

Bradford Grammar School

Whole School Anti-Bullying

Policy Document

The Whole School Anti-Bullying policy

Objectives

To ensure that:

- all staff, pupils and parents have a clear understanding of bullying
- there is no doubt that bullying will not be tolerated at Bradford Grammar School
- the procedures for dealing with bullying are clear and well known
- the school's policy deals with all forms of bullying including:
 - Physical bullying
 - Verbal bullying
 - Gender bullying
 - Racial bullying
 - Disability bullying
 - Bullying through the use of emails or text messaging (cyber)
 - Bullying based on an individual's sexual orientation

The nature of bullying

A survey of our own pupils in 2005, confirmed the conclusions of recent national research that bullying is potentially a problem in every school.

Bullying behaviour can affect pupils in a number of ways. When pupils are bullied, their lives are made miserable. They may suffer injury. They may be unhappy about coming to school. Over time, they are likely to lose self-confidence and self-esteem, blaming themselves for "inviting" the bullying behaviour. This unhappiness is likely to affect their concentration and impair their learning. Some children may experience stress related symptoms: stomach aches and headaches; nightmares or anxiety attacks. Some may avoid being bullied by not coming to school. Pupils may make inappropriate subject choices because they want to avoid certain individuals.

Most definitions identify bullying as being:

- deliberately hurtful (including aggression)
- repeated often over a period of time
- directed towards those who find it difficult to defend themselves

Bullying can take many forms , but the three main types are:

- physical – hitting, kicking, taking belongings
- verbal – name-calling, making offensive or insulting remarks
- indirect – spreading nasty stories or malicious rumours, excluding from social groups, sending malicious emails or text messages

Name calling is the most common form of bullying at BGS. It may be because of individual characteristics relating to ethnic origin, colour, gender, sexual orientation or some form of disability. Bullying can take place on the journey to and from school including on trains and buses. More commonly, however, bullying takes place within school. It is possible for bullying to occur in any part of the school but colleagues should be particularly aware of the potential for problems in changing rooms, corridors and in playgrounds.

Both boys and girls can be bullies but the most common perpetrators are individual boys or groups of boys. Verbal bullying is common amongst boys and girls. Boys are more likely to experience physical threats and violence than girls. Girls tend to use indirect methods which are more difficult to detect.

Colleagues should be aware of the following characteristics of a potential victim of bullying although, of course, **none** of these characteristics can excuse it:

- lacking close friends at school
- being shy
- having an over-protective home environment
- being from a racial or ethnic minority
- being different in some obvious physical respect (e.g. has a stammer)
- having special needs or a disability
- having a less wealthy home background than the majority (this can be a particular issue at BGS)

Being bullied tends to decrease with age, probably because older pupils develop coping skills. This tends to be the case nationally as well as at BGS. Most pupils say they would not join in bullying; fewer say that they would like to help the victim. Girls tend to be more supportive of victims than boys.

Members of families are more likely to be told about bullying than teachers. **A “culture of silence” still tends to prevail and colleagues must take steps to uncover bullying.**

Research suggests that bullying rarely “goes away” without intervention from teachers and, although victims often worry that telling a teacher will make matters worse, it is clear that the unchallenged bully may consider his/her behaviour acceptable or lack the empathy to appreciate the impact that he/she has on the victim.

Survey results at BGS reveal that pupils have a large measure of trust in the way school deals with bullying problems. They also usually express satisfaction in the outcome as long as **the action is not half-hearted or claims of bullying are not taken seriously.**

Bullying by text messages on mobile phones is an increasing problem at all schools including BGS. Pupils need to be careful about giving their phone numbers to others and should keep a record of the date and time of offensive messages. When pupils report bullying text messages the school must take the complaint seriously; the child’s family may also wish to contact the police. If such bullying has been carried out by one or more pupils on a persistent basis, or there has been a threat of violence, it will need to be dealt with firmly. The same also applies to malicious emails.

