



**BROCKHURST & MARLSTON HOUSE SCHOOLS**  
Including all of the Pre-Prep Department and Early Years  
Foundation Stage



## **PREVENTION OF BULLYING POLICY**

**Brockhurst & Marlston House Schools (the School) is committed to providing the best possible care and education to its pupils, and to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. This policy is written with that commitment in mind, and in accordance with KCSIE September 2024.**

**Reviewed: September 2024**

**Next Review: September 2025**

The School's **Prevention of Bullying Policy** states clearly that the bullying by one member of our community by another will not be tolerated. It aims to raise awareness in all members of the community of various forms of bullying behaviour which exist (physical, verbal, psychological and cyber) and to educate them in ways of identifying and dealing with incidents of bullying if they arise. We aim to prevent incidents of bullying behaviour wherever possible and provide anyone who feels that they have suffered behaviour from another with confidence to confide in others; we also aim to ensure that any person who has shown bullying behaviour is counselled and /or sanctioned appropriately.

Allegations of bullying may, in the most serious cases, raise **child protection** concerns in which case the reporting procedure under the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy should be followed.

### **Definition of Bullying**

The School pays due regard to advice published by the Department for Education (DfE) *Preventing and Tackling Bullying* (July 1017) and *Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff* (2014).

Bullying intentionally hurts another pupil or group physically or emotionally and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It may occur directly or through cyber- technology (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email). **Bullying does not need to be repeated over time for schools to take action.**

### **Methods of Bullying** (this list is non-exhaustive)

Bullying can occur through several types of anti-social behaviour. It can be:

**Physical.** A pupil can be threatened, punched, pushed, kicked, hit, spat at, tripped up or attacked in some other way.

**Verbal.** Verbal abuse can take the form of name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours or persistent teasing. It may be directed towards gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, physical appearance, social disability, or any individual characteristic.

**Exclusion.** A pupil can be bullied simply by being excluded from discussion, conversations or activities, by those they believe to be their friends.

**Damage to property or theft.** Pupils may have their property damaged or stolen. Threats may be

used to force a pupil to hand over property or money to the bully. Bullying can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone, or actions that fall short of direct participation, where someone encourages others to bully, or joins in with laughing at a victim. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidating.

**Cyberbullying** - definition "Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others." (Belsey, [www.cyberbullying.org](http://www.cyberbullying.org)). It is an aggressive, intentional act carried out repeatedly over time, often against a victim who cannot easily defend himself/ herself.

Cyber-bullying could involve communications by various electronic media, including for example:

- Texts, instant messages or calls on mobile phones;
- The use of mobile phone camera images to cause distress, fear or humiliation;
- Posting threatening, abusive, offensive or humiliating material or comments on websites (including blogs, personal websites and social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or YouTube);
- Using email to message others in a threatening or abusive manner; or
- Hijacking/ cloning email or social media accounts. Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve anyone - pupils, other young people, staff and parents.

Bullying on the basis of **protected characteristics** is taken particularly seriously and schools should distinguish incidents of this type of bullying in their record.

The protected characteristics as listed in section 4 of the Equality Act 2010 are as follows:

- a. Age
- b. Disability
- c. Gender reassignment
- d. Marriage and civil partnership
- e. Pregnancy and maternity
- f. Race
- g. Religion or belief
- h. Sex
- i. Sexual orientation.

**Initiation and other ceremonies** may amount to potential bullying and/or child-on-child abuse.

### **Signs of bullying**

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include but are not limited to:

- Unwillingness to return to school
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing or are damaged
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Diminished levels of self-confidence
- Frequent visits to the medical room with symptoms which may relate to stress or anxiety, such as stomach pains or headaches
- Unexplained cuts and bruises

- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiencing nightmares etc.
- Talking of suicide or running away

It is acknowledged that this list is not exhaustive and that these behaviours may have a different underlying cause. All accounts of any of these behaviours or a combination of these behaviours should be investigated and reported as appropriate.

**Bullying is unacceptable.** There are no circumstances in which it can be condoned. Bullying can interfere with social development, it can hinder a pupil's ability to perform at school; and at worse it can be a major contributory factor to serious problems be these physical, emotional or psychological. It does not build character, nor should it be an inevitable part of growing up. It is an unpleasant and, at times, a devastating experience.

