

Prevention of Bullying Policy

Berkhamsted Prep and Pre-Prep

Berkhamsted Senior Schools & Sixth

Heatherton

Berkhamsted Day Nursery Ltd.

Berkhamsted School Enterprises Ltd.

Revision and Terminology: Please refer to the School's Policies Policy.

Policy owner:	Headteacher of Senior Boys
Type of policy:	Regulatory
Regulatory Body:	Department for Education / Independent Schools Inspectorate
Relevant Legislation / Guidance:	Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended) (Please refer to guidance mentioned in main body of policy)
Last reviewed by / date:	Exec on 3 October 2019
Last approved by / date:	Governors' Risk & Regulatory Committee on 12 November 2019
Next review due:	Michaelmas 2022
This version published:	29 March 2022
Circulation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ All Staff & Governors ✓ School Website ✓ Senior & Sixth Pupils <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Inspection Portal ✓ Parent Portal
Linked Policies:	Behaviour and Discipline Child Protection and Safeguarding IT Acceptable Use (Pupils) Online Safety Staff Protection Policy

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Scope of this policy

1 Definition of Bullying

- 1.1 Repeated verbal or physical actions over time or a single act of great significance that intentionally hurts another pupil or group physically or emotionally and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted, is a Looked After Child (CLA) or a Previously Looked After Child (PLA), or is a carer. It might be motivated by actual differences between children or perceived differences. It may occur directly or through cyber-technology (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email).

2 Statement

- 2.1 The Berkhamsted Schools Group, in line with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended), is committed to providing a caring and safe environment for all pupils and staff. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. If bullying does occur, all pupils or staff should be able to report the incident and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We recognise that bullying, both physical and emotional is serious and may cause psychological damage. Strong sanctions such as exclusion may be necessary in cases of severe and persistent bullying. In appropriate circumstances, restorative approaches may be applied in conjunction with sanctions, or as an alternative response. Within the Group, the aim is to create an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know this is the right way to behave. Values of respect for staff and other pupils and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others are reinforced by staff.
- 2.2 Guidance has been sought from the DfE document [Preventing and Tackling Bullying July 2017](#) when creating this policy and reference made to the Equality Act 2010 and Children Act 1989.
- 2.3 Peer on peer abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to: bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).
- 2.4 This policy relates to pupils only. For any bullying incidents towards members of staff refer to the Staff Protection Policy.

3 Aims:

- 3.1 Provide an environment where everybody feels secure, respected and valued;
- 3.2 Create an atmosphere which builds pupil self-esteem;
- 3.3 Zero tolerance to any form of harassment or bullying;
- 3.4 All reported incidents are listened to and followed up with swift action when necessary;
- 3.5 Staff to act as positive role models in terms of communication and respect for each other;
- 3.6 Minimisation of the opportunities for bullying (e.g. appropriate supervision and vigilance)

- at key times in the school day, such as break and lunchtimes);
- 3.7 Implement a structured PSHE (PD - Personal Development) programme (including assemblies, drama, projects, stories) which aims to develop personal and inter-personal skills and deals specifically with the issue of bullying;
 - 3.8 Contact with personal tutors or form teachers for every pupil on a regular basis;
 - 3.9 To provide Internet security, filtering and ICT education;
 - 3.10 To undertake an annual wellbeing survey to raise awareness and reflect on positive actions that may be developed as a result of this;
 - 3.11 Ensure pupils are made aware of and have access to additional support within school, e.g. prefects, teachers, counsellor, nurse, chaplain;
 - 3.12 Ensure that pupils have contact details for external agencies, e.g. ChildLine.
 - 3.13 Provide a smooth transition of pupils to Berkhamsted from other Schools and *within* Berkhamsted between Key Stages.

