

Anti-Bullying Policy & Procedures

BETHANY SCHOOL
CURTISDEN GREEN
GOUDHURST
KENT

Pupils’ views on why Bethany has an Anti-Bullying Policy
Bethany has an anti-bullying policy to protect our safety and happiness.

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1. Introduction

This policy is made available to parents of all pupils and is both known and available to all staff and all pupils.

The School aims to create a safe and secure environment in which pupils develop confidence and self-discipline and expects all members of the community to treat one another with kindness, tolerance and respect. Pupil behaviour is expected to reflect high standards of courtesy and self-control. We strive to ensure that all our pupils' time at Bethany is a happy one encouraging kindness and consideration for one another and actively discouraging bullying. Isolated acts of unkindness or a lack of proper consideration for others may not be seen in themselves as bullying but are, nonetheless, serious offences, as each individual has the right to be treated with kindness and respect. This unacceptable behaviour will, if not stopped, impact on the mental health and wellbeing of the victim and potentially on bystanders. We are mindful of the impact of bullying on the mental health of individual pupils and seek to put all pupils' wellbeing at the forefront of our practice whilst realising that bullying and unkind behaviour can also be a symptom of mental health issues, unhappiness and poor wellbeing. When identified both the victim(s) and perpetrators will be supported by the school.

Bullying is a matter of safeguarding as a form of child-on-child abuse which may also manifest itself in any aspects of the following: cyberbullying; physical abuse; sexual violence and sexual harassment; sexting; and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. All staff should be aware of child-on-child abuse and its place in this policy as a safeguarding issue and should act on any instances using this policy with reference to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, see the *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy* on the school website.

All pupils and staff should always avoid prejudice-based language. The issues of unkindness, lack of consideration for one another and bullying, whether it be cultural, relating to disability, emotional, LGBTQ+, physical, racial, religious, relating to Special Educational Needs, sexual, sexist or any type of cyber-bullying, form part of the Tutor and PSHCE programmes. The School will do its utmost to protect pupils from any action that may damage them in any way, physically or mentally and staff will take appropriate and timely action when pupils are found guilty of them. Pupils who are unkind, lack consideration or bully can therefore expect to be punished, in line with the School Behaviour Policy, including the possibility of exclusion for repeated or very serious cases.

It is recognised that pupils within the groups identified in the Equality Act 2010 are more vulnerable to being bullied. As identified in KCSIE, children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning are not inherently at risk of greater harm, but they can be targeted by other children. Furthermore, children perceived by others as being lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning (whether they are or not) can also be more vulnerable to

bullying behaviours. These risks are increased if pupils do not have a trusted adult with whom they can open up. All staff must work to reduce the additional barriers faced in seeking support and provide a safe space for pupils to share concerns. Pupils can gain support through the Wellness Centre or from a member of staff they feel they can trust.

However, the School is limited in its ability to intervene or act with regard to any form of unkindness, lack of consideration or bullying unless we are made aware of the incident or situation. Pupils should not hesitate to, in fact they **must**, talk to someone. This could be a Tutor, Head of Year, a member of House staff, the School Nurse, the Pupil Wellbeing Officer or Counsellor, the Chaplain, the Deputy Head Academic/Pastoral, or the Headmaster - we all have a duty of care not only to protect potential victims but also to help those who are the perpetrators. Pupils may prefer to talk to a Prefect or House Monitor; they understand the duty of care and will pass on their concerns to the appropriate person. Pupils can raise concerns anonymously to the Deputy Head Pastoral using the link on the Pupil Portal and there is also a red mail box in the School Office which is checked by the Deputy Head Pastoral. The School carries out termly anti-bullying surveys of the pupil body. Our younger pupils have a genuine sense of duty, and they are encouraged to find someone to talk to about acts of unkindness, lack of consideration as well as a (potential or) bullying incident. The School identifies Anti-Bullying Ambassadors who receive training to support them in their role which includes running the "Room of Requirement", a pop-up space where pupils can go knowing they will be welcomed and supported.

Any member of staff will help and support both victim and perpetrator but the School Counsellors and Pupil Welfare Officer fulfil a valuable role in talking through all the issues surrounding incidents of unkindness, lack of consideration and bullying as well as offering support, advice and coping strategies for either party.