Bullying can be based on assumptions about a pupil’s sexual orientation. Pupils do not necessarily have to be lesbian, gay or bi-sexual to experience such bullying. Within BGS, some pupils often use the word “gay” to criticise others without a full understanding of its meaning. Colleagues must always challenge homophobic

bullying and use the sanctions available.

Although schools are not directly responsible for bullying which takes place away from the premises, it is important for staff at BGS to be aware of difficulties for pupils on the journey to and from school. It is important to encourage pupils to be forthcoming to colleagues should there be problems. It may be necessary to contact the local police, transport companies or staff at other schools. Pupils may need guidance on finding alternative “safe” routes between school and home as well as assistance in developing strategies to reduce bullying.

BGS Anti-bully strategy

It is important that all those at BGS know that bullying will not be tolerated and this message must be reinforced frequently through:

- whole-school assemblies from the SMT
- year group assemblies
- the form period programme
- the form teacher
- INSET for all staff

It is particularly important that pupils are encouraged to speak to a member of staff if they experience bullying or know of incidents that are taking place.

It will also be important to incorporate the topic of bullying into the curriculum, for example in English and RS.

A culture of anti-bullying should be actively encouraged. Form representatives and prefects may be the first point of contact for the victim and it is vital that they report all matters of concern to a member of staff.

Staff responsible for extra-curricular activities have an important role to play in disseminating the anti-bullying message.

Colleagues on duty must be aware of the potential for bullying including areas outside the school buildings.

The school will conduct regular surveys of pupils in order to ascertain the incidence of bullying within BGS.

Parents will be informed of the anti-bullying message through the publication of this policy.

Procedures

- All staff must be responsive to allegations of bullying. The member of staff who is first contacted by the pupil takes initial responsibility for investigating the incident. It is essential that pupils have confidence that all allegations are taken seriously and acted upon. The incident must always be investigated and recorded. The Form Teacher and the Head of Year of both the victim and the perpetrator will be kept fully informed.

- After initial investigations, if the incident appears to be a serious one, control of the investigation should be handled by the Head of Year. The Assistant Head (Pastoral) will be kept informed.
- When the matter is very serious, the Assistant Head (Pastoral), the Deputy Head or the Headmaster will assume responsibility in conjunction with the Head of Year.
- It should be noted that some colleagues have considerable experience and training in dealing with bullying issues. These members of staff, such as the Heads of Year, the Assistant Head (Pastoral) and the School Nurse, should be consulted at an early stage when there are serious incidents.
- When there are serious incidents, the parents of the bully and the victim will be informed. Past experience suggests that the early involvement of parents is vital if further bullying is to be prevented.
- Where appropriate the parents of the bully will be asked to come to School for a meeting.
- In extreme cases the police will be informed.
- Investigations should be made to ascertain the reasons for the bully's behaviour and, if possible, action taken to alter the behaviour of the bully or bullies.
- The victims of bullying will receive support and help to develop strategies for dealing with bullying.
- Disciplinary action will be taken against the bully including a written assurance that he/she will not be involved or responsible for any further incidents of bullying.
- In the most extreme cases supervision at breaktime and lunchtime will be considered for the bully.
- In the most serious cases, it may be necessary to seek assistance from outside agencies to help the victims and bullies i.e. specialist counselling may be needed.
- After an incident, there must be "follow-up" to ensure that the problem does not re-surface. Experience suggests that bullying will not take place again if it is known that there will be follow-up. This should take place about two weeks after the initial incident and then perhaps again half a term later.

Sanctions

Pupils need to be clear that bullying will lead to one or more of the following actions or sanctions:

- the loss of free time at breaktime and lunchtime
- changes being made to the way a pupil travels to and from school
- parental involvement
- Monday evening detention(s)
- temporary exclusion
- removal from class
- withholding participation in school teams, events or trips
- police involvement
- permanent exclusion