



Est. 1919

BRAMBLETYE

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

***The Brambletye Anti-Bullying Policy and all arrangements referred to therein have regard to the DfE advice 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2014'***

### **Introduction**

This policy must be read in conjunction with the school's Child Protection (Safeguarding), Staff Code of Conduct, IT Acceptable use and Behaviour and Sanctions Policies.

At Brambletye, our community is based on respect, good manners and fair play. In accordance with the DfE's guidance 'Safe to Learn', we are committed to providing a secure, safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence or any other form of harassment so that every pupil can develop to his/her potential. Pupils and staff are expected to treat other people as they would like to be treated themselves. This means being kind, generous, thoughtful and sensitive. We take due regard of the DfE document 'Cyberbullying: Advice for Head teachers and school staff (2014)'.

Brambletye prides itself on respect and mutual tolerance. Ours is a diverse community, with pupils from a variety of cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds. Some pupils require additional support and help. Parents also have an important role in supporting Brambletye to achieve high standards of behaviour. Good communication between home and school is therefore essential.

At school assembly, in Chapel, during Tutor sessions and PSHE lessons pupils are given clear guidance as to their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school.

### **Definition: What is bullying?**

Bullying is when a pupil's life is made unhappy – or worse – by the repeated actions or words of another person or a group of persons. Bullying varies according to age and school, but may include any or all of the following on a regular basis:

1. Physical assaults (to persons or property)

2. Verbal abuse (name calling, racist taunts, threats, excessive banter, swearing; it may involve actions or comments which focus on disabilities, gender, religion, culture, sexual orientation, Special Educational Need or physical attributes such as hair colour or body shape, or unkind comments to a child who is adopted or is a carer). If a person feels bullied that is sufficient to take further action.
3. Exclusion from peer groups
4. Extortion
5. Aggressive or insulting gestures
6. Psychological bullying – the spreading of nasty statements or rumours about someone; excluding someone from social groups
7. Cyber bullying (including chat room, email, e-photos and SMS messages), and children feeling isolated because they are 'shut-out' of group communications.

The above can include: outright physical attacks, theft, vandalism, persistent teasing, swearing, nasty nicknames, personal insults, racial and sexual taunts, malicious gossip.

Bullying can take place regularly or occasionally. It can sometimes occur sporadically over a period of some years. It is always damaging however, and can also be a corrupting influence on other children who witness it happening. Physical or emotional bullying can lead to psychological damage and must be dealt with promptly and firmly whenever it is met. It is the responsibility of the whole Brambletye community to try to prevent bullying from happening.

### **The Bully**

Bullies can have a low self-esteem, despite an appearance of confidence. They will generally seek to have their own way and will respond to stressful situations impulsively. Although it is impossible to generalise, bullies often:

1. Display aggression towards other pupils and adults
2. Have a tendency to break rules and engage in anti-social behaviour
3. Have an inability to recognise faults in themselves
4. Have an ability to communicate well and have an answer for everything
5. Display some leadership qualities and wish to dominate others

### **The Bullied**

Pupils can be passive or provocative victims. The bullied are often:

1. New to the school
2. Different in appearance, speech or behaviour

3. Suffering from low self-esteem
4. Amusing to others in their reactions when bullied (loss of control etc)
5. Nervous, anxious or timid

### **Evidence of Bullying**

Of themselves, the following are not evidence of bullying but may suggest it if several occur together or else are recurring:

1. Repeated minor injuries
2. Deterioration in school work or significant changes in behaviour which have no apparent explanation
3. Tantrums
4. An air of detachment
5. Wariness
6. A reluctance to return to school after a break
7. An increasing lack of self-confidence: a withdrawal from voluntary activities or few friends
8. An unhealthy attachment to members of staff
9. Frequent complaints of being unwell
10. Eating problems

It is worth noting that adults can be bullies too: humiliation of a pupil by using sarcasm or harassment is serious misuse of the power one holds over a pupil. Such behaviour condones bullying by the pupils themselves. Please see staff code of conduct

### **Factors in the rise of bullying.**

1. Lack of parental guidance, warmth or love
2. Lack of adult supervision
3. Harsh physical or emotional treatment by adults
4. A poorly run discipline system (rules, rewards and punishments)
5. Lack of moral education
6. The behaviour of other pupils

### **Bullies thrive when:**

1. There is inadequate staff presence
2. There is a change of staff – and hence a change in habits and relationships
3. Boredom is prevalent in free time
4. There is overcrowding and no haven

5. Prefects are ill-advised or left to their own devices
6. The gulf between staff and pupils is too great for the sharing of problems
7. There is a lack of trust

### **Cyber bullying**

Cyber bullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated hostile behaviour by an individual pupil or group of pupils that is intended to harm the victim or victims. This misuse of electronic equipment can torment, threaten, harass, humiliate or embarrass an individual pupil or group of pupils. There is active management of hardware, software and connectivity by both external agencies (SERVAL) and internal staff - teachers and parents all have a part to play in the safeguarding and protection of pupils.

