

Barnsley Christian School

Anti-bullying policy

Introduction

This policy was written by Garrie-John Barnes (Headteacher) with reference to the School Management Team and Governing Body and is reviewed on an annual basis. The DfE document “Safe to learn: embedding anti-bullying work in schools” has been referred to in the development of this policy and as such is a key reference point for the development of anti-bullying work at Barnsley Christian School.

What is Bullying?

Definitions of bullying have three common themes

1. It is deliberately hurtful behaviour
2. It is repeated over a period of time
3. It is difficult for those being bullied to stop the bullying they suffer from on their own

Bullying can be defined as

“behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally”

Bullying includes name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, pushing, taking belongings and / or money, inappropriate text messaging and emailing, sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet (cyber-bullying); producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups; and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours. Although sometimes occurring between two individuals in isolation, it quite often takes place in the presence of others.

Specific types of bullying include bullying related to:

- Race, religion or culture
- Special educational needs
- Appearance or health conditions
- Sexual orientation
- Of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances
- Sexist or sexual bullying

Why should we tackle bullying?

We should tackle bullying in school because:

1. The safety and well being of our pupils is of paramount importance. Very often pupils' lives can be made miserable; they may suffer injury; they may be unhappy about coming to school. Over time they may lose self-confidence and self esteem and this may have a long-term effect. Persistently bullied pupils are more likely to be depressed as young adults.
2. Educational achievement may be affected. The effects of bullying may mean that a pupil's ability to concentrate in class is affected and consequently their ability to fulfil their potential academically. A sense of security is important in a school community if pupils are to reach their learning potential.
3. Unchallenged bullying will also have wider negative effects in the school community. For those pupils who get away unchallenged with bullying there will be consequences in that person's relationships and character development. Their relationships with other pupils in the school will be impoverished. Their relationships will be based on fear, control and manipulation and not openness, honesty and compassion.

Aims of the policy

1. To de-escalate and / or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour.
2. To create a school ethos which encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidences of bullying behaviour.
3. To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents / carers.
4. To develop procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way.
5. To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour.
6. To safeguard any pupil who has experienced bullying and to provide support for them.
7. To apply disciplinary sanctions to the pupil causing the bullying and ensure that they learn from the experience.

Strategies for dealing with allegations of bullying

1. All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial, will be investigated and dealt with by teachers in order that pupils will gain confidence in “telling”.
2. Serious cases of bullying by pupils will be referred immediately to the Headteacher who will then inform the Chair of Governors.
3. Parents / carers of victims and / or those responsible for bullying will be informed by the Headteacher as soon as possible of the incident concerned, so that they are given the opportunity to discuss the matter. They are then in a position to help and support their children.
4. Support staff e.g. Teacher’s Assistants and the school caretaker are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, to the teaching staff.
5. In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member, this should be raised firstly with the Headteacher who will then inform the School Management team and Governing Body as appropriate. A course of action will then be decided upon. In the event that a complaint is made about the Headteacher the Chair of Governors should be informed.

Procedures for investigating and dealing with allegations of bullying

1. Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents / carers.
2. In any incident of bullying, teachers will speak separately to the pupils involved, in an attempt to build an accurate picture of the incident.
3. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide useful information in this way. A written record of events and interviews undertaken must be kept and stored in the Headteacher’s office in the incident file.
4. When investigating incidents and allegations of bullying behaviour, the teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why, in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with the matter.

5. If a group is involved, each member may be interviewed individually or in a pair or as a whole group as deemed appropriate. Each member will be asked for his or her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said. Other pupils may also be interviewed to get a clearer picture of events.
6. Incidents of one off aggression will be dealt with according to the school's policy on 'Discipline and The Promotion of Good Behaviour'. If it is concluded that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him or her to see the situation from the victim's point of view.
7. A 'no blame' approach may be used to resolve less serious incidents of bullying.

The 'no blame' approach

- Interview the pupil being bullied and those responsible for the bullying
 - Interview others involved
 - Explain the problem
 - Encourage pupils to identify solutions
 - Meet them again to make sure the matter is resolved
8. Teachers who are investigating cases of bullying will keep a written record of their discussions with those involved. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident.
 9. In cases where it has been determined that bullying has occurred, a meeting with parents / carers of the two parties involved will be arranged as appropriate to (a) explain actions being taken and the reasons for them, referring them to the school policy, (b) discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support actions taken by the school.
 10. Separate follow-up meetings, with the two parties involved will be arranged, with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the victim is ready and agreeable. It is hoped that broken relationships may be restored and that those who have been bullied might be able to forgive those who bullied them so that reconciliation may be achieved. This may be achieved through verbal and / or written apologies. It is vital that remorse is genuine and heartfelt.
 11. Through a programme of pastoral support and sanctions the school will seek to help pupils overcome their bullying behaviour.

Sanctions

Sanctions will depend on pupils' past involvement in bullying and previous sanctions imposed. Detentions for minor, verbal incidents, which are one-offs, may be given but once a pattern of bullying behaviour is identified the support of parents will be sought quickly with the aim of addressing such behaviour.

Pupils may lose break time privileges; eat separately from the rest of their form for a set time or work separately from the rest of their class for short periods. Pupils may be given time on their own where they can calm down and reflect on their behaviour, considering what they need to do to change their behaviour and how they might restore the situation. In this context it may be that they write a letter of apology.

If bullying persists over time then pupils may be suspended for a period deemed appropriate by the Headteacher in consultation with the School Management Team and accountable to the Governing Body. Specific advice and assistance may be sought from the Chair of Governors or another governor if felt necessary by the Headteacher.

In very serious cases and as a last resort the Governing Body may decide to permanently exclude a pupil from school if they exhibit persistent bullying behaviour and refuse to address this.

Anti-bullying in the curriculum

Anti-bullying work forms an important part of the school curriculum and is delivered through the PSHE programme and as such we aim to take a preventative approach with the emphasis on forming constructive relationships and friendships between pupils.

Visitors

- Barnsley YMCA lead anti-bullying workshops
- Leanne Cooper Community Support Officer for Barnsley Town centre takes part in PSHE lessons covering aspects of anti-bullying and anti-social behaviour

Conclusion

The aim of this policy is to assist pupils who have been bullied to feel safe and secure about coming to school. It is our aim that all pupils take a full and active role in the life of the school. The school also aims to support those who have been responsible for bullying behaviour in order that their patterns of behaviour might change permanently and that they might be able to make a positive contribution to the school community.