



BARNARD CASTLE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Anti-bullying Policy, to include cyber-bullying

This School Policy document is available to all pupils, parents and staff; a copy can be obtained on request from the Prep School Office or from the school website.

It is made available to all prospective parents when they visit the School and is automatically given to the parents of all new pupils in the Parents' Handbook.

Parents of all pupils are reminded of the policy's existence and availability in the Headmaster's Letter to Parents at the end of each academic year.

Staff can also use this policy to guide them if they feel bullied or harassed at work. They are protected by the Whistle-blowing Policy.

Principles

- ❖ A supportive School environment characterised by warmth and mutual respect is our ambition. This is stressed to all new and existing pupils and staff. This is stated each term by the Headmaster in his beginning of term School address.
- ❖ There is positive involvement from adults and a sense of co-operation and mutual respect between pupils, and between pupils and staff.
- ❖ Individuality is respected and all members of the School must be enabled to flourish without fear.
- ❖ We publicise the stance that pupils have a right not to be bullied and we all have a responsibility to counter bullying.

Aims & Objectives

The aim of our anti-bullying policy is to ensure that all pupils and staff know that bullying is always unacceptable. All staff, pupils and parents must understand the negative effects that bullying has on individuals and the School in general. We all encourage an environment where individuals can flourish without fear. Every pupil has the right to be safe and happy in our School and to be protected when he/she is feeling vulnerable.

The School also recognises that it must take note of bullying perpetrated outside school which spills over into the school. It will do all it can to eliminate any such bullying. The Governing Body values the good relationships fostered by the School and expects that every allegation of bullying will be taken seriously, to include allegations of third party bullying.

The central objective is

- ❖ To minimise the possibility of bullying occurring in any form within Barnard Castle Prep School.

Other objectives include

- i) Maintaining school knowledge that bullying is unacceptable
- ii) Ensuring all pupils, staff and parents are proactive in their approach to guard against bullying

This policy also details the School's response to cyber-bullying, where web or internet sites and facilities like Bebo and Facebook, are used to abuse or bully others. It is made clear to all pupils, their parents and staff that it is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information in any media including internet sites.

The Governing Body reviews annually the School's anti-bullying policy and assesses its effectiveness; this will be part of the Headmaster's presentation to Governors at their meeting.

Definition of Bullying

We define bullying as deliberately hurtful behaviour, whether physical, verbal or psychological, **repeated over a period of time.**

There are different sorts of bullying but the three main types are:

- ❖ physical: any form of physical contact, to include hitting, tripping, kicking, taking or hiding belongings. Wilful interference with property, which includes hiding, damaging, removing and unauthorised borrowing.
- ❖ verbal: persistent or malicious name calling; for example teasing, insulting, threatening and swearing. Any racial, religious, cultural, sexual/sexist, homophobic, disability names, words, references or suggestions are included. This also includes messages or statements written on internet sites, or as text messages, about others.
- ❖ emotional or psychological: any behaviour, passive or active, which is deliberately unfriendly; including tormenting and any action which makes other people feel uncomfortable, humiliated or excluded; for example spreading rumours, looks, graffiti, intimidating gestures or social exclusion of others. This includes sending messages via text or computer to others in which derogatory or defamatory statements are made about others, and which encourage, support or involve others in abuse or bullying of a third party.

These definitions also include any form of sexual harassment, racial abuse, sexual/sexist and homophobic behaviour, religious intolerance, culturally offensive references or words, inappropriate or offensive references to disability.

Bullying also includes defamatory texts or e-mails, offensive phone calls or any other offensive electronic messages or images. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information in any media including internet sites, social web-sites, mobile 'phones, text messages, photographs, posters and emails.

Responsibilities and Systems

We discourage bullying of any kind by

- ❖ ensuring pupils know and understand that bullying causes psychological damage and may lead to suicide
- ❖ low-profile but frequent patrolling of areas where bullying may occur: for example lunch queues, playing areas and encouraging pupils to also be vigilant to support this
- ❖ monitoring School computers and IT facilities: to identify any instances of cyber-bullying; 'fire-walls', ensuring the security of servers, teaching pupils to safeguard access to their computer site via use of username and confidential password are used to guard against unauthorised or improper use of computers
- ❖ occasional screening of pupils' computer use to ensure no improper use of web-sites by individuals or groups
- ❖ being aware of likely victims: those in class who need support and must not be isolated or humiliated; this is emphasised regularly in staff INSET and staff meetings
- ❖ training teachers: to recognise signs and to take a complaint seriously, to include taking action to reduce the risk of bullying, and to be vigilant around the School
- ❖ highlighting the value of co-operation: so that positive peer pressure reduces the potential for bullying to occur
- ❖ using Assemblies: to survey pupils formally and informally about bullying, and to teach them about bullying, through a variety of methods to include role play for example, and demonstrating strategies showing how bullying may be stopped
- ❖ Using the School Council; to seek and hear pupils' views and opinions about further measures to be taken to increase vigilance and reduce the risk of bullying
- ❖ involving year groups and tutor groups in a variety of activities, to include specifically PSHE, Drama, and English classes, as well as other curricular subjects like historical events, current affairs, drawing, stories and t.v. clips to encourage a collaborative approach and highlight the school's counter-bullying policy and practices
- ❖ identifying outside agencies which can make presentations to staff and pupils about bullying, good behaviour and forging better relationships
- ❖ using assemblies to congratulate those who promote high standards of behaviour and consideration for others
- ❖ involving non-teaching staff, such as matrons, in the implementation of the policy and its procedures
- ❖ giving boarders access to the senior school peer support programme and ensuring all new pupils are looked after in their first weeks in the school