Our aims:

- The School aims to promote the Mental Health and Wellbeing of the community as a whole.
- The School aims to create a stable and secure environment in which pupils develop confidence and self-discipline. Routines, structures, and rules are a necessary means to achieving these aims.
- Pupils should be familiar with behavioural expectations; be treated as individuals within the overall School context and perceive correction as a learning experience.
- Sanctions should be known, clear and as brief as possible in application. Incidents should be dealt with without undue delay and once dealt with should not be

resurrected, other than as part of a positive learning experience. Disapproval should be of the action, never the person.

- Pupils' Tutors have responsibility for their day-to-day well-being, as well as for their academic progress. House Staff have *in loco parentis* responsibility for boarders and Heads of Year a watching brief for all pupils in the year group during the school day.
- The School will encourage pupils and staff to speak to someone if they feel under pressure from others. The pupils will have the name of someone outside the School with whom contact can easily be made.
- School and House officials will be encouraged to take seriously the need to actively support pupils under pressure and to communicate to staff any incident of bullying or any other aspect of pastoral concern.
- Pupil and Staff behaviour is expected to reflect high standards of appearance, courtesy and self-control. A lack of proper consideration for others is a serious offence.

2. Bullying

“Bullying is among the top concerns that parents have about their children’s safety at and on the way to and from school. Bullying is also a top concern of children and young people themselves. Bullying makes the lives of its victims a misery: it undermines their confidence and self-esteem; and destroys their sense of security. Bullying impacts on its victims attendance and attainment at school, marginalises those groups who may be particular targets for bullies and can have a life-long negative impact on some young people’s lives. At worst, bullying has been a factor in pupil suicide.”

Executive Summary #1, Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in school

The School aims to create a safe and secure environment in which pupils develop self-confidence and self-discipline. In such an environment bullying has no place and we as staff must take a firm line whenever an instance of bullying is brought to our attention. Whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

Bullying is the deliberate and repetitive attempt, usually/often over a period of time, by one person or group to intentionally hurt, threaten or frighten another person or group. It can cause great distress to the victim(s), it may cause psychological damage and in extreme circumstances it can lead to children committing suicide. It can take many forms: emotional, physical, verbal and it can occur through cyberspace and other impersonal means. It will certainly always be detrimental to the wellbeing of the victim(s).

Examples of bullying include

- Threats
- Teasing
- Name-calling
- Interfering with someone's property or person including 'upskirting', 'sexual violence' or 'sexual harassment' as detailed in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Making fun of someone because: they are adopted, they are carers, of their appearance, colour, culture, disability, faith, gender, race, religion, special educational need, sexuality, shape or speech
- Spreading rumours
- Homophobic behaviour
- Deliberate shoving and pushing
- Physical assault
- Any method electronic or digital of cyber-bullying via, for example, text messages, instant messenger services, social network sites, email, images or videos posted on the internet or spread via mobile phone, online hoaxes
- Initiation ceremonies that are intended to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation

Banter is an ongoing concern for all schools, it is often referred to as the playful and friendly exchange of teasing remarks. However, at Bethany School it is made clear that the following distinctions are drawn:

- Friendly banter is where there is no intention to hurt, and everyone knows the limits
- Ignorant banter 'crosses the line' with no intent to hurt
- Malicious banter is done to humiliate a person – often in public

What do we do about it?

The issue of bullying forms part of the Tutor and PSHCE programmes starting in Year 7 and developing as a pupil moves up the school. It will also be addressed within the curriculum, in subjects like English, History and RS, as well as in House and School Assemblies and Chapel. Cyber bullying is addressed across the academic year in multiple areas of school life but particular focus is paid to this around Safer Internet Day each year.

Pupils will be given the opportunity to discuss various aspects of the problem with the aim of helping not only victims cope more easily with bullies, but also getting potential

bullies to see things from the victim's point of view; and help them to realise that adults do have the ability to stop bullying. This also includes discussion of the differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language. Specifically, the term banter is discussed to ensure that pupils are aware of the lines that we, as a school, draw.

Staff and senior pupils (School Prefects and House Monitors) are made aware of the seriousness of and impact that child-on-child abuse, including bullying, can have on pupils through their induction and ongoing training; this includes encouraging them to be active in watching out for those unsupervised areas, situations and times when bullying could take place. Such training ensures that the principles of the school's policy are understood, legal responsibilities are known, action is defined to resolve and prevent problems and sources of support are available. Where appropriate, the school will source additional training to support the understanding of the needs of our pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender pupils. The specific needs of those pupils with SEND must be considered when investigating bullying both in regard to the victim and the alleged perpetrator by reference to the Pupil Summary and the DLS Department.