Pupils at Brambletye often have access to technologies that have both positive and negative potential, therefore consideration is given to the acceptable use of technology within the school setting and beyond, with a policy that is clear, understood and respected by staff, students and the wider school community. Pupils and staff are requested to sign the school's Internet and Email users Agreement – the pupil's agreement is also countersigned by a parent.

The E-Safety policy includes guidance on:

- clearly defined roles and responsibilities for online safety as part of the school's wider safeguarding strategy and how this links with other safeguarding policy;
- clear guidance on the use of technology in the classroom and beyond for all users, including staff, students/pupils and visitors that references permissions/restrictions and agreed sanctions;
- mention of the school's technical provision/infrastructure and safeguards in place to filter and monitor inappropriate content and alert the school to safeguarding issues; (schools are not required to give away detail in policies which would compromise safeguards);
- how the school builds resilience in its students to protect themselves and their peers through education and information;
- staff safeguarding professional development that includes online safety;
- reporting mechanisms available for all users to report issues and concerns to the school and how they are managed and/or escalated;

- how the school informs, communicates with and educates parents/carers in online safety;
- the management of personal data in line with statutory requirements.

At Brambletye we set out very clear rules and guidelines:

- From the outset when pupils sign an Internet User's Agreement
- Through education in ICT lessons and advice from the ICT Manager
- Through reinforcement of rules by Tutors
- In PSHEE lessons
- Through talks and lectures to pupils, parents and staff
- At School Assemblies led by the Headmaster and Deputy Headmasters
- Emailing a fellow pupil is not allowed
- Pupils are not given access to Facebook or any social networking sites
- No mobile phones are allowed within the School (in the case of overseas pupils, any mobile phones to be handed in to the Assistant Houseparent)

### **Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disabilities**

Children with SEN and disabilities may:

- Be adversely affected by negative attitudes to disability and perception of peers
- Find it more difficult to resist bullies
- Be isolated and not have many friends

To help children with SEN:

- Make sure there is a quiet place in school to talk
- Understand the communication needs of the child
- Give the child time to calm down
- Make another adult available as a supporter
- Provide appropriate, comfortable support mechanisms for the child
- Look to introduce a befriending scheme
- Create a supportive and non-threatening environment
- Aim to promote a sense of disability equality throughout the school

### **Prevention.**

- A positive atmosphere and a spirit of cooperation within a school creates an environment in which helpfulness and kindness will flourish. To that end, 'Work Hard, Play Hard & Be Kind', are principles of behaviour which are reinforced in Assemblies, Chapel Services, PSHEE, Headmaster's Lessons and Tutor sessions, and which are posted around the school, provides the pupils with a framework for the right approach towards living and interacting with others in a school community.
- Effective discipline is also essential. Particular attention must be paid to the times when pupils are together in unsupervised groups: before a lesson, in a queue, free time etc.
- Pupils should be encouraged to recognise that bullying is unacceptable. 'Telling tales' may be one thing, but pupils should feel able to speak to members of staff should they so desire. All our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of the teaching or pastoral staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place. Every member of staff is trained on how to respond to such allegations as part of their induction training.
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site, particularly areas where bullying might occur. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour.
- Staff should draw attention to any undesirable developments among the pupils at our daily staff meeting at 10.55am, and all serious incidents should be recorded.
- We use appropriate assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying. Our PSHEE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of the social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the School. The programme is structured to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other. It specifically tells pupils whom they should inform if they are being bullied, or are worried that another pupil is being bullied.
- We display advice on where pupils can seek help – 'Support for Pupils', which includes details of confidential helplines such as Childline etc. All pupils have access to a telephone, enabling them to call for support in private.

### Response

The Tutor, Housemaster or Housemistress, Sister, Matron or House Parent should be consulted first and opportunities to discuss matters in private and in confidence should be

organised. Staff must try to ascertain the facts, investigate thoroughly and observe, rather than rely upon hearsay. A written record should be kept.

1. Take every incident seriously and make sure allegations are substantiated before taking action
2. Refer the matter to the Deputy Headmaster (Pastoral), Housemaster, Sister/Matron, or House Parent as appropriate
3. Speak sensitively to both bully and bullied, adopting a “no blame approach”
4. Attempt to ensure some measure of protection for the bullied
5. The bullied may require advice on how to avoid similar incidents in the future
6. The bully must feel the disapproval of the school and understand that his/her acts must stop.
7. Explanation must accompany any punishment. Confront the bully with his/her deeds and ask why he/she felt that he/she had to behave in the way he/she did.
8. A record will be made of any serious incident by the Deputy Headmaster (Pastoral). The records are kept to evaluate the effectiveness of the school’s approach and to enable any patterns to be identified.
9. An annual “Anti-Bullying Questionnaire” is given to all pupils of the school and records are also kept of their responses – this also provides the school with a tool to better understand any patterns and helps to identify any particular individuals named in the children’s responses that may be at risk of bullying or are the perpetrators of bullying behaviour.
10. The Deputy Headmaster (Pastoral) will report any bullying incidents to the Headmaster at 8am the following morning and to all the staff at 10.55am in the Staff Room.
11. At the discretion of the School Sister a pupil may be referred to Mrs Victoria Blincow, our qualified School Counsellor. Pupils may also request to be referred to a Counsellor.

