



# ANTI BULLYING POLICY

**Date of Last Review:** October 2017

**Date of Next Review:** October 2018

**Responsibility:** Mr M. O'Shaughnessy

**Advisory Body Signature:**

This Policy has been written in relation with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2016.

## **Peer-on-Peer**

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016 states that 'Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their child protection policy includes procedures to minimise the risk of peer-on-peer abuse and sets out how allegations of peer-on-peer abuse will be investigated and dealt with' (page 19). The document also states it is most important to ensure opportunities of seeking the voice of the child are heard, 'Governing bodies, proprietors and school or college leaders should ensure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems should be in place for children to express their views and give feedback. Ultimately, any system and processes should operate with the best interests of the child at their heart'.

Peer-on-peer abuse occurs when a young person is exploited, bullied and/or harmed by their peers who are the same or similar age; everyone directly involved in peer-on-peer abuse is under the age of 18. 'Peer-on-peer' abuse can relate to various forms of abuse (not just sexual abuse and exploitation), and crucially it does not capture the fact that the behaviour in question is harmful to the child perpetrator as well as the victim. Research suggests that girls and young women are more at risk of abusive behaviours perpetrated by their peers; however it can also affect boys and young men, those with learning difficulties or disabilities, LGBTQ children and young people (CYP) and those who are from different communities. Situations where young people are forced or coerced into sexual activity by peers or associates can be related with gang/serious youth violence activity but that is not always the case. Peer influence or peer pressure is a major factor in the decisions made by young people to join groups. Many young people see it as a 'way out' from their day to day life and feel a strong bond with their peers, one which they may be lacking at home. There is no clear definition of what peer-on-peer abuse entails. However, it can be captured in a range of different definitions:

- Domestic Abuse: relates to young people aged 16 and 17 who experience physical, emotional, sexual and/or financial abuse and coercive control in their intimate relationships;
- Child Sexual Exploitation: captures young people aged under 18 who are sexually abused in the context of exploitative relationships, contexts and situations, by a person of any age including another young person;
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour: refers to any young person, under the age of 18, who demonstrates behaviour outside of their normative parameters of development (this includes, but is not exclusive to abusive behaviours);
- Serious Youth Crime/Violence: reference to offences (as opposed to relationship/contexts) and captures all those of the most serious in nature including murder, rape and GBH between young people under 18.

Briefing February 2017, 198 peer-on-peer abuse can refer to any of the above individually or as a combination, therefore professionals working with CYP who are experiencing abuse from their peers must respond to the needs of each of the definitions to uncover the level of

complexity and respond in the most effective manner. It is possible that a young person may be sexually exploited in a gang related situation by their boyfriend or girlfriend.

At The Ravensbourne School we aim to provide a safe, caring and friendly environment for all our students to allow them to learn effectively, improve their life chances and help them to be the best they can be. We would expect students to feel safe in school, including an understanding of the issues relating to safety, such as bullying. We also want them to feel confident to seek support from school should they feel unsafe.

Bullying is unacceptable behaviour. It happens in all schools and many young people are involved at some time. Our school is committed to creating a safe environment where students can learn and achieve and can talk about their worries confident that they will be listened to and helped.

It is made clear to students, staff, parents and The Advisory Body, that, when bullying happens we will work as a community, in accordance with the policy set out in this document, to ensure the safety of the victim and endeavour to support improved behaviour from the bully.

### **What is Bullying?**

According to the DfE in 2011:

“Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.”

(Preventing and tackling Bullying, Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies, 2017, DfE)

It is the wilful, persistent, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone. Bullying is an abuse of power. There are two significant factors in bullying: a power imbalance in favour of the aggressor; a victim who cannot match that power.

A person is bullied when he or she is exposed regularly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more persons.

### **Bullying can be:**

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding belongings, threatening gestures).
- Cyber-Bullying - Any means of using technology (texting/BBM/emailing/using camera phones/chat rooms/prank calling or voice mailing, or other technologies) that is designed to upset or distress the receiver.
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures. Making a person feel unwelcome or unwanted, marginalised or excluded.

- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually/abusive comments, sexually explicit graffiti.
- Homophobic - because of or focussing on the issue of sexuality.
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
- Disability Bullying – the exploitation of a certain aspect of the victims disability.

Some forms of bullying are illegal and should be reported to the police:

- Violence and assault
- Theft
- Repeated harassment or intimidation e.g. name calling, threats and abusive phone calls, emails or text messages
- Hate crimes

### **School Objectives**

- All staff, The Advisory Body, students and parents have an understanding of bullying.
- An anti-bullying culture is established and monitored once a year through surveys and also through the BBBS monitors work within the school throughout the year.
- Students are encouraged to report incidents of bullying, and the culture of the school is supportive of those students who do.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Students and parents are assured that they are supported when bullying is reported.

### **Prevention – Staff**

All staff have a role to play in the prevention of bullying:

- Staff should encourage all students to report any incidents of bullying.
- Staff should be prepared to listen to students when they are willing to talk about bullying.
- Students should be made aware of sources of support through assemblies and PSHEE & Citizenship.

## Prevention – Students

All students have a role to play in the prevention of bullying:

- Wherever possible students will be encouraged to support each other and listen to each other. This is partially accomplished through the provision of the Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) mentoring scheme, but also through the pastoral teams and the work of tutors and year leaders.
- Daily lunchtime clubs will take place to ensure students have a safe place where they can be comfortable asking for support should it be required. There are a range of clubs on offer each lunchtime. There is also the daily breakfast club for vulnerable students hosted by BBBS.
- Some student bodies (i.e. school council, prefects, Peer Court and BBBS) also work towards establishing an anti-bullying culture.
- All students will be encouraged to take responsibility in aiming to ensure that negative actions are not acceptable. This responsibility is to be school wide. Peer Court and BBBS will have a central role but every opportunity should be taken to ensure other students appreciate their responsibility in not being a bystander.

## Prevention – Parents

- Parents have a key role in identifying the signs of possible bullying.
- Parents are encouraged to raise concerns about incidences of bullying. Concerns can be reported to Form Tutors/ Pastoral Directors /Ys/DYs/Key Stage Assistants. Letters, emails and phone calls can be used to do this. An email address is provided on the website for the BBBS co-ordinator [bbbs@e21c.co.uk](mailto:bbbs@e21c.co.uk) so that parents or members of the local community may inform the school of any bullying issues they may witness outside of the school
- Resolution meetings might take place – these may include outside agencies when appropriate, i.e. parents, school liaison police officer.

## Procedures

- A record of bullying incidents is to be kept in a standardised format on the staff shared area.
- There is an email address to which students are encouraged to send complaints about bullying. This is [bbbs@e21c.co.uk](mailto:bbbs@e21c.co.uk). The emails will be read by Mr Croft who will then refer the incident to form tutors/YL/DYL/Key Stage Assistants or deal with them himself where this is appropriate/practical.
- Students will be made aware of the existence of post-boxes in the libraries. Students can drop a postcard into this box to request support. Postcards will be collected by Mr Croft, read and acted upon appropriately.

- Victims might report bullying to any member of staff *at any time*. There needs to be consistency in the procedures which then follow.

Please refer to the following points for guidance:

- Bullying and any threats of bullying must be dealt with as soon as possible.
- Efforts should be made from the outset to encourage the student to identify the perpetrator.
- If the problem can be dealt with immediately, then deal with it there and then.
- However, it is essential that the incident is logged by adding it to the file in the designated part of the staff shared area.
- Students who repeatedly bully are to be identified using the electronic records so that firm action (including exclusion) can be taken where necessary.
- If a serious case of bullying comes to light, staff are to take the victim to his/her form tutor, DYL, YL or Key Stage Assistant immediately. If these are not available take the student to Mr O'Shaughnessy or Mr Croft.
- The form tutor/DYL/YL/Key Stage Assistant/Mr Croft will use their professional judgement to deal with the incident.

