



Braidwood School

Respect, Honesty, Effort

Anti-Bullying Policy 2024 -2025

Head Teacher _____ Date _____

Chair of Governors _____ Date _____

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Date formally approved : 11 July 2024 (FGB)

Next Review Date : June 2025

Responsible for implementation and monitoring : Senior Leadership Team

1. Statement of intent

Braidwood believes that all learners are entitled to learn in a safe and supportive environment; this means being free from all forms of bullying behaviour. This policy outlines how instances of bullying are dealt with, including the procedures to prevent occurrences of bullying.

Strategies, such as learning about tolerance and difference, aim to promote an inclusive, tolerant and supportive ethos at the school. Kindness is celebrated and promoted weekly during celebration assembly time.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006, outlines a number of legal obligations regarding the school's response to bullying. Under section 89, schools must have measures in place to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst learners. These measures are part of the school's Behaviour Policy, which is communicated to all learners, school staff and parents/carers.

All staff, parents/carers and learners work together to prevent and reduce any instances of bullying at the school. There is a zero tolerance policy for bullying at Braidwood.

2. Legal framework

1.1 This policy has due regard to legislation, including, but not limited to the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Communications Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998

1.2 This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the school's:

- Behaviour Policy
- Cyber Bullying Policy
- E-safety Policy
- Transgender Policy

3. Definition

2.1 For the purpose of this policy, bullying is persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group.

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2.2 Bullying is generally characterised by:

- **Repetition:** Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over a period of time.
- **Intent:** The perpetrator(s) means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
- **Targeting:** Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- **Power imbalance:** Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

2.3 Staff acknowledge that there is often a confusion amongst learners in the use of the word/ sign 'bullying'. At the beginning of each term, an assembly and form tutor session will focus on differentiating between the term 'bullying' and 'friendship fallouts'. Clear guidance will be given to establish the difference between the two. Revisiting the topic with learners is important to support their understanding.

4. Types of bullying

4.1 Many different kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying and can be related to almost anything. Teasing another learner because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual-orientation, home life, culture, disability, or special educational needs are some of the types of bullying that can occur.

4.2 Bullying can be acted out through the following mediums:

- **Verbally** – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling
- **Physically** - pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc
- **Emotionally** – isolating others, tormenting, hiding books/belongings, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation, and coercion
- **Sexually** – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc.
- **Sexist** bullying: Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.
- **Online (Cyber)** – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending abusive text messages, social exclusion etc.
- **Indirect** – can include the exploitation of individuals such as 'false friendships', criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation, and radicalisation
- **Prejudice-related** – derogatory and discriminatory language and behaviour including that which is racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist

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in nature. This language and behaviour may be directed towards people because of their race/ethnicity/nationality; because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans, or are perceived to be, or have a parent/carer, sibling, or friend who is, because they have a learning or physical disability. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986. Such language and behaviour are generally used to refer to something or someone as inferior.

There is no hierarchy of bullying, all forms of bullying are taken equally seriously and will be dealt with appropriately.

5. Statutory implication

5.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the school understands that it has a responsibility to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

5.2 Under the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, the school understands that it could have charges brought against it if it allows the rights of children and young people at the school to be breached by failing to take bullying seriously.

5.3 The National Association of Head Teachers has guidelines that head teachers must 'satisfy themselves' that their school's Anti-Bullying Policy complies with the HRA; the head teacher understands that they cannot do this without fully involving their teaching staff.

5.4 Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications may be considered criminal offences:

- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.
- Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to police include: violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation and hate crimes.