- Bullying is serious and can cause both physical and emotional harm (which may cause psychological damage);
- We ensure that it is easy to report bullying, including cyber-bullying and bullying outside school. All staff are trained to listen carefully to pupils who complain that they are being bullied. Records are kept by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach we have adopted and to enable patterns to be identified;
- We raise awareness of staff through training and through frequent reference during thrice-weekly staff meetings, so that the principles of the school policy are understood, responsibilities are known, action is defined to resolve and prevent problems, and sources of support are available;
- We use educational elements such as personal, social and health education (PSHEE), assemblies, projects, drama, stories, literature, with discussion of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language;
- We implement swift and affirmative disciplinary sanctions which reflect the seriousness of an incident and are intended to convey a deterrent effect (strong sanctions such as exclusion may be necessary in cases of severe and persistent bullying);
- We communicate our policy to parents, pupils and staff, and work ceaselessly to create an environment of good behaviour and respect, with helpful examples set by staff and older pupils and celebration of success;
- We involve parents, for example by holding cyber-bullying sessions specifically for parents and we constantly strive to make sure that pupils are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders;
- Parents are made aware of the DfE's useful publication *Advice for Parents and Carers on Cyberbullying*

**In addition to the preventative measures described above, Brockhurst & Marlston House Schools:**

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its charter for the safe use of the internet. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department monitors pupils' use.
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- Issues all pupils with their own personal school email address.
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyber bullying in PSHE lessons, which covers blocking and removing contacts from "buddy lists".
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and

other personal details safe.

- Electronic equipment which may be used for bullying is covered by the school's policy. Mobile phones are not permitted at school except by full boarders.
- The use of cameras on mobile phones or as stand-alones is not allowed in washing and changing areas, or in the dormitories of the boarding house, nor anywhere without supervision of a teacher.

### **Procedures for dealing with reported bullying**

If a bullying incident is reported, the following procedures are adopted:

- The member of staff to whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the pupils involved.
- He/she will inform an appropriate member of the pastoral team as soon as possible.
- The member of staff will calmly explain the range of disciplinary measures that are potentially involved.
- The victim will be interviewed on his/her own and asked to write an account of events.
- The bully, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events.

The incident should be recorded using the 'Unkindness and Bullying Report' form. These are immediately forwarded to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will update the overview monitoring log. This facilitates very rapid searching of names/locations etc. for further monitoring by senior staff. Bullying on the basis of **protected characteristics** is taken particularly seriously and schools should distinguish incidents of this type of bullying in their record.

- The Form Tutor should be informed and, if a boarder, the House Parents. In serious incidents, the Headmaster should be informed.
- The victim will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the alleged perpetrator. It will be made clear to him/her why revenge is inappropriate. He/she will be offered support to develop a strategy to help him or herself.
- The alleged bully will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why his/her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. He/she will be offered guidance on modifying his or her behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions.
- The parents/guardians of all parties should be informed and invited into school to discuss the matter. Their support should be sought.
- A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling, should be agreed.
- This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures.
- A meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode.
- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place.
- In very serious cases, and only after the Headmaster has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to the Social Services. However, it is the policy of Brockhurst and Marlston House Schools to attempt to resolve such issues internally under the school's own disciplinary procedures, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely.
- A pupil who repeatedly bullies other boys or girls may be suspended or expelled, in line with the Schools' Behaviour and Discipline Policy.

## **Review**

All incidents and sanctions relating to unkindness and bullying will be logged (See Appendix 3). These records are monitored by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Each term, the DSL will review the log to identify any trends or concerns and will report these to the Headmaster as part of the termly safeguarding review.

See Appendix 1 & 2 below: **Advice for Pupils and Parental Involvement**

### **Appendix 1: Advice for Pupils**

#### **Advice to children if you think you are being bullied**

- Try to ignore the person who is attempting to bully you
- Walk calmly away from the situation if you can, without retaliating
- Tell someone what has happened, even if you have been warned not to
- Remember that there are likely to be others being bullied by the same person and so you will be helping them too by talking about your experience
- Do not blame yourself
- If it feels safe to do so, say you would like them to stop

#### **Advice to children if you see someone else being bullied**

- Make sure that you do not get involved in the bullying as an easy way out of the situation
- Remember that if you are being a “bystander” and do nothing to help, then you are joining in with the bullying behaviour
- Do not ignore it – think how you would feel in the other person’s position
- Remember that bullying doesn’t go away by itself
- Find a teacher and explain what you have seen/heard
- Remember that we are all responsible for maintaining the culture we would like

#### **Advice on how to try to avoid being bullied**

- Be friendly – friends can help you
- Think positively about yourself – praise yourself every day for something
- Don’t make unpleasant remarks about anyone, even if you intend them as a joke

#### **Advice on how to avoid being a bully**

- Talk about problems rather than taking them out on someone else
- Try to avoid confrontations – find somewhere to cool down
- Think before you act or speak: might your words or actions hurt or upset anybody? (think carefully about all name-calling)
- Think very carefully before sending a text message or an email: could this hurt or upset anybody? Could it be misinterpreted?