Possible actions include the steps below:

- Some bullies and victims can be supported by the BBBS peer mentors. Capacity for this is limited and not all bullies/victims can be supported. Requests for this support are to be emailed to Mr Croft who will advise whether and when this is possible.
- The bully will be encouraged and helped to change their behaviour to stop future incidents occurring.
- The library has a role to fulfil in ensuring that a range of anti-bullying resources are available and publicised to students.
- In serious cases of bullying parents will be informed and may be expected to attend a meeting.
- If necessary and appropriate the police will be consulted.
- If appropriate a Peer Court referral will be made by Year Leader.
- If appropriate a Post 16 mentor will be assigned to support the student.

## **Outcomes**

- The bully should be encouraged to apologise to the victim. If a face to face meeting is not always appropriate, a written apology must suffice.
- An appropriate sanction should be placed upon the bully – if behaviour does not improve.
- If possible the bully and the victim should be reconciled. This is not necessarily an easy process and caution should be exercised. The main thing is ensuring the behaviour stops and the victim is safe. The views of the bullied student regarding any reconciliation meeting are paramount.
- In serious cases exclusion will be considered.
- After any case of bullying has been dealt with, each case will be monitored in order to ensure bullying does not recur. This is the responsibility of the lead teacher in each incident.
- Staff can monitor victims and bullies through follow-up conversations. Where appropriate, BBBS might also follow up on victims'/bullies' progress.

## Signs of Bullying

Sometimes when a student is bullied they may display certain types of behaviour which may indicate they are being bullied. Some of these are listed below:

- A student is unwilling to attend school ('school phobic') or begins to arrive at school very early or late.
- A student feels ill in the mornings.
- A student truants from school.
- A student begins to do poorly in school work.
- A student becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable.
- A student is bullying other students or siblings.
- A student becomes distressed and anxious, becomes withdrawn, starts stammering, lacks confidence, stops eating.
- A student is frightened to say what is wrong.
- A student has money or other possessions that get lost on a regular basis.
- A student has unexplained cuts or bruises or is seen regularly with clothes or books destroyed.
- A student attempts or threatens suicide.

This is by no means an exhaustive list. These are signs and could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered.

## The role of Big Brothers Big Sisters

- BBBS is an enthusiastic group of students who do what they can to provide satisfactory outcomes when bullying occurs.
- Its strength is that it is a student-led body and the students have been selected because they either have been bullied themselves or because they are otherwise suitable role models for more vulnerable students. The school feels that bullied students benefit from having a peer resource of this nature.
- BBBS must be seen as a complementary service rather than a 'one-stop' shop for all bullies and all victims. It is limited by time and space. Mentoring a student requires an available room and a regular time slot. Not every student who suffers can be mentored by BBBS. Students with small friendship groups often benefit most.
- BBBS do their best to promote an anti-bullying ethos. It is requested that staff follow this lead and use their own initiative to build upon this through delivering their own assemblies. Staff are welcome to request BBBS support for these in order that bullies see that the student's peer group and not just teachers are against bullying.
- Staff are requested to lend their fullest support to Anti-Bullying Week which occurs in November through supplementing BBBS activities in their own classes and forms. Resources are to be put onto the staff shared area so that each year group has a library of resources.
- BBBS will survey students once a year to monitor issues that worry/concern students, and identify other related issues. This information will be analysed and reported back to Mr O'Shaughnessy to share with the Leadership team.
- BBBS will collaborate with prefects to monitor behaviour in the playground.

**BBBS Activities:**

- BBBS Open House runs daily in room 23.
- Open House is a daily club that BBBS provides for shy/quiet/vulnerable students in room 23. It is hoped that this safe space provides an opportunity for students to form relationships with their peers and where students can talk about their concerns in a suitable atmosphere.
- BBBS mentors also support vulnerable students during form time whilst the rest of the form attends assemblies.
- BBBS Breakfast Club. Run daily in room 23 from 8am.