

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Policy reviewed by: James Thompson – Chief Operating Officer

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Reviewer's Signature:



Please note: 'School' refers to Chatsworth Schools; 'parents' refers to parents, guardians and carers.

This is a whole school policy, which also applies to the Early Years Foundation Stage.

POLICY AMENDMENT PAGE

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Anti-Bullying Policy

The School Ethos

“At Benedict House, we are a family where every child is known, valued and encouraged to thrive. Through high expectations, strong relationships and our R.R.I.T.E. values, we develop confident, kind and resilient young people who are ready for the future.”

The policy reflects the school ethos and the curriculum. Its emphasis is on helping children to take responsibility for their own behaviour and caring for others. Educational elements are also included in assemblies, projects, drama, stories, literature, historical events, current affairs and discussion of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language. PSHE Lessons, Circle Time and an annual anti-bullying week are also key features of the school’s strategy to prevent and tackle bullying. The school aims to ensure that bullying is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy.

The school seeks to have effective procedures for dealing with bullying and demonstrate that concerns raised by children or parents will be taken seriously. This is a whole-school policy.

The School recognises that bullying can take many forms and can have a significant impact on a pupil's emotional wellbeing, mental health, safety and educational progress. All reports, concerns and allegations of bullying will be taken seriously, investigated appropriately and addressed promptly.

The School will never dismiss bullying as:

- "banter";
- "just having a laugh";
- "falling out";
- "part of growing up";
- "a joke"; or
- "typical playground behaviour".

Whilst the School recognises that children and young people may sometimes disagree or experience friendship difficulties, all concerns will be carefully considered in order to determine whether bullying, harassment, discrimination, child-on-child abuse or another safeguarding concern may be present. Pupils will always be listened to, supported and reassured that their concerns are being taken seriously.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Cyber-Bullying Policy, the Online Safety Policy, the Behaviour Policy, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (including Prevent), Looked After Children Policy, PSHE Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct.

Aims

- To raise awareness amongst pupils that we must respect all people no matter what their beliefs or persuasions are
- To raise awareness amongst pupils and parents about bullying behaviour and that they should report bullying, including when they find themselves as by-standers (as a by-

stander a person has the responsibility to report immediately what he/she has witnessed)

- To raise awareness about the school's attitude to bullying behaviour via the anti-bullying policy
- To challenge attitudes about bullying-type behaviours and help build an anti-bullying ethos in school
- To raise awareness that hurtful behaviour in young children can develop into bullying in older children and that psychological damage can even result in suicide
- To foster a positive caring atmosphere
- To ensure good supervision in all areas of the school at all times so far as is reasonably practical, including off-site visits and activities and holiday clubs/play scheme
- To raise staff awareness by involving them in training
- To talk openly about bullying with the children so that they can understand the feelings of someone who is being bullied and learn to deal with bullying.

Objectives

- All School Advisory Board members, Directors, staff, parents and pupils understand what bullying is
- All School Advisory Board members, Directors, teachers and non-teaching staff know what the school policy is on bullying, use it to help prevent bullying and follow it when bullying is reported
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises

Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported, and given appropriate counselling, if necessary, when bullying is reported.

Bullying is defined as behaviour, which is:

- Being deliberately hurtful to others (physically, emotionally, mentally or through exclusion)
- Difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves against. This includes;
 - racist, cultural, sexist and bullying related to actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender reassignment
 - bullying on the basis of being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender
 - bullying because of a person's special educational need or disability
 - bullying someone because he/she is adopted or a carer
 - bullying someone because he/she is a Looked After or Previously Looked After child or has a social worker.
- Frightening someone into doing something he/she does not want to do
- Invading someone's personal space to make him/her feel uncomfortable or unhappy
- Taking or damaging someone's property
- Spreading rumours about someone.

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. (Preventing and Tackling Bullying, Advice for Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies, DfE, July 2017). Although bullying is noted usually to be repeated over time, the school will, where appropriate, take action in response to a single incident and keep an appropriate record.

Staff are aware that child-on-child abuse, (including sexual violence and sexual harassment between pupils, and upskirting), is closely allied with bullying and that initiation ceremonies may also have the effect of causing harm, embarrassment or physical or emotional distress. Staff work to raise the pupils' awareness of the potential damage of such incidences in order to minimise their occurrence. Any such issues will be dealt with in accordance with this policy and the safeguarding and child protection policy.

