



Birkenhead High School Academy Anti Bullying Policy

Statement of Philosophy

- Our Academy community is based on an ethos of mutual respect and consideration. The Academy and the GDST are committed to providing a safe and happy learning environment for all
- We do not tolerate bullying, harassment, victimisation or discrimination of any kind and work hard to prevent these or to tackle them if they occur
- Bullying is a whole Academy issue and we take a whole Academy approach in response. Any member of the community may bully or be a victim of bullying: we regard all incidences of bullying equally seriously and in turn expect all staff, students and parents/carers to play their part in preventing and tackling bullying.

Aims of Policy

This policy aims to:

- Try and prevent bullying, as far as possible, and
- Help staff, students and parents/carers deal with bullying when it occurs.

What do we mean by bullying?

The Department for Education defines bullying as 'behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally'.

This can include:

- Physically hurting, harming or humiliating another person or damaging their property
- Verbal abuse such as name-calling or writing unkind notes
- Emotional manipulation such as excluding someone or spreading malicious rumours about them, building negative alliances based on gossip, or deliberately betraying former confidences to humiliate or isolate another student
- Cyberbullying, i.e. via social networking websites, phone calls, text messages, photographs or emails
- Unpleasant remarks or actions related to any of the following:
 - Race, religion or culture
 - Sex (i.e. talking to or touching someone in a sexually inappropriate way)
 - Gender
 - Sexual orientation (e.g. homophobic bullying)
 - Disability
 - Intellectual or other abilities
 - Being adopted, in care or a young carer

Any behaviour that a reasonable bystander would say was intended to hurt or upset the victim is wrong and could constitute bullying, including complicity that may fall short of participating directly in the bullying. It is no justification that the perpetrator says or believes that the victim is not upset or hurt by his or her actions or words.

Much bullying is performed in subtle ways, which are not easy to detect; a bully can use a simple look, word or gesture to a victim to signal an intended threat or insult. Some students are adept at changing a bullying situation into an apparently harmless one when an adult approaches. This makes it all the more important for the victim or another student to be able to come forward to report bullying, and for staff and parents/carers to be alert to symptoms of bullying.

Bullying is always hurtful to the victim and damaging to the whole Academy community. Anyone and everyone who is involved in or witnesses bullying is affected by it. It can cause great distress, unhappiness and psychological damage



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and at its worst lead to suicide. It can also be a criminal offence, for example if the behaviour amounts to harassment or threatening behaviour.

How does bullying differ from banter or friendship difficulties?

Sometimes students can feel hurt or upset because they have fallen out with a friend. This is not the same as bullying.

A teasing remark or a malicious joke?

Bullying: 'to use superior strength or influence to intimidate (someone), typically to force them to do something'. Throughout their education, thousands of children have found themselves subject to endless teasing and have even on occasion been physically hurt. To the victim of this abuse, it is classed as bullying.

Bullying:

- Is deliberately intended to hurt or humiliate
- Involves a power imbalance that makes it hard for the victim to defend themselves
- Is usually persistent
- Often involves no remorse or acknowledgement of the victim's feelings

But what do the bullies themselves think? Are they hurting them maliciously or do they just think it is banter?

Banter: 'the playful and friendly exchange of teasing remarks'. Over the years, the definition of bullying has changed. In the early 1900s, bullying simply 'didn't exist'. With racism and sexism being the 'norm' in society, it was easy to just turn a blind eye to most of the verbal and physical abuse that occurred. Recently however, awareness of bullying has increased massively, with charities and foundations being set up to stop bullying and to help the victims of it. With so much attention being focused on the matter, people are struggling to decide on a single definition which can suit every eventuality. One of the biggest issues of controversy is: Is it bullying or banter?

A common excuse for bullying is passing it off as "banter". Banter is only okay when the feeling of playfulness is mutual between the victim and the aggressor. If the victim is repeatedly feeling under attack and inferior, this is bullying and it needs to be stopped.

Academy staff are ready to help and support students who have fallen out with friends, but such situations will not be treated in the same way as a case of bullying. However, the strategies we use may be similar because we acknowledge that over a period of time the impact on the student may be the same, and the situation could become bullying if it escalates.