4 Procedures to Follow for the Reporting of Bullying

- 4.1 Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'.
- 4.2 Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications - could be a criminal offence. If the School feels that an offence may have been committed, then it may seek assistance from the police.
- 4.3 Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises to such an extent as is reasonable. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises. Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it may be investigated and acted upon. This includes incidents of bullying occurring on school transport. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying the teacher can only discipline the pupil on school premises or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the staff member. (see Behaviour and Discipline in School Policy)
- 4.4 The school promotes the idea that caring for each other is of prime concern. All situations are dealt with promptly and talked through thoroughly. We seek to gain a clear picture of the situation and clearly explain ideas about unfairness, cruel actions and the consequences of such actions.
- 4.5 All staff should be vigilant and aware of the Signs and Symptoms of bullying (see paragraph on Signs and Symptoms). They should deal promptly with suspected or actual bullying and report to the Head of House or Form Teacher, Boarding Staff and senior staff as appropriate. (see Behaviour and Discipline in School Policy).
- 4.6 During a Disclosure of Bullying
 - 4.6.1 Explain to the person disclosing bullying that if you feel they may be at risk, you cannot promise confidentiality.
 - 4.6.2 Explain to them that you will discuss with them how to proceed, so they can be as comfortable as possible with the actions to be taken and you are able to

sustain their confidence.

- 4.6.3 Initially establish the facts; ask open-ended questions; listen, believe and support pupils who say they have been bullied.
- 4.6.4 If possible, gain a written account of what happened from both the alleged victim of bullying and the alleged bully, asking them to express their opinions; the written records should be dated and signed, from all parties present. Witness statements should be included as appropriate. Statements and Interviews should be conducted in the presence of a responsible adult, whenever possible. Statements about possible consequences should not be made.
- 4.7 Following a Disclosure of Bullying
- 4.7.1 Inform the appropriate Head of House or Form Teacher who should ensure that a full record of the incident has been made and that the truth of the incident has been established as far as possible.
- 4.7.2 The Head of House or Form Teacher will then make a decision on how to proceed with the problem in consultation with the member of staff involved.
- 4.7.3 The Head of House or Form Teacher/Senior Manager/Deputy Head/Headteacher will meet separately with the alleged bully and victim to discuss the specific incident(s) and the general situation in order to identify the cause of the bullying; depending on the seriousness of the incident(s) or general situation, parents may be invited to this or a further meeting; appropriate sanctions will be imposed which will follow from the School's Behaviour Policy. Sanctions will reflect the seriousness of an incident and convey a deterrent effect. Please refer to the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy with specific reference to Appendices 1 – 5 which give information on the procedures within each specific school. It is important to consider the motivations behind bullying behaviour and whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is the case, the child engaging in bullying may need support themselves and therefore Restorative Approaches may also form part of the School's response to an incident of Bullying. (see Behaviour and Discipline in School Policy)
- 4.7.4 Boarding staff should be informed in cases involving all boarders. Good behaviour is promoted amongst the School's Boarders, who follow whole-school policies. In addition, procedures specific to boarding are detailed in the Boarding Pupil Handbook.
- 4.7.5 Cyber-bullying will be investigated using the same procedures, with support from the ICT technical team, the Director of Digital Learning, the DSPs and the DLP where appropriate. The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images on electronic devices, including mobile phones. (see the Online Safety, ICT Acceptable Usage (Pupils) and Child Protection and Safeguarding policies and 2014 DfE advice on Cyberbullying:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/374850/Cyberbullying_Advice_for_Headteachers_and_School_Staff_121114.pdf)

- 4.7.6 Counselling should be used to support both the victim and bully in order to help change attitudes and behaviours. The situation will continue to be monitored by the Head of House or Form Teacher for an appropriate length of time after the incident has been resolved.
- 4.7.7 Records must be kept on My Concern to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted and to enable patterns to be identified.

5 Monitoring Bullying

- 5.1 A record of bullying incidents is kept via My Concern and we aim to keep parents informed of any action taken by the school. Bullying behaviour is not tolerated and any child/children involved are monitored carefully. The staff are proactive in looking for signs of issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and develop strategies which might prevent bullying occurring in the first place.
- 5.2 Bullying is monitored in school through:
 - 5.2.1 My Concern
 - 5.2.2 Pupil questionnaires such as annual wellbeing survey;
 - 5.2.3 Staff vigilance and good pupil/staff relationships;
 - 5.2.4 Making bullying an item on the agenda of Heads of House Meetings when appropriate;
 - 5.2.5 Heads of School monitor My Concern records half termly and exercise particular vigilance for patterns of behaviour.

