



BERKHAMPSTEAD SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure

The Definition

The Government defines bullying as:

Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

Bullying includes: name-calling; taunting; mocking; making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; pushing; taking belongings; inappropriate text messaging and emailing; sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups; and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours. Although sometimes occurring between two individuals in isolation, it can often take place in the presence of others.

Within the school environment, where present, it usually takes the form of the following actions carried out repeatedly and where it may be difficult for the person being bullied to defend him or herself.

- Saying unpleasant things.
- Threatening to hurt.
- Writing unpleasant notes.
- Hiding or damaging property.
- Purposely causing physical harm.
- Excluding someone from a group.
- Teasing nastily.

However, any of what is included in the Government's definition, particularly racial, sexual, disability, as examples, will be looked for and dealt with appropriately.

- Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve everyone - pupils, other young people, staff and parents.
- Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory.
- All members of Berkhamstead School have the right to enjoy their lives free of bullying and harassment. Anyone who feels bullied or intimidated has the right to expect the School to listen and to act promptly and sensitively to deal with the problem.

Aims and Objectives

At Berkhamstead, our community is based upon respect, good manners and decency. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can develop their full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed; but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other.

Berkhamstead prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents and guardians have an important role in supporting us in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. This policy is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils from the School Office or on the School website. It is also available and known to staff and pupils, including junior and recently appointed staff.

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We aim to treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable.

At Berkhamstead, we always treat bullying, including allegations of bullying, very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the school's social and moral principles. Bullying can be so serious that it causes psychological damage, eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide, and, whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the school, involving our pupils.

If a pupil cannot learn to stop bullying this will lead to punishment or even exclusion from the school.

Advice to Pupils

Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon! Teachers will take you seriously and will deal with bullies in a way that will end the bullying and will not make things worse for you.

- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied, and that it is **WRONG!** Be proud of who you are. It is good to be individual.
- You should treat others as you would hope to be treated yourself in an atmosphere of mutual respect. If an incident occurs you should do what you can to show your disapproval of bullying. We should all adhere to the Behaviour Policy and remember its essence – 'Do as you would be done by.'
- Try not to show that you are upset. It is hard but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
- Stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers.

- Be assertive - shout "No!" Walk confidently away. Go immediately to a teacher or other member of staff.
- Fighting back may make things worse. If you decide to fight back, talk to a teacher or parent/guardian first.
- If you feel that you are being bullied, **talk to someone**: a friend, your Form or Class Teacher, any of your subject teachers or teaching assistants or the Head Master. It is also right for you to talk to your parents about it, and for them to discuss it with the school.
- If you find it difficult to talk to anyone at school or at home then you can phone the 24 hour Childline service on 0800 1111. All calls are free and confidential and trained counsellors will help any young person with a problem.
- What can we do about bullies and the victims of bullying? The first thing is to talk and improve communication, individually and in confidence, in small groups, in year groups, depending on what people feel comfortable with. We can help people to understand themselves and others, and to cope better with life at school. We will do this through CWB lessons and occasionally, if necessary, during the daily Reading Time sessions.

A one-off, unpleasant incident is not regarded as bullying; neither is an occasional fight or quarrel between pupils of equal power or strength. However, these incidents will be dealt with accordingly.

If you know someone is being bullied you should:

- TAKE ACTION! Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own.
- Bullying will never stop if it is kept secret and no one faces up to it. If you think someone else is being bullied, talk to a member of staff about it. We guarantee that whistle-blowers who act in good faith will not be penalised and will be supported.
- Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully.
- Keep in mind the principle of the Behaviour Policy and 'Do as you would be done by...'

Advice to Parents

- Look for unusual behaviour in your children. For example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard.
- Always take an active role in your child's education. Enquire how their day has gone, who they have spent their time with, how lunchtime was spent etc.
- If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, please inform the School IMMEDIATELY. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will

follow.

- It is important that you advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse!
- Reassure your own son or daughter there is nothing wrong with him or her. It is not his or her fault that they are being bullied.
- Make sure your child is fully aware of Berkhamstead's policy concerning bullying, and that they must not be afraid to ask for help.

Implementation of the Policy

Communication – ‘A Whole School Policy’

- Staff will receive advice on the policy for dealing with and prevention of bullying.
- Pupils need to be aware that both staff and pupils disapprove of bullying behaviour and will act if bullying is brought to their notice. An anti-bullying ethos should be in place, reinforced by all adults; something that takes time and a drip feed approach - repeated plugging of the theme with pupils. The majority of children who are not involved are the most effective preventative and protective force in countering the problem. A clear understanding is therefore essential.
- Bullying procedures will form part of the induction process for new members of staff.
- A copy of the policy will be available to the Governors and to all parents via the School website.
- Pupils will be given advice on Bullying and made aware of their rights and responsibilities as per the Behaviour Policy.

As a School

- We shall treat bullying as a serious offence and take every possible action to eradicate it from Berkhamstead.
- We will minimise opportunities for bullying, e.g. provide increased supervision at problem times.
- We shall use any opportunity to educate and discuss aspects of bullying, the appropriate way to behave towards each other, to be sensitive to the feelings of others, to use clear direct and honest messages, to use assertiveness techniques, to solve conflicts etc e.g. the CWB programme and during Reading Time.
- We shall deal quickly, firmly and fairly with any complaints, involving parents where necessary.
- We shall continue to have a firm but fair discipline structure.
- We shall encourage pupils to discuss how they get on with other people and to form positive attitudes towards other people. This includes a review of what friendship really is.
- We shall encourage pupils to treat everyone with respect. Good role modelling is a vital factor if pupils are to see the positive effects of social, as opposed to anti-social, behaviour.