When psychological damage results from such behaviour, appropriate medical advice and guidance will be sought via the school Wellness Centre.

Whilst always remaining alert and vigilant, we act most effectively if we are kept informed.

- Pupils who are being bullied should inform a member of staff they feel they can talk to.
- Pupils who think someone else is being bullied should inform a member of staff. Stamping out bullying is everybody's responsibility.
- In both these cases pupils might find it easier to talk, in the first instance, to a School or House official. They will have received training in how to deal with such issues.
- Staff must act promptly according to the school's Anti-bullying Policy & Procedure.

3. Anti-Bullying Policy & Procedure

This policy is written mainly with pupils in mind, but the policy applies equally to every member of the School community as no one should be subject to bullying nor need to suffer in silence.

3.1 Aims:

- To promote the mental health and wellbeing of all in the community
- To ensure that pupils are able to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated
- To ensure that pupils are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders
- To ensure that all staff are trained, vigilant and alert to the signs of bullying
- To ensure that all staff act promptly and firmly against incidents of suspected or reported bullying
- To ensure that clear steps are taken to help and support the victim
- To ensure that appropriate disciplinary sanctions are applied and that clear steps are taken to help and support the perpetrator
- To ensure a satisfactory outcome by working with the parents of both parties and also, when and where appropriate, outside agencies
- To protect confidentiality as necessary
- To ensure that the school is in line with the requirements of:
The latest edition of KCSIE
'Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools' (DfCSF 2007)
'Education and Inspections Act 2006'
'School Standards and Framework Act 1998'
'Approaches to preventing and tackling bullying' (DfE 2018);
'Prevent bullying' (DfE 2017);
'Tackling Race and Faith bullying face to face and online: A guide for schools' (DfE)
'Cyber-bullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff' (DfE)

Further information and guidance can be accessed from various websites;

www.education.gov.uk

www.beatbullying.org

www.childnet.com

3.2 Implementation:

1. Incidents of suspected or reported bullying should be referred to and dealt with by Tutors in the first instance. Depending on the nature or the seriousness of the incident, Heads of Year and/or one of the Deputy Heads and/or Headmaster will then become involved.
2. Incidents of suspected child-on-child abuse should be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and then the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy applied.
3. A Tutor should offer an immediate opportunity for the pupil who has been bullied to report and discuss the bullying incident. The pupil's concern for confidentiality (and possibly 'no action') should be recorded in the Wellbeing Module on iSAMS but the pupil should be reassured that their safety is paramount. The tutor should explain to the pupil what they intend to do about the incident.

4. A Tutor should record written notes as soon as possible using, in the first instance, the Anti-bullying Incident Aide Memoire Form ensuring the accuracy in recalling events later. A copy should be given to the relevant Head of Year and, if necessary, one of the Deputy Heads and/or Headmaster. For a more serious incident then the Safeguarding Incident/Concern may also be used, copied and passed on. All concerns must be recorded on the Wellbeing Module on iSAMS.
5. The Tutor of the victim(s) should then contact the Tutor (and if appropriate the Head of Year) of the perpetrator.
6. If the victim agrees or the matter is deemed serious enough to require follow up by staff, then the tutor of the perpetrator should give the perpetrator the opportunity to put their side of the incident.
7. The Tutor of the perpetrator will ask them to complete a Pupil Statement Form and will add a summary of the information on the Bullying Aide Memoire Form generated for the incident to ensure accuracy of recalling events later. A copy should be given to the relevant Head of Year and, if necessary, the Deputy Head and/or Headmaster, who is dealing with the incident. For a more serious incident (child on child abuse) then the Safeguarding Incident/Concern may also be used, copied and passed on.
8. The Tutor(s) or Head of Year(s) and/or one of the Deputy Heads and/or the Headmaster should contact the parents of both parties and meetings may be arranged.
9. Support is offered to both parties; in house, via the School counsellor therapist or with outside agencies.
10. A 'conflict resolution' or Restorative Justice meetings between parties may be used.
11. Occasionally parents telephone a Tutor to report a bullying incident on behalf of their child (often without the child's knowledge). Tutors should consult with the Head of Year and/or one of the Deputy Heads and/or Headmaster so that a specific procedure for that particular incident can be instigated – this may often involve staff, both academic and ancillary, as well as School & House officials keeping a 'watching brief' for this particular child.
12. Where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, the matter is then treated as a child protection issue and will then be reported, as appropriate, to external agencies including as appropriate, the police or children's social care by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Staff should have no hesitation in consulting with the DSL.
13. To record incidences of bullying, the school uses a Bullying Aide-Memoire and there is a central log held and updated by the DSL. Where there is a child protection concern a Green Form is completed by the DSL and a child protection file is opened. Concerns are also recorded for monitoring on the Wellbeing Manager Module.