Encouragement to talk to others

The victim of bullying must feel able and confident to talk directly to a teacher, or an older pupil or to a friend who will alert an adult to ensure effective action is taken to stop bullying. To allow this, staff create the right climate by doing the following:

- a) being available, listening objectively, reassuring people that what they say is being taken seriously, and teaching listening skills. This will involve ensuring listeners do not ask leading questions and no promises of confidentiality are given.
- b) discussing with the pupil about what action should be taken and who should be involved in the action. The action must be recorded. A written statement must always be given to the Deputy Head or Headmaster.
- c) communicating clearly the message that keeping silence only protects the pupil perpetrating the bullying.
- d) encouraging parents to communicate with the School if they suspect bullying.
- e) identifying those who can be approached inside and outside school, to include, for example the School Counsellor, nursing staff, independent listener or Childline.
- f) for boarders, the Peer Support 'Listeners' are always available to those who seek such help.

Legal Responsibility

Governing Bodies and Heads have a legal duty under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, and The Education/Independent Schools Standards (England) Regulations 2003, to draw up procedures to prevent bullying among pupils. These will:

- a) ensure all staff have an opportunity for discussing counter-bullying strategies and reviewing them,
- b) determine the strategies and procedures,
- c) discuss the development of the strategies with colleagues,
- d) ensure appropriate training is available, to include listening skills, and
- e) ensure that procedures are brought to the attention of staff pupils and parents.

The Procedures

The Headmaster will review the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy annually with the School's Governors and consider its effectiveness.

The Deputy Head is responsible of the day-to-day management of the policy and systems, ensuring that there are positive strategies and procedures in place to educate potential bullies.

Class teachers are responsible for ensuring that the School's positive strategies are put into practice and that they know the school's procedure in dealing with all incidents.

Teachers will be vigilant at all times, bearing down on any bullying and reporting incidents to the relevant class teacher, the Deputy Head or the Headmaster as soon as bullying is suspected or identified. The Headmaster will, each term, ensure all members of the School are made aware of the School's zero tolerance of bullying, and will stress the importance of good relationships, citing examples of particularly successful behaviour in this area.

Indicators of Bullying

Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy, nervous, feigning illness or clinging to adults. They may show changes in their work patterns, lack concentration or may even truant from School. As people react differently, it is not always possible to tell if someone is hurt or upset.

Encouragement to tell

We create an atmosphere in the school where students who are being bullied, or others who know about it, feel that they will be listened to and believed, and that action taken will be swift and sensitive to all concerned. Not telling protects the bully or bullies and gives the message that they can continue, perhaps bullying others too.

Procedures for dealing with incidents

- ❖ if bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be investigated and dealt with initially and immediately by the teacher. Teachers must act upon and report any instances of bullying.
- ❖ if a racial element to the bullying is suspected, the Headmaster must be informed immediately and the matter will be dealt with via the School's Equal Opportunities policy as well as the anti-bullying policy.
- ❖ where appropriate, the teacher will record the details, immediately or subsequently, of the incident and inform the relevant class teacher who will interview all parties and make a record, and inform parents. The Deputy Head will be kept informed of the details.
- ❖ every effort will be made to resolve the problem through counselling of both parties.
- ❖ teaching and other staff involved with the bullied pupil will be informed.
- ❖ the class teacher, or Houseparent, will determine, in consultation with the Deputy Head, the appropriate strategy to combat the bullying.
- ❖ bullies can reasonably expect to be punished severely for their actions. Part of this will incorporate corrective behaviour action. Their success here will allow them to regain their former reputation as a caring person.
- ❖ it is important to make it very clear to the victim that revenge is not appropriate, and to the bully that his or her behaviour is totally unacceptable, and has caused distress to the bullied.
- ❖ parents of both the victim of bullying and the bully will be informed by the class teacher, Deputy Head or the Headmaster.
- ❖ a copy of the incident report will be logged by the Headmaster in his Office.