6 Involvement of Parents/Other adults

- 6.1 Support for Parents
 - 6.1.1 At school we aim to support parents of children who are either bullying or being bullied. We support parents by discussing the problems and offering help and advice as soon as the situation becomes evident.
 - 6.1.2 Parents may be invited to meetings at school so that the situation can be closely monitored. If the child is bullying, then sanctions and/or Restorative Approaches may be discussed. The reasons why the child may have chosen to bully are also discussed. What kind of support can be given to the child to help them change their behaviour is explored. If the child is being bullied, problems and possible solutions are discussed, including ways to help the child deal with this problem, ways to help build self-esteem (often connected to those who are bullied) and ways to ensure all incidents are reported and explored.
- 6.2 Parents can receive ongoing support from the pastoral teams (including Senior Management), Chaplain, School Counsellors, Deputy Head Pupil Wellbeing, Nurses, and Director of Digital Learning. A Programme of Talks and Courses is made available to all parents. Parents may also be directed to information and advice from external and online resources and agencies, such as ChildLine, Care line and Kidscape.
- 6.3 Members of staff have an Induction Programme that includes guidance from the Wellbeing team (Deputy Head Pupil Wellbeing, Counsellor, Learning Support, Chaplain,

Nurse) and a requirement to read School Policies and Procedures (including Prevention of Bullying), and sign a declaration that they have done so.

Whilst working at Berkhamsted, members of staff may receive ongoing support, as appropriate, from the Wellbeing team as well as the pastoral teams (including Senior Management) within the Schools Group. Ongoing staff training is available via the School CPD programme which includes topics such as 'Language for wellbeing' and 'Homophobia.'

- 6.4 Signs and symptoms of bullying:
- 6.4.1 Reluctance to go to school (school phobic);
 - 6.4.2 A pattern of minor illnesses;
 - 6.4.3 Damaged possessions or clothing;
 - 6.4.4 Missing items of equipment;
 - 6.4.5 Aggression to siblings;
 - 6.4.6 Mood swings or character changes;
 - 6.4.7 Changes in eating habits;
 - 6.4.8 Difficulty sleeping;
 - 6.4.9 Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations;
 - 6.4.10 Get into physical or verbal fights;
 - 6.4.11 Have friends who bully others;
 - 6.4.12 Blame others for their problems;
 - 6.4.13 Don't accept responsibility for their actions;
 - 6.4.14 Standards falling at school;
 - 6.4.15 Unexplained injuries;
 - 6.4.16 Asking for money or stealing money.
- 6.5 Characteristics which can make a child vulnerable to bullying include: Appearance, Age/Maturity, Disability, Special Needs, Medical condition, Ability/Application, Race/Ethnicity, Gender identity, Religion/Belief, Home/Class Background, Adopted or is a carer, is a Looked After Child (CLA) or a Previously Looked After Child (PLA), Sex, Sexual orientation.
- 6.6 If a parent suspects or knows that their child is a victim of bullying they are asked to:
- 6.6.1 Report any concerns to their child's form teacher or Head of House as soon as possible. (Please see Appendix 3 for more information).
 - 6.6.2 Listen carefully to the child, reassure and support them.
 - 6.6.3 Advise them how to cope in a non-violent manner (e.g. walk away).
 - 6.6.4 Build up the child's self-esteem and consider that empowering the pupil to be assertive may be the most effective strategy
 - 6.6.5 Work with the School towards a resolution
- 6.7 If a parent suspects or knows that their child is involved with bullying behaviour they are

asked to:

- 6.7.1 Talk through the situation calmly.
- 6.7.2 Support the school in expecting this behaviour to stop (reminding child if necessary).
- 6.7.3 Accept that this may have happened due to peer group pressure and the child may be bullying to avoid being bullied themselves.
- 6.7.4 Acknowledge that this may or may not be an isolated incident.
- 6.7.5 Ease the situation by using a sensitive approach.
- 6.7.6 Explain to their child why this situation cannot continue and why it is important to you and your family.