As noted in the DfE Guidance 'Behaviour in Schools 2024', the headteacher has the authority to take disciplinary action in relation to events which take place away from the school premises. (Refer to the Behaviour Policy for further details). In this respect, the school will take seriously and respond appropriately, in accordance with this policy, to reports of bullying, including cyber-bullying, which take place away from school.

As a statutory requirement, the Anti-Bullying Policy is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils via the school website. Its content and implications are discussed with pupils, for example, in lessons, assemblies and other relevant occasions.

The Protected Characteristics and Prejudiced-based Bullying

The Equality Act protects people against discrimination because of the protected characteristics.

The school recognises that people who have a protected characteristic may experience an additional vulnerability to being bullied. Throughout the curriculum and co-curriculum and, in particular, through the PSHE programme, staff work to develop a sense of tolerance and respect towards people who have a protected characteristic, in line with the school's promotion of fundamental British values. Any bullying on the basis of a protected characteristic is taken very seriously. The school's log of bullying incidents enables any issues arising out of a protected characteristic to be identified and characterised to facilitate the monitoring of patterns or trends, the school's success in its anti-bullying strategies and its active promotion of the pupils' well-being.

Cyber-Bullying

Cyber-bullying is bullying that takes place through the use of technology and electronic communication. It can occur through mobile phones, tablets, computers, gaming platforms, social media, messaging applications, websites, email and other digital technologies. Cyber-

bullying may take place at any time and can have a significant impact on a pupil's emotional wellbeing, mental health, safety and educational experience.

The School recognises that online behaviour can have a direct impact on relationships and wellbeing within school. Pupils are therefore expected to demonstrate the same standards of behaviour, courtesy, respect and kindness online as they are expected to demonstrate offline.

Cyber-bullying may include, but is not limited to:

- sending threatening, abusive, intimidating or humiliating messages;
- posting, sharing or encouraging offensive, discriminatory or hurtful comments online;
- spreading rumours or false information through electronic means;
- impersonating another person or creating fake accounts;
- deliberately excluding someone from online groups, chats or activities;
- sharing confidential or private information without consent;
- sharing images or videos intended to embarrass, humiliate or distress another person;
- cyberstalking or persistent unwanted communication;
- manipulating, coercing or encouraging others to participate in online bullying;
- the creation, sharing or distribution of digitally altered or AI-generated images designed to humiliate or target another person; and
- the sharing of nudes, semi-nudes or other intimate images without consent.

The School recognises that cyber-bullying may constitute child-on-child abuse and, in some circumstances, may amount to a criminal offence. Where appropriate, incidents will be addressed in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and may be referred to external agencies, including Children's Social Care and the Police.

Preventing Cyber-Bullying

The School takes a proactive approach to preventing cyber-bullying through education, supervision, safeguarding and the promotion of positive online behaviour. Prevention measures include:

- educating pupils about online safety, respectful communication and responsible use of technology through the curriculum, assemblies, PSHE and pastoral programmes;
- promoting awareness of cyber-bullying, its consequences and how concerns can be reported;
- teaching pupils how to protect personal information, manage privacy settings and report inappropriate online content;
- helping pupils to understand the risks associated with social media, messaging platforms, image sharing applications, live streaming services and online gaming environments;
- reinforcing that behaviour occurring outside school and online may still be subject to school sanctions where it affects the welfare of pupils or the orderly running of the School;
- operating appropriate filtering, monitoring and online safety systems on school devices and networks;

- providing information and guidance to parents regarding online safety and cyber-bullying; and
- ensuring that all staff receive appropriate safeguarding and online safety training.
- Having comprehensive Internet security, with the appropriate filters.
- Teaching children how to stay safe in the online and real world.

The School makes clear that online conduct is subject to the same expectations and standards as conduct within the school environment. The anonymity sometimes associated with online activity does not reduce personal responsibility for behaviour.

Reporting Cyber-Bullying

Pupils who experience or witness cyber-bullying should report their concerns immediately to a trusted member of staff. Parents are encouraged to inform the School promptly if they become aware of any incident that involves a pupil of the School.

The School encourages pupils not to:

- respond to abusive messages;
- retaliate against the person responsible;
- delete evidence before it has been reviewed; or
- attempt to investigate incidents themselves.

Where possible, pupils and parents should retain evidence such as screenshots, messages, emails, photographs, videos or usernames to assist any investigation.

Responding to Cyber-Bullying

All reports of cyber-bullying will be taken seriously and investigated promptly. The School will never dismiss cyber-bullying as "banter", "just online behaviour" or "part of growing up".