Preventing Bullying

We aim to prevent bullying by:

- Fostering a whole Academy ethos of good behaviour, mutual respect, and consideration. We aim to create a safe, happy, and inclusive environment for learning, and encourage students to value diversity and difference, protect the vulnerable, and appreciate how their actions might affect others
- Our staff and older students setting a good example of how to behave towards each other
- Raising awareness about bullying through opportunities in the curriculum, the PSHE programme, assemblies, and national events such as Anti Bullying Week, amongst others
- Developing students' social skills, confidence, resilience and self esteem; and defining the value of assertiveness in relationships as opposed to aggression, whether direct or indirect
- Making it clear to all that there are effective procedures for reporting, investigating and tackling bullying



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- Making it clear to all that incidents of cyberbullying or bullying of any kind that occur off the Academy premises but have an impact on the classroom environment or relationships between students will be pursued with the same seriousness as bullying occurring within Academy
- Making it as easy as possible for students who are being bullied to talk to someone they trust and get help confidentially
- Having a strong pastoral team dedicated to student welfare and experienced in dealing with bullying issues. All our staff are trained in recognising and responding to bullying and staff awareness is raised through regular discussion of student issues in pastoral meetings. Action is taken to reduce the risk of bullying where and when it is known to be most likely to occur. The member of staff with overall responsibility for anti-bullying work is Mrs K. Earle (Vice Principal) in the Senior School and Mrs B. Carter (Head of Juniors) in the Junior School.
- Taking students' views into account through the School Council, and developing the roles that students can play in anti-bullying work, for example 6th formers supporting Y7s via the Big Sister programme.
- Ensuring all students sign up to the Academy's Acceptable Use Agreements. The Academy also makes more detailed information on how to deal with cyberbullying available to students via assemblies, form activities and PSHE and via the Principal's newsletter for parents/carers.
- Working in line with national guidance, and the requirements of our regulatory bodies.

Being aware – possible signs of bullying

Changes in behaviour that may indicate a student is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to go to school or return after a break
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, work that appears to have been copied, or interfered with or spoilt by others
- Belongings suddenly going missing or being damaged
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, sitting in the library instead of going out at playtime/break)
- Diminished levels of self confidence
- Inability to concentrate
- Anxiety, depression, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Reluctance to leave the classroom at the end of lessons or Academy day
- Choosing the company of adults
- Frequent visits to the classroom teacher or Progress Leader with symptoms such as stomach pains or headaches, especially at particular times or during particular lessons
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Difficulty in sleeping, nightmares
- Talking of suicide or running away

Although there may be other causes for these symptoms, teachers, parents/carers and fellow students should be alert for these possible signs of bullying and contact a teacher (Juniors) or Form Tutor/Progress Leader (Seniors) if they are concerned.

Dealing with Bullying

If you are being bullied:



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- Stay calm and try to appear confident. Tell the bully to stop and get away from the situation as quickly as you can
- Do not suffer in silence: talk to a member of staff. This could be your class teacher, form tutor or Progress Leader, the Student Welfare Lead Professional or Learning Mentor, or any other member of staff you trust. If you are unhappy about talking to a member of staff directly, you could talk to someone in your family, a friend or 'Big Sister'. Telling does not make you a 'grass' or 'snitch': not telling means that the bullying is likely to continue. Remember you may not be the only victim
- Be assured that we take every report of bullying seriously and will act upon it, even if it occurred outside the Academy. We will keep records of what has happened, and consult you and support you in whatever action we take
- Remember being bullied is not your fault – nobody ever deserves to be bullied

If you know that someone else is being bullied

- Talk to a member of staff, so that the Academy can take steps to help the victim
- Stand up for them – studies show that one of the most effective ways of stopping bullying is for fellow students to show their support for the victim
- Be sceptical about rumours concerning other students. Don't add to them. Put yourself in the position of the person targeted
- Don't be drawn into simply standing by. Many perpetrators will not persist in bullying unless they have an audience to play to, and by not taking action it could be argued you are condoning what is happening

What the Academy will do

The exact course of action will vary with each situation but the main objectives should be that bullying incidents are brought into the open and strategies agreed to help resolve the problem using Restorative Justice procedures (Appendix I).

- All reports of bullying will be taken seriously and investigated immediately
- Everything that happens will be carefully recorded
- The most important thing is to stop the bullying and ensure the victim is safe
- We aim for a peaceful resolution: revenge is not helpful for the victim or appropriate
- The victim will be supported throughout the process
- Guidance and help will be available for the perpetrator to help change her behaviour
- Staff will monitor the situation to ensure that the bullying does not continue. If bullying recurs, further action will be taken
- In any serious case of bullying the Principal will be informed and the Academy will work with the parents/carers of both the victim and the perpetrator. The Academy will remain in regular contact with parents/carers until the situation is resolved
- A bullying incident will be regarded as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' (Children Act 1989). Where this is the case, after the Principal has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to Children's Social Care and in certain cases the police
- The Academy will keep a log of all bullying incidents which is monitored in order to identify trends and inform preventative work in the Academy and future development of policies and procedures.