6. Prevention

- 6.1 The school clearly communicates a whole-school commitment to addressing bullying which is regularly promoted across the whole school. Each year in the autumn term students will be reminded to take the following action if they feel they are being bullied. These messages will also be reinforced throughout the year;
- if you feel able to, then let the perpetrator know that they do not like what is happening to them and ask them to stop;
 - if the bullying doesn't stop, tell someone in school who will initiate action to sort out the problem. This will often be their form tutor, any teacher or any member of staff.
- 6.2 All reported or witnessed instances of bullying in the school are challenged by a member of staff.
- 6.3 Staff encourage learner co-operation and the development of interpersonal skills through the use of group work and pair work.
- 6.4 All types of bullying are discussed as part of the curriculum, and diversity, difference and respect for others is promoted and celebrated through various lessons.
- 6.5 Potential victims of bullying are drawn into intervention groups with children who do not abuse or take advantage of them.
- 6.6 Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills are provided through participation in special events, for example, drama productions, sporting activities and cultural groups.
- 6.7 All members of the school community are made aware of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.
- 6.8 All staff members receive training on identifying and dealing with the different types of bullying.
- 6.9 A safe place (well-being room) is available for learners to go to at lunch if they are involved in conflict with their peers, or wish to have space from a situation for a period of time.

7. Signs of bullying

Some of the signs that a learner may be victim of bullying include, but are not limited to the following:

- Being frightened to travel to or from school
- Asking to be driven to school

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- Unwillingness to attend school
- Truancy
- Becoming anxious or lacking confidence
- Saying that they feel ill in the morning
- Decreased involvement in school work
- Returning home with torn clothes or damaged possessions
- Missing possessions
- Missing dinner money
- Asking for extra money or stealing
- Cuts or bruises
- Lack of appetite
- Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices
- Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages
- Lack of eye contact
- Becoming short tempered
- Change in behaviour and attitude at home

7.2 Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental issues, so are still worth investigating. These will be investigated by form tutors in the first instance.

7.3 Learners who display a significant number of these signs are given the opportunity to communicate with a trusted adult, in order to determine the underlying issues, whether they are due to bullying or other issues.

8. Staff principles

8.1 Prevention is at the forefront of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

8.2 Staff treat reports of bullying very seriously.

8.3 Staff do not ignore signs of suspected bullying.

8.4 Unpleasantness from one learner towards another is always challenged and never ignored.

8.5 Staff take action immediately; this applies to all staff, not solely teaching staff.

8.6 Staff always respect learners' privacy, and information about specific instances of bullying are not discussed with others, unless it is in a setting that the victim has given consent to.

8.7 Follow-up support is given to both the victim and bully in the months following any incidents, to ensure all bullying has stopped.

9. Roles and responsibilities

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- 9.1 The School Leadership Team evaluates and reviews this policy to ensure that it is non- discriminatory.
- 9.2 It is the responsibility of all staff to be alert to possible bullying of learners and to deal with incidents as the highest priority.
- 9.3 The head teacher reviews and amends this policy, taking account of new legislation and government guidance, and using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in the previous year to improve procedures.
- 9.4 The head teacher monitors reported incidents on CPOMs including which type of bullying has occurred to allow for proper analyses of the data collected.
- 9.5 The head teacher analyses the data in the Bullying Record at termly intervals in order to identify any trends in the types of bullying occurring and implement the appropriate measures to tackle it.
- 9.6 The head teacher arranges appropriate training for staff members.
- 9.7 Each form teacher corresponds and meets with parents/carers where necessary. They also provide a point of contact if/when more serious bullying incidents occur.
- 9.8 Form teachers are alert to social dynamics in their class and are available for learners who wish to report bullying. They also provide follow-up support after bullying incidents.
- 9.9 Teachers ensure that they are alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and that they inform the learner's form teacher of such observations.
- 9.10 All staff will avoid gender stereotyping when dealing with bullying.
- 9.11 Throughout the year, the composition of learner groups shows sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying.
- 9.12 First aiders are often the first people to receive reports of bullying, offer emotional support to victims, and alert the pupil's form teacher.
- 9.13 Parents/carers are advised to inform their child's form teacher if they are concerned that their child may be bullied or be involved in bullying.
- 9.14 Learners are advised to inform a member of staff if they witness bullying, or are a victim of bullying.
- 9.15 Learners are taught not to make counter-threats if they are victims of bullying.