When responding to allegations of cyber-bullying, the School may:

- interview pupils involved and any witnesses;
- review available evidence;
- implement support measures for the affected pupil;
- impose sanctions in accordance with the Behaviour Policy;
- engage with parents and carers;
- implement behaviour support or restorative measures where appropriate;
- involve the Designated Safeguarding Lead where safeguarding concerns arise; and
- refer matters to external agencies where required.

The School recognises that pupils involved in cyber-bullying may themselves require support in understanding the impact of their behaviour and in developing safer and more respectful online practices. Appropriate pastoral intervention will therefore be considered alongside any disciplinary response.

Sharing of Intimate Images

Incidents involving the creation, possession or sharing of nude or semi-nude images, AI-generated intimate images, upskirting, sexualised imagery or other forms of image-based abuse will be treated as safeguarding concerns and referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Such matters will be managed in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and current national guidance.

Electronic Devices and Searches

Where there are reasonable grounds to believe that an electronic device contains evidence relating to cyber-bullying, safeguarding concerns or other serious misconduct, the School may search, examine, confiscate and retain electronic devices in accordance with its Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and applicable statutory guidance. Any search will be conducted lawfully, proportionately and with due regard to the welfare and rights of the pupil concerned.

Records will be maintained of significant cyber-bullying incidents, investigations, actions taken and support provided, enabling the School to monitor trends and evaluate the effectiveness of its anti-bullying strategy

Reporting and Responding to Bullying:

The School is committed to ensuring that all concerns relating to bullying are easy to report, are taken seriously and are dealt with promptly, fairly and consistently. Pupils, parents and staff should never assume that concerns are too minor to report. Early intervention can prevent behaviours from escalating and help ensure that pupils feel safe, supported and listened to.

Pupils who experience bullying, witness bullying, or have concerns about the behaviour of others are encouraged to speak to any trusted member of staff as soon as possible. This may include a Class Teacher, Teaching Assistant, or any other member of staff. Pupils may also choose to discuss their concerns initially with a friend, parent or peer mentor, who should encourage them to report the matter to a member of staff without delay.

The School recognises that bullying is not always reported directly by the pupil affected. Concerns may arise through observation, information provided by another pupil, a parent, a member of staff, or through online activity. All concerns will be taken seriously and investigated appropriately.

Initial Response

The member of staff receiving the report will:

- listen carefully and sensitively to the pupil;
- reassure the pupil that they have done the right thing by speaking up;
- make clear that the concern will be taken seriously;
- avoid making promises of absolute confidentiality;

- make an accurate written record of the information provided; and
- report the concern to the Head, DSL or designated senior member of staff responsible for managing bullying incidents as soon as reasonably practicable

Investigation

The School will investigate all reports proportionately and fairly. Depending on the nature and seriousness of the concern, this may include:

- interviews with the pupil raising the concern;
- interviews with the alleged perpetrator(s);
- interviews with witnesses;
- review of written statements;
- consideration of electronic communications, screenshots or online evidence;
- consultation with relevant members of staff; and
- consultation with parents where appropriate.

All incidents and outcomes will be recorded using the School's recording procedures. Records will be held securely and monitored to identify recurring concerns, trends and patterns of behaviour. Copies of relevant records may also be placed on pupil files and safeguarding records where appropriate.

Safeguarding Considerations

Where bullying behaviour raises safeguarding concerns, constitutes child-on-child abuse, involves discriminatory or prejudicial behaviour, sexual harassment, sexual violence, online abuse, sharing of intimate images, or causes reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the matter will be referred immediately to the DSL and managed in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. External agencies, including Children's Social Care or the Police, may be involved where appropriate. The DSL will assess whether the incident meets the threshold for referral to children's social care or the police, in line with the school's Safeguarding Policy and KCSIE (2026).

Outcomes and Support

Following the investigation, the School will decide upon the most appropriate course of action. This may include:

- pastoral support for the pupil experiencing bullying;
- restorative approaches where appropriate;
- parental involvement;
- monitoring arrangements;
- behaviour support strategies;
- sanctions in accordance with the Behaviour Policy; and
- referral for additional wellbeing, counselling or safeguarding support where necessary.

The School recognises that support may be required both for pupils who have experienced bullying and for pupils who have displayed bullying behaviour. Appropriate support and guidance will therefore be offered to all parties involved.

Monitoring and Follow-Up

Following any confirmed bullying incident, the School will monitor the situation carefully to ensure that the behaviour has ceased and that all pupils involved continue to feel safe and supported. Follow-up discussions may be undertaken with pupils, parents and staff, and further action taken where necessary. The Head and DSL will review bullying records regularly to evaluate the effectiveness of the School's anti-bullying strategy and to identify any patterns requiring further intervention.

