



BOROUGHMUIR HIGH SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying and Equalities Policy

May 2015



Our schools values and beliefs

All pupils and staff have the right to feel happy, safe and included.

We aim to ensure a confident, nurturing and inclusive learning community where all achieve their true potential and embrace life's challenges.

We will treat everyone with respect, deliver high quality and inspirational learning and teaching and provide opportunities for personal and social growth.

Our school values fairness, integrity, compassion, tenacity and perseverance, justice, loyalty and pride, empathy, curiosity, equality and trust.

We are committed to advancing equality of opportunity for all and we work actively towards eliminating all forms of bullying and discrimination.

We recognise the effects that bullying and discrimination can have on pupils' feelings of worth, on their school work and within the school community. We actively foster good relations between diverse groups and individuals.

We recognise that certain individuals and groups in society experience disadvantage, prejudice or discrimination on account of their age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender change, looked-after status, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, sexual orientation and socio economic status or any combination of these.

Definitions

Bullying

Bullying is an abuse of power that is defined by its effects. People who are bullied are upset by something that someone else has done or said to them or about them. They are likely to fear that this will happen again and feel powerless to stop it. Bullying is also a breach of children's rights under several articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Just because someone doesn't realise how hurtful their behaviour is, doesn't mean it is not bullying.

Equalities

We use the legal definition of 'equalities' which gives protection to people who have specific characteristics - for example being gay, lesbian or bisexual or from a minority ethnic group or disabled or elderly. It also includes boys and girls and anyone undergoing gender change, as well as those of particular faith groups. The Equality Act 2010 defines these as 'protected groups'. Looked-after children, young carers and children and young people from poor backgrounds are also included as "equalities groups".

Responsibility

The Head Teacher is responsible for introducing and implementing this policy. However all staff, all pupils and their parents have an active part to play in the development and maintenance of the policy, and in its success.

Pupils are expected to:

- Report all incidents of bullying and suspected incidents that other children may be afraid to report.
- Support each other and to seek help to ensure that everyone feels safe, and nobody feels excluded or afraid in school.

All Teachers are expected to:

- Be proactive, to treat all allegations seriously and respond appropriately and timeously to pupil concerns. Referrals are passed on and records held centrally.

Parent/Carers can help by:

- Supporting our anti-bullying policy and procedures.
- Encouraging their children to be positive members of the school and wider community.
- Discussing with their child's teacher any concerns that their child may have

Management Teams are expected to:

- Monitor and report annually on the implementation of this policy.
- Supervise the review and updating of this policy at least every four years.

Boroughmuir 'Bully Line'

We have now established in the school a new initiative where pupils have the opportunity to report bullying using text messaging, through a confidential school number. This has been running since June 2012 and has been successful with incidents of bullying reported this way.

Concerns, complaints and compliments

We recognise that there may be times when parents feel that we have not dealt well with an incident of bullying and we ask that this be brought to the Head Teacher's notice. If the Head Teacher cannot resolve these concerns informally, parents can raise their concerns more formally through the school's Complaints Procedure (*see school website under Information – Policies*). If early resolution at this stage is not achieved, then the matter can be referred to the Department's Advice and Conciliation Service. We are also pleased to receive compliments – feedback from parents when things have gone well.

Communicating this policy

- We advertise our anti-bullying, equality and diversity policy on the school web-site
- We provide written information via the school homework diary to our pupils to explain what they should do if they are being bullied, or if they see another pupil being bullied.

Evaluating and reviewing our policy

We evaluate this policy using the following measures:

- The number of incidents that are reported to staff over a given period.
- Pupils' perceptions and experiences of bullying in secondary schools through periodic questionnaires.
- The number of complaints and compliments that we receive from parents.
- From the comments made by visitors and other people connected with the school.

The policy and procedures will be reviewed every 4 years.

Procedures

Prevention

Posters on the school notice boards and classrooms are updated regularly and used to remind pupils that bullying and discrimination are not acceptable, and tells them what to do if they are bullied.

Periodic use will be made of the plasma screen.

There are public, accessible welcoming messages throughout the school in a range of languages.

We use evaluation and discussions in class lessons, council bullying surveys, and include the pupil council as appropriate.

We involve other agencies as appropriate.

The school holds diversity and anti-bullying days, weeks and assemblies and publishes its work on the website.

There is a buddy system, especially at transition from primary to secondary. The school supports nurture and friendship groups for S1 run by S6.