3.3 Procedures:

Bullied children can be extremely scared that talking to an adult who then intervenes will make matters worse; giving the child reassurances is therefore a vital first step. A child's wish to speak in confidence should be respected, with the clear proviso that if the adult (or School or House official) is told something which is cause for concern about the child's safety or well-being the adult (or School or House official) will have an obligation to discuss the matter with someone in authority – the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and/or Headmaster.

A discussion with a bullied child should:

- Reassure them that, as far as possible, confidentiality will be kept
- Identify clearly what is upsetting them
- Encourage their sense of self-worth
- Remind them that no one deserves to be treated unkindly
- Look at assertive ways to respond to unkindness
- Encourage them to help themselves by identifying moments which may have triggered unkindness and look at ways to handle such situations
- Encourage their sense of humour
- Reassure them that more help and support will be forthcoming

A discussion with a bullying child should:

- Clearly identify what is unacceptable in their behaviour
- Ask the child for their point of view
- Try to get them to see the other person's point of view
- Try to get them to appreciate the other person's feelings
- Look at other ways to handle an irritation or dislike
- Make a clear statement that this behaviour must stop
- Explain why sanctions have been issued

If the bullying behaviour continues then the Tutor, or adult who has been handling the situation, will inform and work in conjunction with the appropriate Head of Year and then consult one of the Deputy Heads and/or Headmaster if more assertive intervention is necessary. The bullying child will be told clearly which aspects of their behaviour must change immediately and that the consequences of continuing to act unkindly will be severe. It may well be appropriate at this point to involve the bully's parents. The peer group(s) should be made aware of their collective responsibility to support the bullied child and to help the bully to effect a change by expressing their liking of them but their disapproval of their behaviour. Throughout the various processes and procedures dealing with bullying incidents any sanctions imposed will be in accordance with the School's

disciplinary procedures. If these steps are ineffective then the School reserves the right to express its strong opposition to bullying by suspension and, *in extremis*, expulsion.

4. Online Bullying -

Mobile, Internet and wireless technologies have increased the pace of communication and brought benefits to users worldwide. But their popularity provides increasing opportunities for misuse through online bullying. It is crucial that children and young people, who are particularly skilful at adapting to new technology, use their mobiles and the Internet safely and positively, and that they are aware of the consequences of misuse. School staff, parents and young people have to be constantly vigilant and work together to prevent this form of bullying and tackle it wherever it appears.

The advent of online bullying adds new dimensions to the problem of bullying. Unlike other forms of bullying, online bullying can follow children and young people into their private spaces and outside school hours; there is no safe haven for the person being bullied. Online bullies can communicate their messages to a wide audience with remarkable speed and can often remain unseen and unidentifiable. They will often act anonymously.

At the same time, recent national media coverage has shown that this new technology has the potential to be used by pupils to abuse and undermine staff and therefore implicit in the guidance, policies and sanctions set out is the need to protect staff as well.

There is also the potential for staff to misuse the technology to the detriment of colleagues and / or pupils. Such cases would be classed as misconduct and as such would consequently be dealt with through standard staff disciplinary procedures. Further information about school procedures with reference to e-safety and online bullying may be found in the E-Safety and Computer Usage Policy.

What is cyber-bullying?

Research commissioned by the Anti-Bullying Alliance from Goldsmiths College, University of London, identifies seven categories of online bullying:

Text message bullying involves sending unwelcome texts that are threatening or cause discomfort.