Sanctions

Where students do not respond to the measures put in place to resolve the issue it will be necessary to use the sanctions outlined in the Academy's behaviour policy. Any sanctions imposed will be fair, proportionate and reasonable, take account of any special educational needs or disabilities that students may have, and consider the needs of vulnerable students.



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Cases of severe or persistent bullying may lead to fixed term or permanent exclusion.

Partnership with Parents/Carers

We believe that working with parents/carers/guardians is essential to establishing the Academy's anti-bullying ethos and resolving any issues that arise

- Parents/carers are encouraged to reinforce the principles of the Anti-Bullying Policy at home
- Parents/carers are asked to let Mrs B. Carter (Juniors) or Mrs K. Earle (Seniors) know directly if they have cause for concern, either on behalf of their own children or because of rumours about others
- In any serious case of bullying parents/carers will be informed by the Academy and may be invited in to discuss the matter. We will keep in regular contact with parents/carers until the issue is resolved

Links to other policies

This policy operates in conjunction with:

- BHS A Behaviour Policy
- BHS A Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- BHS A Acceptable Use Agreements
- GDST/ATB Inclusion Policy
- GDST/ATB Equal Opportunities Policy
- PSHE schemes of work
- SEAL and Learner Quality initiatives

Monitoring and evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy and the Academy's anti bullying strategies will be evaluated annually through a review of the bullying log and consultation with the School Council.

This policy will be reviewed annually and ratified by the Local Governing Body.

Key Contacts

- Mrs K. Earle (SLT member with lead responsibility for anti bullying: Seniors)
- Mrs B. Carter (SLT member with lead responsibility for anti bullying: Juniors/EYFS)
- Year Group Progress Leaders/Form Tutors/Classroom Teachers
- Student Welfare Lead Professional/Learning Mentor
- Childline Tel: 0800-1111

Other resources which may be useful:

“Don't Suffer in Silence' publication :http://www.cornwallhealthyschools.org/documents/dfes_bullying_pack.pdf

DfES documentation:

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



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Appendix I: Restorative Justice Procedures

Restorative Justice at BHSA

Restorative approaches provide an underpinning ethos and philosophy for making, maintaining and repairing relationships and for fostering a sense of social responsibility and shared accountability.

There are many challenges in implementing an organisation or institution-wide approach since the restorative way challenges deeply-held notions about power and control and the urge to make things unpleasant for someone when they have done something wrong or 'misbehaved'.

When harm has been caused by inappropriate, sometimes thoughtless, negative behaviour then all sides need:

- a chance to tell their side of the story and feel heard
- to understand better how the situation happened
- to understand how it can be avoided another time
- to feel understood by the others involved
- to find a way to move on and feel better about themselves

