The Bicester School

THE
BICESTER
SCHOOL

Aspire and Achieve

Anti-Bullying Policy

Date reviewed: October 2014

Signed Headteacher: *Tony Rushworth*

The Bicester School promotes a safe learning environment where everyone feels able to enjoy and achieve and where success is recognised and rewarded. We aim to keep all students safe and educate them to make good choices about their own safety on the School site and beyond. Students who feel safe are able to achieve and enjoy.

Philosophy:

We believe that for everyone to benefit from our learning community, The Bicester School should be a place where students, staff, families and other visitors are made to feel welcome and comfortable and where everyone is treated with respect in an atmosphere free from intimidation.

We believe that all young people have the right to protection from harm, neglect and abuse and that their wellbeing is of paramount importance. The Bicester School aims to ensure good relationships between, and good behaviour towards, all members of its community and that learning and personal development takes place in a climate of trust, safety and confidence.

We believe that all members of our community need to work together to identify, manage and eradicate any threat to safety. These threats may be physical, emotional and/or psychological. Our work as a school includes directly teaching young people how to ensure their own safety and that of others.

The School has adopted a House system and Vertical Tutor groups in order to promote community cohesion, and to increase student awareness of the needs of others. Healthy competition between the Houses uses a system of rewards which aims to motivate and encourage students as well as helping to build individual self- confidence and self-esteem. The Bicester School values everyone's unique contribution to our community. Everyone has a responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all students and all staff have a duty of care, to ensure our students are aware of their contribution to creating a safe environment and to protect them from harm.

The School works in partnership with outside agencies to educate students about how to keep themselves safe, and to ensure they are supported in making effective choices. Learning Schemes across the School document the areas where students are made aware of risks and/or hazards and how to keep themselves safe while learning.

Keeping Students Safe from Bullying:

We work from a shared definition of bullying:
'A persistent, deliberate attempt to hurt or humiliate someone'

There may sometimes be misunderstanding about the meaning of the term 'bullying'. One-off incidents, whilst they may be very serious and must always be dealt with, do not fall within the definition of 'bullying'. Students may also encounter friendship issues which the welfare team may help them to unpick but again do not fall within the definition of 'bullying'

Types of bullying:

There are various types of bullying, but most have three things in common:
• It is deliberately hurtful behaviour.
• It is repeated over time.
• There is an imbalance of power, which makes it hard for those being bullied to defend themselves.
There are various forms of bullying which include:
• Physical – e.g. hitting, kicking, taking belongings.
• Verbal – e.g. name calling, insulting, racist, homophobic, sexist, transphobic remarks and any identity based comments including racism and religion, SEN and disabilities
• Indirect – e.g. spreading malicious rumours, excluding individuals from social groups, family feuds brought into school.
• Cyber – e.g. use of email, social networking sites, mobile phone messaging to spread rumours, make malicious comments.
Sexual- e.g. inappropriate or unwanted physical contact, verbal comments or cyber messages of a sexual nature

The lives of students who are bullied are made miserable; they may suffer injury, they may
attend erratically, they may lose self-confidence, they are likely to underachieve educationally and socially. Many of the outward signs of bullying can be the same as other
indicators of abuse such as:

• non accidental injuries (including self-harm)
• low self-esteem, unhappiness, fear, distress or anxiety.

If unchecked, others may come to see bullying behaviour as acceptable within the school. It is not unknown for person being bullied to become persons that bully younger or more vulnerable students than themselves. Bullying can and frequently does have long term effects on victims which may affect their adult lives.

Discriminatory Language:

Discriminatory language of any kind is not acceptable and will be challenged. It could be verbal or written (including graffiti).We will not accept any derogatory language that is:

- Sexual or sexist
- Relating to SEN, health conditions or disabilities
- Gender based
- Homophobic
- Transphobic
- Racist
- Relating to Religion
- Classist
- Relating to a person's family or home circumstances

Discriminatory language not only undermines confidence and self-esteem but is in some cases illegal. A culture that accepts any kind of discriminatory language from any of it's community is likely to become a culture where bullying is more prevalent

Staff who encounter students using this type of Discriminatory language will respond as follows:

- The first time a student is heard using discriminatory language they will be asked not to do so and told why it is not appropriate
- The next time the member of staff will explain in more detail the impact of this type of language and email the form tutor in order to monitor the student, in case there is a pattern
- If the same language is heard again the form tutor will be informed again and may decide to inform their Head of House/parents. The student will receive an appropriate sanction.

Off Site Bullying:

When students are off the school site but in their school uniform they still represent The Bicester School and therefore our values. Any persistent incidents of bullying on journeys to and from school will be treated in the same way as on site bullying (please see sanctions and strategies)
When students are in the public domain including social networking or messaging sites it would be more appropriate for parents to contact the police to investigate any incidents of abuse. Any issues that arise in school because of off site bullying will be investigated in the usual manner.
For example if a student is being called names or threatened on the bus on a regular basis then this would constitute bullying and needs to be reported to the school.
If a student has received threatening messages on a social networking site then it should be reported to the internet site in the first instance. If the abuse is persistent it would be a matter for the police. We are unable to control access to the internet off site and therefore could not prevent this situation arising again.
Incidents of cyber bullying that take place off site can have an impact on relationships within the School. All students are provided with advice regarding safe

use of social networks and advised that malicious use may result in police involvement.

