

Anti - Bullying Policy

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Section 1

‘Every child is unique – in characteristics, interests, abilities and needs; and every child has the ability to enjoy his or her rights without discrimination of any kind.’

(Thomas Hammarberg 1997)

Background

Briarwood School is a special school which provides education for children with severe learning disabilities (SLD) including autism spectrum disorders (ASD), profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) and complex needs (CN), aged 3 to 19 years. This policy sets out the procedures for dealing with bullying and has been written with reference to *Safe to Learn – Bullying of Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – Embedding Anti-Bullying work in School* (2008) and *Preventing and tackling bullying - Advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies* (2017). This policy should be read with the Briarwood School Behaviour Management Policy.

Policy

The children and young people at Briarwood School have a wide-range of complex needs. As a school community we understand that bullying in this context can have additional subtleties and raise issues that are in themselves complicated to resolve. Not all learners at Briarwood will recognise bullying behaviour if they experience it or/and may be unable to express or communicate their aversion to and also to respond appropriately to instances of bullying behaviours. Equally not all students would recognise that certain behaviours directed towards others may be undesirable or that they might be construed as bullying.

Ethos

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Students are given every opportunity to express their feelings in the most appropriate form of communication. We aim to support and teach skills to increase desirable behaviours through the development of individual Engagement targets (see Engagement Policy), bespoke Positive Behaviour Plans (See Positive Behaviour Management Policy) and our Life Skill and Creative Curriculum (See Curriculum Policy). As a school we have committed to following the 10 Key Principles (Appendix 1) to prevent and respond to bullying as set out by the Anti-Bullying Alliance.

Aims

- All governors, teaching and non- teaching staff and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying and what they should do if bullying arises.

- To provide a happy and secure school environment for all students and staff.
- To ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied.
- To promote consistency of approach and create an environment in which all types of bullying are considered unacceptable.
- To react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way.

Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Section 2

Defining Bullying Behaviours

The Department for Children, Schools and Families publication *Safe to Learn – Bullying of Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – Embedding Anti-Bullying work in School. (2008)* describe bullying as ‘Behaviour by an individual or a group usually repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally’. Bullying behaviour which may occur in school usually has common features including:

- It is deliberate, hurtful behaviour;
- It is repeated, often over a period of time;
- It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves;
- It is often aimed at certain groups because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation. Research has shown that some groups are more vulnerable to bullying. These include SEND, Looked After Children, Young Carers, Minority Ethnic groups and LGBT.

Bullying behaviour can cause feelings of distress, fear, loneliness and lack of confidence in those that are at the receiving end. The four main types of bullying behaviour:

- Physical: hitting, kicking, pushing, taking belongings.
- Verbal: name-calling, insulting, racist or discriminatory remarks attributed to gender or sexual orientation.
- Indirect: spreading nasty stories or rumours; excluding from groups, being ignored, intimidation or threatening behaviour.
- Cyber bullying: using IT particularly the internet and mobile phones, to deliberately upset someone.

The Behaviours of Children with SLD and the Characteristics of Bullying Behaviours

The children attending Briarwood School have a diagnosis of SLD and associated needs. Cognitive understanding and communication impairment are strong factors in how/what the children and young people communicate. As the DFE anti-bullying guidance notes, children with special educational needs and disabilities may not be able to articulate their experiences. Therefore, Briarwood proactively teaches children/young people to understand what is meant by the definitions above and how to resolve any bullying situation.

Learners who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy, nervous, feigning sickness, refusing to come to school, clinging to adults, refusing to remain in class. It is important that all school staff are alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against any form of bullying in line with the roles and responsibilities listed below.

It is also possible that one child may develop an obsession with another child or display undesirable behaviours towards others through high anxiety levels. These may manifest in potentially harmful behaviours such as kicking, biting, pinching, hitting or throwing objects.

Staff have a duty to be vigilant to these behaviours and the fear/anxiety that the ‘target’ child may have. Incidents of bullying with or without intent are recorded on Sleuth. Any incidents of bullying will be reported to a member of the Executive/Senior Leadership Team (ELT/ SLT). It is important that this information must be shared amongst all members of the class team and other members of staff as soon as possible.

Prevention and Resolution

Detailed observations will be made of the outcomes of the behaviours and links made to establishing possible functions. This information will then be used to identify appropriate strategies to support the development of desirable behaviours. From this bespoke Optimum Learning Maps will be developed and shared with all appropriate staff involved with the child/children. The possible functions of the behaviour may include:

- Attention (from the child or from an adult)
- Task avoidance (the child may not want to complete the work or demands made)
- Reinforcement (the child is reinforced by the sensory input)
- Access to a tangible object (i.e. snatching a toy from another child)

The Briarwood Life Skill and Creative Curriculum will underpin the social skills taught through targets set in termly Learning Maps and support the development of an ethos of co-operation and respect for all. Activities to develop social and emotional literacy skills will be taught through PSHE, via the Myself Curriculum and Language and Communication sessions; with a specific focus on celebrating differences. Targeted support will be provided via the intervention programme for identified children that have displayed inappropriate behaviours towards others.