Picture/video-clip bullying via mobile phone cameras is used to make the person being bullied feel threatened or embarrassed, with images usually sent to other people. 'Happy slapping' involves filming and sharing physical attacks.

Phone call bullying via mobile phone uses silent calls or abusive messages. Sometimes the bullied person's phone is stolen and used to harass others, who then think the phone owner is responsible. As with all mobile phone bullying, the perpetrators often disguise their numbers, sometimes using someone else's phone to avoid being identified.

Email bullying uses email to send bullying or threatening messages, often using a pseudonym for anonymity or using someone else's name to pin the blame on them.

Chat room bullying involves sending menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chat room.

Bullying through instant messaging (IM) is an Internet-based form of bullying where children and young people are sent unpleasant messages as they conduct real-time conversations online.

Bullying via websites and social media includes the use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal polling sites. There has also been a significant increase in social networking sites for young people, which can provide new opportunities for online bullying.

Bluetooth bullying involves messages or images being sent from one user to another via Bluetooth in an attempt to belittle that person or to intimidate and upset them.

Who is most vulnerable?

Because of the anonymity that new communications technologies offer, anyone with a mobile phone or Internet connection can be a target for online bullying. What's more, bullies can reach much larger numbers within a peer group than they can with conventional bullying. Vindictive comments posted on a website, for instance, can be seen by a large audience, as can video clips sent by mobile phone.

Research suggests that most cyber-bullying is done by pupils in the same class or year group. Although it leaves no visible scars, online bullying of all types can be extremely destructive and is taken very seriously by Bethany School.

What can be done about it?

While other forms of bullying remain prevalent, online bullying is already a significant issue for many young people. School staff, parents and young people need to work together to prevent this and to tackle it whenever it occurs. All pupils, staff and visitors sign the school's ICT acceptable use policy.

In the event of an incident of online bullying, the procedures laid out in paragraph 3.3 of this policy should be followed.

There are a number of strands to the Bethany policy, including:

- Bullying via mobile phone or the Internet is included in our mandatory anti-bullying policies. These policies are regularly updated. Teachers have sufficient knowledge to deal with online bullying in school. The PSHCE curriculum teaches pupils about the risks of new communications technologies, the consequences of their misuse, and how to use them safely. In addition, pupils receive regular e-safety training in lectures given by Karl Hopwood.
- Online communications used on the school site *or as part of school activities off-site* are monitored as far as it is possible
- Clear policies are set about the use of mobile phones at School and at other times when young people are under the School's authority
- Internet blocking technologies are continually updated and harmful sites blocked and we work with pupils and parents to make sure new communications technologies are used safely, taking account of local and national guidance and good practice. We work with police and other partners on managing cyber-bullying. Parents are kept informed of the school standards and policies so that they can be applied at home as well as at school.
- We also work closely with our Area Safer Schools' Police Unit in order to monitor, educate and report incidences.
- Any sanctions imposed will be in accordance with the school's disciplinary policy and applied as and when appropriate.

5. Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are now a feature of modern society and most pupils, staff and parents own one. Increasing sophistication of mobile phone technology presents a number of issues for schools:

- The high value of many phones.
- The integration of cameras into phones leading to potential safeguarding and data protection issues.

- The potential to use the phone (e.g. for texting or sending images) whilst on silent mode.

It is not realistic to prohibit phones being brought to School, nor is it logistically possible for schools to collect phones in each morning and return them in the afternoon. The Bethany policy is to allow pupils to have a mobile phone with them in School but locked into a Yonder Pouch during the School day if they are in Years 7-10 and under the conditions outlined in the *Mobile Phone Policy* for other pupils.

In cases where a pupil is found to have abused the use of a phone by indulging in online bullying or similar, additional sanctions may be applied in accordance with the Bethany anti-bullying policy.

Responsibility for Phones

The School accepts no responsibility whatsoever for theft, loss, damage or health effects (potential or actual) relating to mobile phones. It is the responsibility of parents and pupils to ensure mobile phones are properly insured and looked after.

6. Appendix I Bullying Incident Aide Memoire Form

(This page is intentionally left blank – form on following page)

Bethany School

Bullying Incident Aide Memoire Form

Pupil name:	DoB:
	Year: House:

Your name & position:	Date of incident / concern:
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Incident / Concern (who, where, when, what):

How did that make you feel?

How do you think we can resolve this problem?

Action taken:

Signed:	Date:
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