acceptable level.
- The school will keep records of bullying so that trends can be identified and action taken if necessary.

Complaints Procedure

Parents/guardians and students are encouraged to use our complaints procedure (which is published on our website) if they feel that their concerns about bullying (or anything else) are not being addressed properly.

Mrs J Goodacre
Deputy Head (Pastoral and Student Progress)

May 2023
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