

Reference:	Status:	Approved By:	Date:	Revision:
BC/STC/036	Approved	Resources Governors	25 November 2015	003

# Anti-bullying

## POLICY

### BIDEFORD COLLEGE

"We are working with staff, students and parents/carers to create a school community where bullying is not tolerated."

#### DEFINITIONS AND AIMS

The aim of the anti-bullying policy is to ensure that students learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will students be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at this school.

#### Bullying is:

- deliberately hurtful (including aggression);
- repeated over a period of time, sometimes by one person on many others;
- difficult for victims to defend themselves against.

#### Bullying takes many forms:

- Physical (hitting, kicking and other forms of violence);
- Verbal (name calling, insulting remarks, persistent teasing, sarcasm, spreading rumours);
- Emotional (excluding people from social groups, taking belongings, humiliation, ridicule, tormenting);
- Sexual (unwanted physical contact).
- Cyber-bullying via computers or mobile devices.

Name calling and hostile mobile text messages are the most common direct form of bullying. This may be directed at certain specific characteristics – ethnic origin, colour of skin, sexual orientation, disability, body shape, and other physical characteristics.

#### At Bideford College:

- we aim to educate students and staff to appreciate that all bullying is wrong;
- every student has the right to be safe and to be protected when s/he is feeling vulnerable;
- everyone should feel valued;
- individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted;
- we want a secure, happy and caring environment;
- kindness, sensitivity and helpfulness are expected;

- we teach respect for self and others;
- we will work with other external support agencies to ensure the safety of all.

#### REPORTING BULLYING

Bideford College is a school which believes in openness and honesty. All students and staff are encouraged to report incidents of bullying that they have witnessed or where they are victims.

#### At Bideford College we will:

- Encourage an anti-bullying atmosphere in all that we do, so that bullying is less likely to occur;
- Encourage victims and witnesses to talk to someone about bullying;
- Set up a system where bullying can be reported to a responsible adult by leaving a note in the 'anti-bullying box' (with the nurse in Abbotsham building);
- Treat all incidents seriously however trivial they may seem at first glance
- Be alert for changes in behaviour, attitude and well-being;
- Listen to parental concerns;
- Ask that victims/witnesses help the investigation by making sure that everything the bully/bullies have done or said is recorded.

#### GUIDANCE FOR COLLEGE STAFF

All staff must act firmly, and formally, when bullying is seen, reported or suspected. The evidence is that if reported bullying is dealt with informally with a 'let's shake hands and be friends' type approach then repeated offences are likely to follow. If dealt with through a formal process, such as we have at Bideford College then repeat offences are very rare.

A formal written statement must be made and this given to the relevant Head of Year or Years. They will then instigate the procedures described in this policy.

#### What we will do as a school when a bullying incident is reported:

At Bideford College we will take all reports seriously. We will implement an agreed system to follow up reported incidents of bullying.

- The appropriate Head of Year will appoint a bullying incident investigator (this may be the tutor in the first instance), and issue a 'Bullying Incident Report Pack'.\*

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- The investigator will be expected to record all details of the investigation thoroughly, on the specific bullying report forms in the pack.
- The parent/carer of the victim will be contacted by the investigator to inform them that a bullying report process has begun and the circumstances discussed.
- The victim/witness/bully will be given the opportunity to discuss the bullying incident with the investigator. Victims, witnesses and alleged bullies will be interviewed separately to start with.
- The investigator will put in place immediate support for the victim to prevent any further incidents. This may mean ensuring that the victim is supported by friends or making sure that s/he knows where there are safe places.
- Once complete the Bullying Incident Report should be shared with the appropriate Head of Year and decisions made about the long term welfare of the victim and the sanctions to apply to the bully/bullies (see College Behaviour Policy).
- Throughout the process the investigator should recognise the importance of standard 'Safeguarding' procedures and where evident refer immediately to the designated Senior Designator Officer.

\*The appropriate Assistant Principal will appoint an investigator from incidents reported in the 'bullying box' (currently in Student Reception).

### **GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS/CARERS/FAMILIES**

Parents/carers and families have an important role to play in helping us to deal with bullying. We expect parents and carers to:

- Discourage bullying behaviour in the home
- Encourage their children to build personal self-esteem through participation in activities where children achieve success
- Keep an eye out for signs that their children are being bullied or are bullying other
- Maintain positive relationships with school staff
- Report any concerns they have about bullying to the child's tutor in the first instance.
- Be aware of our Safeguarding procedures and its relevance to bullying behaviour.

### **GUIDANCE TO STUDENTS**

Bideford College believes that progress can only be made if there is positive working relationships and respect between everyone, adult and child. A respectful community is one where bullying is absent and care for each other is clearly evident. Students at the College must be made to understand that being a bystander to bullying is colluding with bullying and therefore unacceptable. Students must know that help

and support is at hand for those that are bullied and also for those that bully (in order that the bullies are supported in their efforts to free themselves from such negative behaviours). Students will be informed of this policy through the curriculum and through the work done in year teams and therefore know how to respond appropriately to incidents that occur.

### **BULLYING: MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

Bideford College will review this policy in line with guidance, and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the College.