10. Procedures

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Staff Responsibilities:

10.1 Minor incidents are reported to the learner's form teacher, who investigates the incident, sets appropriate sanctions for the perpetrator and records the incident and actions on Class Charts, which is visible to parents.

10.2 When investigating a bullying incident, the following procedures are adopted:

- The victim, alleged bully and witnesses are all interviewed separately
- Members of staff ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the learners interviewed, including electronic communication
- If a learner is injured, members of staff take the learner immediately to the first aid room for a medical opinion on the extent of their injuries
- A room is used that allows for privacy during interviews
- A witness is used for serious incidents
- If appropriate, all parties (bully, victim, witnesses) are asked to write down details of the incident; this may need prompting with questions from the member of staff to obtain the full picture
- Premature assumptions are not made, as it is important not to be judgemental at this stage
- Members of staff listen carefully to all accounts, being non-confrontational and not attaching blame until the investigation is complete
- All concerned learners are informed that they must not discuss the interview with other learners

10.3 Due to the potential for sexist, transphobic and sexual bullying to be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviour, staff members involved in dealing with the incident are required to consider whether there is a need for safeguarding processes to be implemented.

11. Sanctions

11.1 If the head teacher is satisfied that bullying did take place, the learner will be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and warned that there must be no further incidents.

11.2 The head teacher informs the learner of the type of sanction to be used in this instance (detentions, service-based activities, etc.) and future sanctions if the bullying continues.

11.3 If possible, the head teacher will attempt reconciliation and will obtain a genuine apology from the bully. This will either be in writing to the victim (and/or witnesses if appropriate), or face-to-face, but only with the victim's full consent. Discretion is used here; victims will never feel pressured into a face-to-face meeting with the bully.

11.4 The bullying learner is made to realise that some learners do not appreciate the distress they are causing, and that they should change their behaviour.

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11.5 Parents/carers are informed of bullying incidents and what action is being taken.

11.6 The form teacher informally monitors the learners involved over the next half-term.

12. Support

12.1 The **form teacher** informally checks whether the bullying has stopped on a **weekly** basis for **a month** after the initial complaint of bullying.

12.2 **SLT will** formally check whether the bullying has stopped the week after the bullying, and again **during the same half term**.

12.3 If necessary, group dynamics are broken up by members of staff by assigning places in classes.

12.4 The victim is encouraged to tell a trusted adult in school if bullying is repeated.

12.5 The victim is encouraged to broaden their friendship groups by joining a lunchtime activity.

13. Follow up support

13.1 The progress of both the bully and the victim are monitored by their form teachers. One-on-one sessions to discuss how they are progressing may be appropriate.

13.2 If appropriate, follow-up correspondence is arranged with parents/carers one month after the incident.

13.3 Learners who have been bullied are supported in the following ways:

- Being listened to
- Having an immediate opportunity to meet with their form teacher or a member of staff of their choice
- Being reassured
- Being offered continued support
- Being offered the opportunity to have a supervised talk with the bully and agree a way forward where the behaviour is not repeated
- Being offered counselling, where appropriate

13.4 Learners who have bullied others are supported in the following ways:

- Receiving a consequence for their actions
- Being able to discuss what happened
- Reflecting on why they became involved
- Understanding what they did wrong and why they need to change their behaviour
- Appropriate assistance from parents/carers

14. Bullying outside of school

14.1 Teachers have the power to discipline learners for misbehaving outside of the school premises. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

14.2 Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it is investigated and acted on. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, the teacher can only discipline the learner on school premises, or elsewhere when the learner is under the lawful control of the member of staff.

14.4 The head teacher has a specific statutory power to discipline learners for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives the head teacher the power to regulate learners' conduct when they are not on school premises, and therefore not under the lawful charge of a school staff member.

14.5 The **head teacher** is responsible for determining whether it is appropriate to notify the police or the **anti-social behaviour coordinator** of the action taken against a learner.

14.6 If the misbehaviour could be of a criminal nature, or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police are always informed.