### **Action**

1. Any bullying behaviour and threats of bullying must immediately stop. Repetition of an offence will be treated very seriously and a pupil will be punished. The seriousness of the punishment, which may involve suspension, will be proportional to the offence and age of the child. It must be remembered that an alleged bully may have specific needs themselves that should be addressed as bullying may be a reflection of something else in the child’s life. Referral to the DSL for further consideration may be necessary – see Child Protection Policy.
2. Parental involvement will take place where deemed appropriate
3. The Headmaster will be involved where there is any serious occurrence or repetition of bullying by a child or group of children

4. A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This is the point when bullying would be reported to external agencies.
5. In very serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered

### **Parental Concerns**

Brambletye has long prided itself on the quality of the pastoral care provided for its pupils. However if parents do have any concerns regarding the bullying of their child, they should make immediate contact with either the Head of the Pre-Prep Department or the Deputy Headmaster (Pastoral), who will carry out a thorough investigation before reporting back to the parents and Headmaster.

### **Advice for Parents**

The following advice is taken from:

[www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Bullying/Pages/Bullyingadviceforparents.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Bullying/Pages/Bullyingadviceforparents.aspx)

Knowing or suspecting that your child is being bullied can be very upsetting, but there's lots you can do to help tackle the problem. Bullying is one of the biggest concerns for parents, according to Family Lives, a support organisation for parents. If you find out or suspect your child is being bullied, there are things you can do to resolve the problem.

And you don't have to find all the answers on your own. There are a number of organisations, including Family Lives, that can give you help and advice.

### **How do you know if your child is being bullied?**

Sometimes children don't talk to their parents or carers about bullying because they don't want to upset them, or they think it will make the problem worse. But if you suspect your child is being bullied, there are signs to look out for, according to the NSPCC. These include:

- coming home with damaged or missing clothes, without money they should have, or with scratches and bruises
- having trouble with homework for no apparent reason
- feeling irritable, easily upset or particularly emotional

There is more about spotting the signs of bullying on the NSPCC website.

Signs of cyberbullying include:

- being withdrawn or upset after texting or being online
- being unwilling to talk about what they're doing online or on their phone
- spending much more or much less time texting or online

- many new phone numbers, texts or email addresses show up on their phone, laptop or tablet

Find out more about the signs of cyberbullying on the NHS website listed above.

### **How to help your child if they are being bullied**

If a child tells you they're being bullied, the first thing to do is listen. The NSPCC advises parents and carers to let children tell their story in their own words, and not to dismiss their experience as "just a part of growing up". The NSPCC advises that you suggest your child keeps a diary of bullying incidents. It will help to have concrete facts to show the school. The next step is to talk to the school.

### **Who can help with bullying?**

All the organisations listed below provide support and information to parents.

#### Family Lives

Family Lives is a charity that runs a free and confidential 24-hour helpline for parents. Call 0808 800 2222 to speak about any parenting issue, including bullying.

#### Bullying UK

The Bullying UK website, which is part of Family Lives, has a dedicated area for parents.

#### Kidscape

Kidscape is an anti-bullying charity that runs assertiveness training courses for young people who've been bullied. There's extensive information for parents and carers on its website.

#### NSPCC

The NSPCC website has information for parents on bullying and cyberbullying.

#### Childnet International

Childnet International is a charity promoting the safe use of the internet by children. Its website has a wealth of detail, including information about bullying for parents and carers.

#### Contact a Family

Contact a Family provides advice, information and support to the parents of all disabled children throughout the UK. It also runs a free helpline (0808 808 3555).

#### Help from health services

Children can feel the impact of bullying even once it's ended. If they continue to feel anxious or low and it's stopping them getting on with day-to-day life, it may be time to ask for further help. You can speak to your GP or the school nurse about the problem.

### **Rationale**

At Brambletye, all staff and governors are committed to 'Every Child Matters' in that the following five outcomes are key to well-being and in later life:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Achieving economic well-being

### **Staff Training**

- New staff are made aware of anti-bullying procedures in their induction process
- The Headmaster is responsible for ensuring staff receive training. This will take place every three years.

### **Conclusion**

The staff must wholeheartedly support this policy. While bullying is not common, it does occur and must be controlled. We should always be on the lookout for bullying and should respond to it at once. We must always stress that it is not wrong to tell an adult about incidents of bullying. Moreover, once an incident has been reported, both the bully and the bullied must be dealt with immediately.

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