If the bullying behaviour continues, and counselling has not worked, then further sanctions will follow. It is important counselling is maintained for both parties, even when sanctions have been applied.

It is also vital that information relating to incidents is carefully recorded in a clear and factual way; this will be done by recording details of the bullying, naming involved parties and detailing actions taken. A copy of this will be held by the Headmaster in his Office.

Further measures specifically related to staff

- ❖ there will be regular updates for staff on bullying
- ❖ discussion by staff of any identified problems arising from implementing the counter-bullying strategy and assessment of its effectiveness
- ❖ sharing amongst staff of new strategies to reduce and eliminate bullying
- ❖ staff discussion of bullying incidents, and any trends identified in the log of incidents kept by the headmaster; class teachers and Houseparents should regularly question their pupils about the existence of bullying at the school

Advice to pupils

If you are being bullied, or you know that someone else is, then tell a teacher straight away, and it will be dealt with. Not telling means the victim will continue to suffer or the bullying will carry on, probably with others too. Victims of bullying will be supported by the School during the investigation, and afterwards. We will agree with you what actions we will take to support you. You and your friends have a responsibility to make sure that bullying does not occur in our School.

Advice to parents

If your child is being bullied, or you are told that this is a possibility, please let the class teacher, Houseparents or Deputy Head know immediately. Please reassure your child that we will deal with any matter sensitively but firmly. If we discover your son or your daughter is being bullied, or has bullied another pupil, we will contact you as soon as possible after the information is made known to us.

Should parents have any advice to pass on to the School about how the risk of bullying or cyber-bullying might be reduced, please put this on paper and send it directly to the Headmaster or Deputy Head. The School stresses the importance of maintaining a strong Home-School Partnership to minimise the risk of bullying occurring in the School.

Advice to teachers

If an instance of bullying occurs or you suspect it is happening, talk to the pupils concerned and ask them what has happened. Do not ask leading questions or promise confidentiality. Either ask them to write the details down, or do so yourself so that it can be passed on to the class teacher, Houseparents or Deputy Head as a matter of urgency.

Particular vigilance is needed at breaks, at lunch, travelling to and from the senior school, in corridors between lessons, in the computer rooms both in class and when pupils are using computers in their own time, to include evenings and weekends, and less accessible areas to teachers like toilets and shower rooms. These are times and places where victims are less visibly supervised and bullying is not as easily seen or identified.

We recognise the importance of personal, social and health education within our school and its potential for influencing very positively the behaviour of all our pupils and staff, particularly as far as counter bullying is concerned.

Remember you are a role-model as far as your own behaviour is concerned and ensure you do nothing which could be perceived as bullying behaviour towards pupils or others, or anything which could suggest you condone bullying or abuse of others.

Advice Source

Safe to Learn – Embedding anti-bullying work in schools.

Delivering the Behaviour Challenge (linked to the White Paper “Building a 21st Century Schools System”) Sept 2009.

CYBER BULLYING

Whilst Barnard Castle Prep School embraces the advantages of modern technology in terms of the educational benefits it brings, the school is mindful of the potential for bullying to occur. Central to the School's counter bullying policy is the belief that, 'all pupils have a right not to be bullied' and that 'bullying is always unacceptable'. The school also recognises that it must, 'take note of bullying perpetrated outside School which spills over into the School'.

The definition of bullying given in the document above makes explicit reference to defamatory texts or e-mails, offensive phone calls or any other offensive electronic messages or images. As a result of the pace of change in telecommunications, the School has produced a policy specifically to address cyber bullying. The success of this policy is reviewed annually by the senior school cyber bullying working group which is chaired by the senior school Deputy Head and which has the Head of IT Resources, the senior IT technician and representative pupil 'user groups'.

Definition

By cyber bullying, we mean bullying by electronic media:

- ❖ bullying by texts or messages or calls on mobile phones
- ❖ use of mobile phone cameras to cause distress, fear or humiliation, to include 'happy slapping' – filming violent physical attacks
- ❖ posting threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating material on web sites, to include blogs, personal websites, social networking sites
- ❖ using e-mail to message others
- ❖ hijacking e-mail accounts
- ❖ making threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating remarks in chat rooms, to include Bebo, YouTube and Ratemyteacher

Legal issues

Parents should be aware of the age limits relevant to social networking sites that indicate that children of Prep School age should not be using them.

Cyber bullying is generally criminal in character. The law applies to cyberspace.

- ❖ It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information in any media including internet sites
- ❖ Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by public means of a public electronic communications network, a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or one of an indecent, obscene or menacing character
- ❖ The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.