### **OTHER STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT STUDENTS**

#### **Antibullying Ambassadors**

We have a small number of trained Antibullying Ambassadors in Years 8-11. They offer lunch time drop in sessions in which students can talk them with friendship issues. They report any such discussions to relevant heads of year or any major concerns directly to the designated Senior Designator Officer. They aim to offer a "first step" discussion so that students know they have others of a similar age who can offer moral support. This is not a confidential service and the ambassadors are trained to only discuss issues with relevant staff members.

#### **Assemblies**

Every year we use assembly time to explore, and reflect, on the issues that surround bullying in school and in the wider world.

#### **Community Groups and Inter-Agency Working**

We recognise that a comprehensive anti-bullying approach will involve the support and help of outside agencies. These will be approached as necessary.

#### **Curriculum**

There are many opportunities within subject teaching for anti-bullying issues to be discussed and explored with children.

#### **Mid-term Admissions**

Anti-bullying information will be provided to all students and parents when they apply for admission to Bideford College.

#### **Year 6 to Year 7 Transition**

Anti-bullying strategies are developed as part of the information process at the critical time of transition from primary to secondary school.

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### Year Councils/School Council

Students will have the chance to feedback issues and develop improvements to policy via their respective Year Councils and the School Council.

### RESPONDING TO CYBER-BULLYING

Cyber-bullying is a form of bullying via the use of computers or mobile devices such as phones and PDAs and includes misuse of text messaging, blogging, instant messaging and social networking. Therefore, Bideford College should, where appropriate, be able to deal with the majority of cases through their existing anti-bullying policies and procedures. Where this is evidently occurring outside the College, and where it comes to the attention of the College, the parent/carer will be given the best advice of how to deal with this by the relevant College staff. Students will be informed of the dangers of cyber-bullying and internet abuse through the work done in the curriculum and through assemblies. Parents/Carers can help prevent this sort of bullying by being attentive to their child's use of social networking sites (eg Facebook, Flickr, Instagram, MSN, Snapchat, Tumblr, WhatsApp), and by monitoring and regulating their use.

### Supporting the Person being Bullied

Bideford College will provide reassurance that the person has done the right thing by telling someone, and will be referred to any existing pastoral support procedures and parents/carers informed.

### They will be advised on the following next steps:

- Make sure the person knows not to retaliate or return the message.
- Ask the person to think about what information they have in the public domain.
- Help the person to keep relevant evidence for any investigation (e.g. by not deleting messages they've received, and by taking screen capture shots and noting web addresses of online cyber-bullying instances).
- Check the person understands simple ways to prevent it from happening again, e.g. by changing contact details, blocking contacts or leaving a chat room.
- Take action to contain the incident when content has been circulated:
- If the person responsible is known, ask them to remove the content;
- Contact the host (e.g. the social networking site) to make a report to get the content taken down.
- Use disciplinary powers to confiscate phones that are being used to cyber-bully. Ask the student to tell you who they have sent messages on to.

- In cases of illegal content, we will contact the police, who can determine what needs to be kept for evidential purposes.

### Investigating cyber-bullying incidents

All bullying incidents will be properly recorded and formally investigated in the way described in this policy. Cyber-bullying can be a very serious matter and can constitute a criminal offence. In UK law, there are criminal laws that can apply in terms of harassment or threatening and menacing communications.

Students and staff will be asked to try and keep a record of the bullying as evidence. It can be useful to show parents/carers, teachers, pastoral care staff and the police, if necessary, what has happened.

We will take steps to identify the bully, including looking at College systems, identifying and interviewing possible witnesses, and contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary. The police will need to be involved to enable the service provider to look into the data of another user.

### Working with the cyber-bully and sanctions

Once the person bullying is identified, steps will be taken to change their attitude and behaviour as well as ensuring access to any support that is required. Factors to consider when determining the appropriate sanctions include:

#### The impact on the victim:

- was the bully acting anonymously
- was the material widely circulated and humiliating
- how difficult was controlling the spread of the material?

#### The motivation of the bully:

- was the incident unintentional or retaliation to bullying behaviour from others?

Technology-specific sanctions for students engaged in cyber-bullying behaviour could include limiting internet access for a period of time or removing the right to bring a mobile into school.

### CONTACTS AND LINKS

Address: Bideford College, Abbotsham Road, Bideford, Devon EX39 3AR

Telephone: 01237 477611

Fax: 01237 429599

E-mail: mail@bideford.devon.sch.uk

Website: www.bidefordcollege.org

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### **Helplines**

Childline: 0800 11 11

NSPCC helpline: 0808 800 5000

Kidscape: 08451 205 204

Bideford Police: 01237 428032

Social Care: 01271 388660 Children and Young People's Services (CYPS)

Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP),

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk) (reporting button)

<http://www.digizen.org/cyberbullying>

### **ASSOCIATED POLICIES/PROCEDURES**

Anti-bullying Leaflet

Behaviour Management Policy

e-Safety Policies

Mobile Phones/Pages Policy

Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

### **REVISION HISTORY**

003 Review (Nov15)

002 Review (May12)

001 Original document