Bullying and equalities issues are a standing item on our Pupil Council agenda.

We annually review our policy and arrangements for young people to raise issues with staff.

Our staff are supported in accessing professional development opportunities that increase their awareness and understanding of bullying, prejudice and discrimination.

What we do when bullying occurs?

A child may not be engaging consciously in bullying behaviour, but its impact is still felt and this is taken seriously. The level of awareness of a child who is bullying is a significant factor in how it is dealt with.

Pupils who experience bullying or discrimination will be listened to and supported.

Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour or discrimination will be treated fairly and consistently using a range of measures.

Examples of our strategies include:

- Restorative practices, including acknowledging grievances.
- Involvement of parent/carer where appropriate.
- Mediation.
- Counselling.
- Involvement of other agencies and partners in health, police and voluntary sector.
- De-escalation strategies.
- Physical separation of person/people bullying, where necessary and possible.
- Support base, safe room where feasible.
- Sanctions, including loss of privileges.
- Assessment of additional support needs for person being bullied or person bullying.
- In extreme cases, Child Protection procedures will be considered.
- Exclusion from school is not itself a sanction or punishment for bullying behaviour and will only be used as a last resort.

Our support to pupils who are bullied or discriminated against:

- They are reassured that they do not deserve this and it is not their fault.
- We assure them that it was right to report the incident.
- We encourage them to talk about how they feel and try to ascertain the extent of the problem.
- We engage them in making choices about how the matter may be resolved.
- We discuss strategies for being safe and staying safe.
- We ask them to report immediately any further incidents to us.
- We endeavour to ensure it is stopped and will pursue all available avenues to achieve this.
- We follow up after incidents to check that bullying has not started again, as appropriate.

Our work with pupils who bully others:

- We interview the pupil (or pupils) involved in bullying separately, and work to ascertain the sort of support they will need.
- We listen to their version of events and talk to anyone who may have witnessed the bullying.
- We reinforce the message that bullying is not acceptable, and that we expect it to stop.
- We seek a commitment to this end.
- We affirm that it is right for pupils to let us know when they are being bullied.
- We consider sanctions under our school's Behaviour/Discipline Policy.
- We advise pupils responsible for bullying that we check to ensure that bullying stops.
- When bullying occurs, we contact the parents of the pupils involved at an early stage.

Reporting and recording incidents

Pupils who have been bullied should report this to a trusted person.

Pupils who are aware of others being bullied should report this to a member of staff.

Reporting can be done in person or using the Bully Line.

Members of staff who receive reports that a pupil has been bullied should report this to Guidance and/or Year Head.

Reports of bullying are logged by the Equalities Co-ordinator.

Records are kept by the Equalities Co-ordinator.

Acts of bullying or discrimination on grounds of race, disability, gender, faith and sexual orientation are of equal concern and are all clearly distinguishable.

We send annual reports of incidents to our departmental equalities colleagues on request.

Cyber-bullying and bullying outside the school premises

We know that bullying can occur outside the school gates and via mobile phones and social network internet sites. The bullying may be done by pupils from our own school, by pupils from other schools or by people who are not at school at all. Where a pupil or parent tells us of bullying off the school premises we will:

- Talk to pupils about how to avoid or handle bullying outside of school.
- Talk to the Head Teacher of another school whose pupils are allegedly bullying/being bullied, where appropriate.
- Consider additional support, Police involvement and Child Protection Procedures.
- Work with the local community to address bullying, when appropriate.

Planning

We examine and use all available information to ensure that the promotion of equality and anti-bullying issues is contained within our development plans.

Equality impacts analysis

When reviewing or creating any new policies or services within our school, we give due regard to all protected groups and consider whether any individual or group might experience a particularly positive or negative impact. Where necessary we take steps to reduce any negative impact.

Involvement

We actively encourage all our young people to participate in school and extra-curricular activities and we take positive action to make sure that the diverse school population is represented in activities, surveys and our student council.

Gathering and monitoring information

Our school routinely monitors attainment of pupils by ethnicity and gender. We are also committed to developing measures for monitoring the achievements of our looked-after and disabled pupils.

We also monitor attendance and exclusion of pupils by ethnicity, disability and gender.

We examine our annual records of incidents and survey information.

We are aware of our local demography, through pupil census data.

We use information from surveys of pupils' views and opinions.

We take active steps to ensure that all data held on pupils' disabilities, ethnicity, caring and looked-after status is accurate by the return of the Annual Data Check Forms.