### **Appendix 2: Parental Involvement**

Problem solving approaches to bullying which are school based alone may not always work without the support of the parents. The involvement of parents has been found to be effective in deterring persistent bullying. Parents need to show their children ways of dealing with difficult situations without using violence or aggression. Brockhurst and Marston House believes that making parents aware that their child has been involved in bullying demonstrates the fact that the

School takes seriously this matter, seeks to change such patterns of behaviour and welcomes parental support in that process.

### **If your child is being bullied or if you find yourself as a bystander**

Parents along with peers will probably be the first to hear of a bullying incident. They should not dismiss it. Parents should contact their child's Form Tutor, Deputy Head or the Head if they are worried. It is essential to stay calm, supportive and find out the facts of the situation. Reassurance will be needed in order to persuade your child that he/she has done the right thing by telling you. You may find it helpful to have the following checklist at your side to ensure that correct information is passed to the school.

- What happened?
- Who was involved?
- Who saw it?
- Where did it take place?
- How often has it happened?
- Why did it take place?
- What form did the bullying take?

When you inform the School of these details you will want to ask what you can do to support the School in the action taken to support your child. You will also want to make a note of the suggested strategy the School intends to take. Stay in touch with the School so that they can be kept informed of how things are improving and to establish further contact if necessary.

### **If your child is involved in bullying**

It is important to work with the School to modify the patterns of behaviour which are causing your child to bully. It is important to acknowledge that these things do happen and the School has mechanisms in place to deal with this issue. It is helpful to recognise some of the reasons why pupils behave in this way from time to time. Children sometimes bully others because:

- They are not aware of how hurtful it is.
- They are copying the behaviour of older siblings or people they admire.
- They have a temporary difficulty integrating in their peer group.
- They are bullying others because of encouragement from friends.
- They are going through a difficult time personally and need help.
- They have not yet learnt satisfactory ways for making firm friendships.

### **To stop your child from bullying others**

- Talk with your child and help him/her to understand that what he/she is doing is unacceptable as it makes other pupils unhappy.
- Discourage aggressive and violent behaviour at all times.
- Suggest ways of joining in activities with other pupils without bullying.
- Liaise with the School: Form Tutor, Deputy Head or the Head
- Make time to have regular chats about how things are going at school.
- Check that your child has identified an adult at school to whom they can go if they have a problem or a worry of any kind.

N.B. the School will want to and need to take action if bullying occurs. The matter will be sensitively handled but it needs to be effective.

### **If your child is being bullied by a member of staff**

Families that feel that their child is being bullied by a member of staff may, in the first instance, like to consider making an appointment to discuss the matter with the Headmaster. If parents remain dissatisfied, they are encouraged to pursue the matter under the Complaint's Procedure as published on our website.

## **Resources**

### **Advice for parents and families about bullying:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>

### **Organisations who can help**

Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) [www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/)

Bullying UK [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)

Childline 0800 1111

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline 0808 800 5000

## **Appendix 3: Bullying and Unkindness Form**

Please log incidents of bullying and unkindness. The threshold for logging incidents of unkindness: if the unkindness warrants a stripe or detention or needs to be reported to the Heads, please log as an act of unkindness.

This document will be sent electronically to the Heads, DSL, Deputy DSL, Deputy Head and Nurse.

If necessary, the DSL will consult with the Form Tutor and an appropriate course of action will be agreed.

Tracking and monitoring: the process is ongoing but is included in the termly safeguarding review/report.

Please note: whilst bullying may be defined as 'several times on purpose' one incident can constitute a clear case of bullying.

### **Child on Child Abuse**

If the bullying is clearly an example of child on child abuse (including sexual harassment or sexual violence) please alert the DSL, or in his absence, the Deputy DSL immediately and record the incident on MyConcern.

Please refer to the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy for further details on Child-on-Child abuse.