Staff Guidelines

The Bully:

- Make the bully aware that such behaviour is unacceptable
- Explain clearly and precisely what behaviour is causing distress to the victim
- Discuss the difference between assertive and aggressive behaviour
- Make the bully aware of the consequences if bullying continues
- Discuss ways by which the bully must change his/her behaviour
- Always inform the Head
- Monitor the bully's behaviour over the next few weeks

Whatever the cause, bullying is usually a signal that the bully also needs help. The school will give due consideration as to whether an incident of bullying also gives rise to a possible child protection concern for the perpetrator.

Strategies

Pupils are encouraged to talk to peers and teachers who can then give feedback. Teachers support in a confidential manner.

All pupils undergo training to develop their resilience to bullying and to understand its effects and how to prevent it.

Curriculum areas, such as English and Drama, provide opportunities to explore relationships with bullying as the theme.

Creating an inclusive environment and a school, which builds on positive self-image and commends good and appropriate behaviour in all areas and ages.

Ensuring staff are trained on how to watch for signs, react to and deal with instances of bullying or suspected bullying. This needs to include training on the needs of the pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities. Training on this policy and the school's anti-bullying strategy is included in the induction training of new staff.

Staff are expected to be particularly vigilant in identifying and supporting pupils who may be more vulnerable to bullying, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those in receipt of social care services, young carers, pupils with medical conditions; pupils with mental health difficulties, pupils questioning identity, adopted children or those with English as an additional language (EAL). Tailored pastoral and academic support will be offered to ensure these pupils are not disadvantaged.

Senior Management, teachers and pupil groups regularly present 'Anti-Bullying Assemblies'.

The Head and DSL maintain a central log of bullying and prejudiced incidents, which is reviewed termly to identify patterns and inform strategic action.

Our key message will always be prevention, by teaching pupils that everyone in our school has the right to feel safe and happy, and that bullying of any kind will not be tolerated. This programme of education is aimed at building resilience, to promote and understand the differences between people, and help pupils avoid prejudice-based language.

Discipline and Exclusion

In deciding on appropriate sanctions in relation to identified incidences of bullying, the school ensures that its action is in line with its behaviour policy. Ultimately, parents may be required, during or at the end of a term, to remove a pupil, without refund of fees, temporarily or permanently from the school if, after consultation with a parent, the Head is of the opinion that the conduct of the pupil has been unsatisfactory. These sanctions will be imposed in severe or persistent cases of bullying. The school has an obligation to report to its Local Authority if a pupil is permanently excluded from the school. Following a permanent exclusion, the school will assist the parents in finding a future school. However, upon receipt of a request for a reference, if a pupil has been permanently excluded, if asked, the school is obliged to inform the potential future school about the exclusion.

Evaluation and Assessment

The effectiveness with which the school acts to prevent and tackle bullying is evaluated by the Chatsworth Schools Advisory Board, by the Head, Senior Leadership Team and class teachers. The policy has due regard for the DfE guidance documents, 'Preventing and Tackling bullying, Advice for Head teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies', (July 2017) and 'Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff' (November 2014).

Useful Publications / Contacts for Parents:

- The Anti-Bullying Alliance (anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)
- Kidscape (kidscape.org.uk)
- Cyber bullying: DfE guidance (Cyberbullying Advice for Headteachers and School Staff)
- ChildNet International (childnet.com)
- CEOP's Thinkuknow website (thinkuknow.co.uk)
- UK Council for Internet Safety (uk council for internet safety)
- The UK Safer Internet Centre (saferinternet.org.uk)

Designated Safeguarding Leads

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Prevent Strategy Lead is: Stephanie Tedder

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) is: Laura Baker, James Perkins, Amy Willis-Richards, Matthew Evans

The person responsible for safeguarding, including in EYFS, in Chatsworth Schools is:

Vivianne Thompson – Chair of School Advisory Board and Group Safeguarding Lead.

Interpretation

In this policy, the term “senior manager” means the School Head and their designated deputies.

This policy applies to all employees in all Schools (save for Schools with their own procedure which shall prevail) and other work environments within Chatsworth Schools.

This policy applies within all companies, which are wholly owned subsidiaries of Chatsworth Schools Ltd, a company registered in England, registered number 11552579.

The registered office of all companies is St Botolph Building, 138 Houndsditch, London, EC3A 7AR. Any enquiries regarding the application of this policy made to the above address.