School commitments

The School educates its pupils both in the proper use of telecommunications and about serious consequences of cyber bullying

- ❖ in ICT lessons and on occasion in class groups or assemblies, the School will continue to inform and educate its pupil body in these fast changing areas
- ❖ the School encourages its staff to respond effectively to reports of cyber bullying or harassment and has systems in place to respond to it

- ❖ the School endeavours to block access to inappropriate web sites, using firewalls, anti-virus protection and filtering systems
- ❖ the School audits, where appropriate and responsible, ICT communications
- ❖ the School informs parents of its policy on procedures and offers advice about the use of computers by pupils at home

School statement

Whilst education and guidance remain at the heart of what we do, the School reserves the right to take action against those who take part in cyber bullying.

- ❖ all bullying is damaging but cyber bullying and harassment can be invasive of privacy at all times. These acts may also be criminal acts.
- ❖ the School supports victims and, when necessary, will work with the Police to detect those involved in criminal acts
- ❖ the School will use, as appropriate, the full range of sanctions to correct, punish or remove pupils who bully fellow pupils or harass staff in this way, both in or out of school
- ❖ the School will use its power of confiscation where necessary to prevent pupils from committing crimes or misusing equipment
- ❖ all members of the School community are aware they must bring to the attention of senior staff any example of cyber bullying or harassment that they know about or suspect.

Advice to staff

If you suspect or are told about a cyber bullying incident, follow the protocol outlined below:

❖ mobile phones:

- ❖ ask the pupil to show you the mobile phone
- ❖ note clearly everything on the screen relating to an inappropriate text message, to include the date, time and names
- ❖ make a transcript of a spoken message, again record date, times and names
- ❖ tell the pupil to save the message
- ❖ go with the pupil and find the class teacher, Houseparents or a member of the senior management team
- ❖ inform the Deputy Head as a matter of course

❖ computers

- ❖ ask the pupil to get up on-screen the material in question
- ❖ ask the pupil to save the material
- ❖ go to the Head of IT Resources' office with the pupil and show the Head of IT resources the material
- ❖ print off the offending material straight away
- ❖ make sure you have got all pages in the right order
- ❖ inform the class teacher or Houseparents, and the Deputy Head as a matter of course
- ❖ the normal procedures to interview pupils and to take a statements will then be followed and the Headmaster will be informed, particularly if a child protection issue is presented.

Advice to pupils

If you believe you or someone else is the victim of cyber bullying, you must speak to an adult as soon as possible. This person could be a parent, your class teacher, the Houseparents, the Deputy Head or the Headmaster.

- ❖ Do not answer abusive messages but log and report them
- ❖ Do not delete anything until it has been shown to your class teacher, the Head of IT resources, the Deputy Head or the Headmaster (even if it is upsetting, the material is important evidence which may need to be used later as proof of cyber bullying)
- ❖ do not give out personal IT details
- ❖ never reply to abusive e-mails
- ❖ never reply to someone you do not know
- ❖ stay in public areas in chat rooms

Advice to parents

It is vital that parents and the School work together to ensure that all pupils are aware of the serious consequences of getting involved in anything that might be seen to be cyber bullying.

- ❖ Parents can help by making sure their child understands the School statement, and, above all, how seriously the School takes incidents of cyber bullying
- ❖ Parents should also explain to their sons or daughters legal issues relating to cyber bullying
- ❖ If parents believe their child is the victim of cyber bullying, they should save the offending material (if need be by saving an offensive text on their or their child's mobile 'phone), and make sure they have all relevant information before deleting anything
- ❖ they should contact their child's class teacher, or the Houseparents

A meeting can then be arranged with the class teacher or Houseparents, which may involve the Deputy Head and/or the Head of IT resources.

If the incident falls in the holidays, parents have the right to contact the parents of the other child involved. However, as stated in the Anti-Bullying Policy, the school reserves the right to take action against bullying perpetrated outside the school which spills over into the school.

E safety at home

Several sites offer helpful advice to parents, particularly with respect to how they can best monitor their child's use of the computer at home. Important and useful information can be found on the following site:

<http://www.parentscentre.gov.uk/usingcomputersandtheinternet/familycode/>

ICT Code of Conduct

This is displayed prominently in ICT classrooms and the Code of Conduct is explained and discussed with pupils in IT classes.

Support from national bodies

Advice and assistance relating to cyber bullying has been received from several national bodies including:

Val McFarlane, North East Regional Co-ordinator
Anti-bullying Alliance, CDEDC
Enterprise Way, Spennymoor, County Durham, DL16 6YP

John Quinn, Development Director
Beatbullying
Rochester House, 4 Belvedere Road, London, SE19 2AT

Andrew Mellor
'Information on cyber bullying' Paper
Anti-Bullying Network

C.F. Rycroft
Headmaster
January 2010

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