Roles and Responsibilities and How bullying will be dealt with:

The *Deputy Headteacher* holds strategic responsibility for ensuring the safety of all members of the School community, including ensuring their safety from bullying. All staff, students, parents and governors should be made aware of the Stay Safe policy alongside awareness being raised of the issues associated with bullying in schools.

The *Student Welfare Team* work with the target of the bullying and the person who is doing the bullying. They use a restorative approach to make certain the person doing the bullying understand the effect of their actions, and the person who is the target of the bullying feel supported in asserting their own dignity and right to feel safe. Anything reported to the welfare team at the Open Access or through other avenues is logged.

The *Heads of Houses* and *Form Tutors* will raise cases of concern to the Welfare Team through Student Progress meetings (14ntly) where they see isolated disagreements or incidents developing into a pattern of behaviour that fits our shared definition of bullying.

Class Teachers, LSAs, Duty Staff and all members of staff must address individual incidents of hurt or humiliation as they are witnessed and/or reported. These should be logged with the form tutor of both the person who is the target of the bullying and the person doing the bullying to ensure that any pattern of behaviours can be identified.

Every Student has a responsibility to work to ensure that their peers feel safe and supported in school. They achieve this by ensuring their own behaviour is thoughtful and considerate, and that any concerns are passed on to: their class teacher at the time; the closest member of staff on duty or present out of lesson time, the Open Access welfare team at lunch or break time or their form tutor during Tutor Time on the day of the incident or the day immediately following.

Isolated incidents of harm or humiliation should be dealt with in accordance with the guidance in the Behaviour Management Protocols. Persistent instances of bullying are considered seriously and are clearly a breach of one of the School 'Never' rules: "We never abuse or intimidate others". Following this sort of breach the following sanctions/strategies can be applied:

- Restriction of unstructured time (supervision at break and lunch times)
- Detention
- SLT Detention
- Fixed Term Exclusion
- Attendance and participation at a Restorative Justice Conference
- Longer term monitoring and support programmes delivered by the Access Team and / or other partner agencies
- Discussion/presentation with specific groups of students from victims, victim's supporters, perpetrators, peer groups, parents

Supporting those bullied and bullying:

Any student who reports bullying to a member of staff will be taken seriously and supported. It is important for staff to be aware that it may have taken time and courage to report the situation and may have been unnoticed for some time.

- The welfare team will be made aware of the situation and arrange to meet and discuss the bullying with the person being bullied as soon as possible.
- The welfare team will log the details and inform the form tutor and Head of House of both parties sensitively so that an RJ meeting could be arranged, if both parties are willing for this to go ahead
- Students will be reminded of the 'Open access' facility where there is always an adult and a safe place during unsupervised times.
- The Head of House may offer a peer mentor if appropriate
- The person being bullied will be offered follow up meetings with the welfare team and may be referred to interventions or vulnerable students or outside agencies.
- Made aware of the Anti-bullying Alliance website

The person who has been bullying will be offered support also

- They will be seen by a member of the welfare team and allowed to give an account of the situation; welfare will discuss reasons why the person has been bullying
- The form tutor will be informed and asked to monitor person who has been bullying to ensure that they are being heard
- The opportunity to engage in an RJ to resolve the issues (if both parties are willing)
- Peer mentoring may be appropriate
- Made aware of the Antibullying Alliance website

Information for Parents/Carers:

Any parent or carer that thinks their child maybe being bullied should report the situation to the school as soon as possible. It would be useful to talk through the incidents calmly and logically to ensure that the person being bullied does not feel that they have upset you or caused you a problem (this can be a reason for students not reporting bullying)
The welfare team and the Head of House are likely to all be involved at some point during the process but the initial message should be left for the form tutor.

Spotting bullying early:

There are some signs which may indicate that a child is being bullied but there is no definitive checklist so it is important to cultivate a household where talking about your day and your feelings is made comfortable and supportive.

A child may encounter friendship issues, disagreements and one off incidents with their peers that may be serious but do not fall under the definition of bullying. These can be discussed with their form tutor and RJ meetings can be arranged with students involved.
Where incidents are persistent and deliberate attempt to hurt or humiliate then this would be defined as bullying.

Parents/carers may find useful advice on the Anti-bullying Alliance website (run by the NSPCC) of which the School has membership.

Allegations against staff:

The Bicester School believes that all members of the school community are entitled to protection from bullying. Inappropriate behaviour between students or staff will not be tolerated and any concerns or allegations of impropriety will be dealt with quickly, fairly and sensitively through the Grievance Procedure Policy. Any staff disclosing information, regarding inappropriate behaviour by colleagues, will be listened to and supported by the senior leadership group, in line with the 'Whistle Blowing Policy'.

Evaluation and Monitoring:

This policy is a dynamic document and will be updated as new guidance is produced or, in response to research, review or other events that have not previously been covered in depth.

Monitoring of the policy will be conducted on a regular basis via the termly Stay Safe Reviews led by the Senior Leadership with the Heads of Houses and the Access Team. Analysis within these reviews will include: numbers and details of incidents; records of action/follow-up with repeat offending rates; results of student surveys and discussions; attendance data from drop-ins and interventions; levels of referrals via Student Progress meetings; CAF/TAC interventions, and students subject to Child Protection Plans.

All analysis and reports will be formalised through the Senior Leadership Report to the Governors.   All references to individual students will be restrained to initials only in this document.