Staff are important role models for the children. The behaviour of adults towards each other and towards the children is a potentially highly effective tool for preventing and for decreasing bullying behaviours.

It is important to support the child who is the target of the bullying behaviour, particularly as they may have difficulty communicating about their experiences. Opportunities will be created for the child to communicate with adults how they may be feeling through the use of their preferred communication systems (PECs, Makaton signing, symbol books). Social stories may also support the child's understanding of the situation and associated emotions. Emotional Health and Wellbeing interventions will provide targeted support for identified children. The school also employs a Child Therapist who is able to provide additional support.

All pupils at Briarwood School will be provided with a meaningful way to comment and feedback on how safe they feel in school. This will be supported by strategies and resources created through Pupils Voice. This information gained will be used to inform future school improvement.

Section 3

Roles and Responsibilities

Senior Leadership Team

- To ensure that the whole school is promoting equality and inclusion.
- To support anti- bullying strategies.
- To oversee the implementation of the Anti – Bullying policy.

All Staff

- Ensure that all incidents of bullying are reported to SMT or SLT.
- To be vigilant and constantly monitor the pupils for bullying – related behaviour and follow the procedure when evidence points towards bullying taking place.
- To model high standards of behaviour and have high expectations from all the students.
- To maintain a positive attitude towards all pupils.

Pupil Voice

- Where appropriate pupils will be involved in exploring bullying and its impact through PSHE and Myself Curriculum. This will include the role of friendships, peer support and celebrating individuality. This can involve a variety of educational opportunities, such as discussion and role-play.
- The pupils can express their feelings and thoughts through: student council, annual reviews, Education Health Care Plans, everyday communication with staff. School staff should be vigilant for signs that a learner may be subject to bullying behaviour.

Reporting & Recording

Step 1 – Safety of those involved

- Be proactive and act upon early warning signs. If you are concerned that a pupil is being bullied or is the instigator, inform a member of SMT or SLT.
- Following a suspected incident of bullying, staff must record the incident on Sleuth as a Pupil on Pupil Incident. All incidents must be reported within 24 hours to a member of SMT or SLT.
- The Heads of School will review the Pupil on Pupil Incidents **weekly** and will determine whether any of the inputted incidents were 'bullying behaviours'. The Head of School will then label this incident as bullying on Sleuth.

Step 2 – Prevent from Reoccurring

- The Head of School will produce a **termly** pupil on pupil Incident analysis report that will include all the actions taken in order to reduce incidents and the interventions that need to be put in place in order to support both the victim and the instigators.

Monitoring

Step 3 – School Learning and Reflection

- Heads of Schools will formally monitor incidents of bullying each term.
- Positive Behaviour Support strategies and Optimum Learning Maps will be under constant informal review within class teams.
- Peer on Peer incidents will be reviewed termly and cross referenced with Vulnerable Plus and attendance data.
- Monitoring information will be reported to school governors twice a year.

- A debrief will be provided to those involved and there will be an opportunity for reflection.

Working with Families

Close work with the family is essential part of our work at Briarwood. Parents need to be confident that any concern of bullying will be investigated. Parents / Carers please let the school know if there was an incident at school that your child/ young person is anxious about and we will work together to resolve any issues arising from the incident. If as parent/ carer you are concerned about your child / young person at school please contact the school and ask to speak to a member of SLT or the class teacher.

Links with Other Briarwood Policies

- Positive Behaviour Management Policy
- Child Protection / Safeguarding Policy
- E-safety Policy
- Relationship Policy

Reference List

Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) – <https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008) “Safe to Learn – Bullying of Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – Embedding Anti-Bullying work in School”

Department of Education (2017) ‘Preventing and tackling bullying, Advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies’

DfE (2011) Research Brief: “The Use and Effectiveness of Anti-Bullying Strategies in School”

DfE (2014) “Preventing and Tackling Bullying”

GOV.UK (2017) “Bullying at School”

Appendix

Appendix 1 – Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) 10 Key Principles

Review Date: February 2022

Appendix 1

10 Key Principles

Briarwood School:

1. **listens** - all pupils and parents and carers are listened to and influence strategies and approaches to prevent, report and respond to incidents of bullying.
2. **includes us all** - all pupils, including those with SEND, are included, valued and participate fully in all aspects of school life.
3. **respects** - all school staff are role models to others within the school in how they treat others.
4. **challenges** - all forms of discriminatory language – including disablist language – is challenged taken seriously.
5. **celebrates difference** – difference is actively and visibly celebrated and welcome across the whole school.
6. **understands** - all school staff, pupils and parents and carers understand what bullying is and what it isn't.
7. **believes** - all pupils, including disabled children and those with SEN, and their parents and carers are acknowledged, believed and taken seriously when reporting incidents of bullying.
8. **reports bullying** - all pupils within the school and their parents and carers understand how to report incidents of bullying.
9. **takes action** - we respond quickly to all incidents of bullying. Pupils, including disabled pupils and those with SEN, participate fully in decisions made about them and help to formulate appropriate action to respond to incidents of bullying.
10. **has clear policies** - our school's anti-bullying policy reflects these principles and is embedded within other school policies. They are widely and actively promoted to school staff, pupils and their parents and carers.