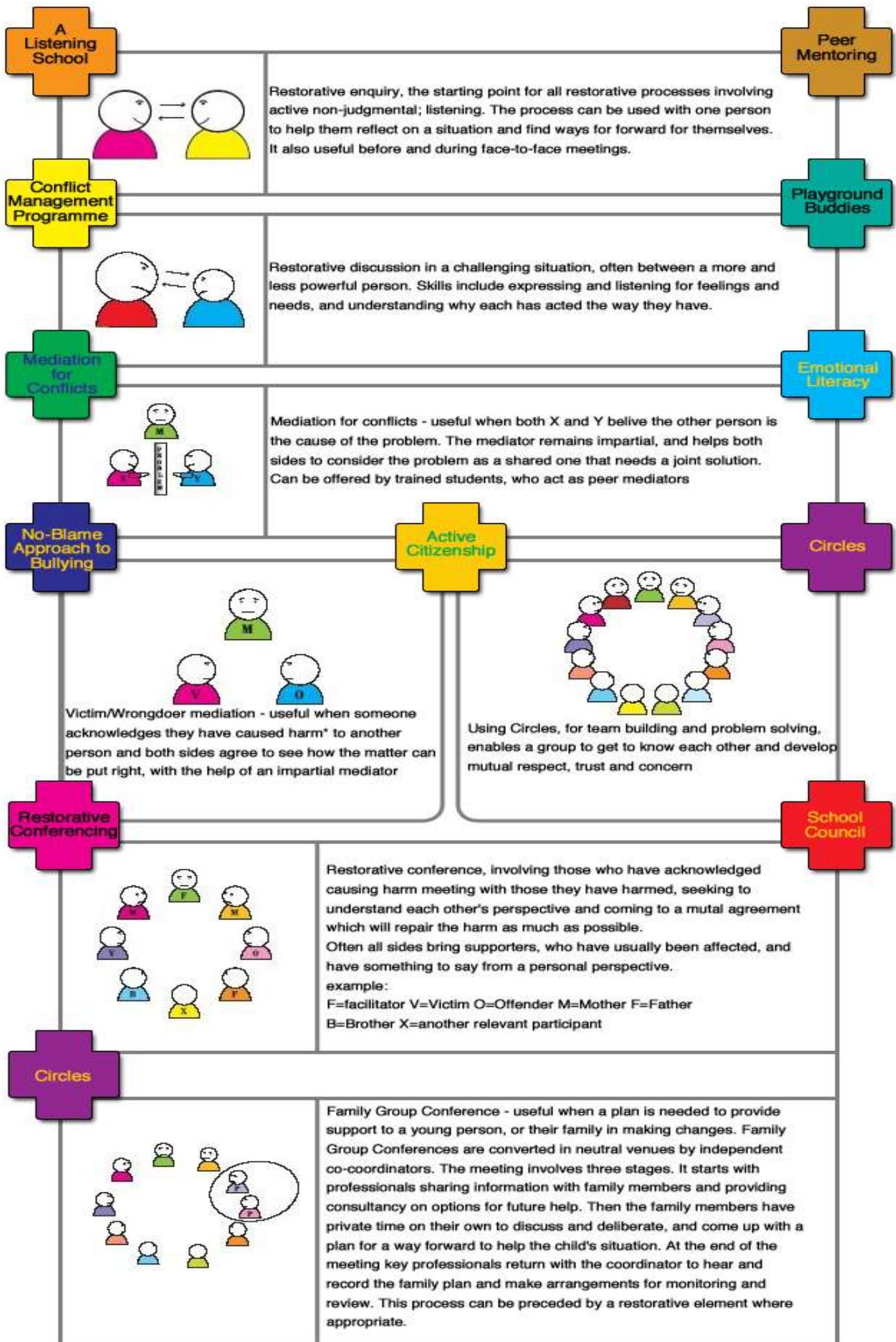
If conflicts and challenges are dealt with in a way that get these needs met then those involved can repair the damage done to their connections with the others involved, or even build connections where there were none previously. They feel fairly treated and respected, since they have been trusted to find solutions for themselves and put things right in their own way. Because they have been listened to, people in conflict are more ready to listen to others' perspectives and emotional responses, and so empathy is developed. This can change the choices made in future situations, as mutual respect and consideration develop.

Punitive disciplinary responses, on the other hand:

- cause resentment rather than reflection
- are rarely considered fair
- do not repair relationships between those in conflict and indeed can make them worse
- leave those labelled as wrongdoers feeling bad about themselves leading to further alienation
- can often leave those people expected to act punitively feeling uncomfortable and frustrated – and wishing there was an alternative

Environments that have had most success in the implementation of a restorative approach are those that have seen it as part of an ongoing plan to develop relationship skills, emotional literacy, health and wellbeing and distributed leadership opportunities. In educational environments this also includes participatory and collaborative teaching and learning and peer support. At BHSA, the Form Tutor, Class Teacher, Progress Leader, Student Welfare Lead Professional or Learning Mentor will also support students as far as their time allows.

By seeking to build cohesive, compassionate communities wherever people live and work together, restorative approaches also address community cohesion in practical and pragmatic ways.





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Restorative Justice Student Proforma

Name: _____ Form: _____ Date: _____

Restorative Justice at BHSA

When you have done something that has caused upset to someone else, we feel you need time to think about your actions, discuss what happened and put things in place to ensure they don't happen again.

We call this Restorative Justice.

Step-by-step we give you:

- a chance to tell your side of the story and feel heard
- to understand better how the situation happened
- to understand how it can be avoided another time
- to feel understood by the others involved
- to find a way to move on and feel better about yourself

Please write below the following questions :

1) How can this situation be avoided in future?

2) How do you think (name) felt when you did this?

3) What steps can you take to avoid (eg.pushing or shoving someone when you feel angry or annoyed).....?

4) How can we help with this?