7 Involvement of Pupils

- 7.1 Pupils should be encouraged to take responsibility for preventing bullying by using a range of strategies appropriate to their age.
 - 7.1.1 Tell someone, maybe via their parents, or via Whisper
 - 7.1.2 Asking the bully to stop;
 - 7.1.3 Rescuing the victim;
 - 7.1.4 Staying with or close to a potential victim;
 - 7.1.5 Talking to a bully at a time when he/she is not bullying;
 - 7.1.6 Taking collective responsibility, by not standing around and watching someone being bullied;
 - 7.1.7 Ensuring that personal contact numbers given to others are restricted and if necessary changed;
 - 7.1.8 Having a mentoring system, where the younger pupils are paired with older ones so that they have someone to go to if they need help;
 - 7.1.9 Contributing to the writing and implementation of a policy for dealing with any problems of this nature within the House.
- 7.2 Pupils are encouraged to discuss the issue of bullying within their Houses/Forms. The School Council has produced a Pupil Anti-Bullying Policy, a copy of one of which is shown below. Support for all pupils within the School is directly available from the pastoral teams (including Senior Management), Prefects, Chaplain, Class Teachers, School Counsellors, Nurses, the Learning Support Department, Director of Digital Learning, and the Deputy Head Pupil Wellbeing.

Appendix I - Pupil Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying occurs when someone is made to feel uncomfortable or unhappy.

Bullying is not accepted at this school.

Bullying can be either emotional and/or physical.

Emotional bullying can include:

- Name calling (including racial, sexist, homophobic comments).
- Isolation (e.g. rejecting someone from a group).
- Hiding or tampering with someone's belongings.
- This can occur to someone's face or as cyber-bullying (e.g. texting, posting on websites).

Physical bullying can include:

- Pushing, tripping, and jostling.
- Hitting.

Stopping Bullying

What to do if you are being bullied

- Tell someone as soon as possible, no matter how minor you think the situation may appear. (e.g. Heads of House, parents, any teacher, friends, School Counsellor, Deputy Head Pupil Wellbeing, School Chaplain, School Nurses.)
- Try and avoid situations where problems may occur.
- Make it clear that you find the situation unpleasant.

Most difficulties can be resolved very quickly if you communicate early

What to do if you see others being bullied

- Challenge the behaviour.
- Support the person being bullied.
- Report the problem.

Appendix 2 – Cyberbullying – Identification and Prevention

I Overview

- 1.1 Bullying is the act of intentionally causing harm to others, through verbal harassment, physical assault, or other more subtle methods, i.e. exclusion from a group or spreading rumours, etc.
- 1.2 Cyberbullying is when someone bullies, threatens or harasses a person online. It can happen on social media, games or anywhere else online. People might bully a person by:
- sending nasty or threatening messages
 - posting photos, videos or posts about them online, or liking posts or comments about them
 - trolling or commenting on posts or pictures saying nasty things
 - revealing personal details about another person online
 - starting a group chat to talk about someone
 - targeting someone over and over in an online game.

Cyberbullying might only be happening online, or it might be part of people being bullied in other ways as well.

1.3 Using the School's network, or a personal mobile phone, or a home PC, to send out messages, images, online posts, SMS messages, phone calls, or any other type of digital communication that undermines, intimidates, upsets, or disturbs, another student, or a member of staff, will be considered to be cyber bullying. The School makes no differentiation between bullying that occurs via digital means to bullying that occurs in person, and any incidence of cyberbullying will be dealt with severely.

2 What type of actions count as cyberbullying?

- 2.1 **Email:** Sending threatening emails or intimidating someone.
- 2.2 **Social Networking Sites:** Posting hurtful comments on someone's profile, faking profiles, or using someone else's profile to pretend to leave comments by them.
- 2.3 **Chat:** Saying nasty things in chat and instant messaging.
- 2.4 **Gaming:** Ganging up on another player or excluding them.
- 2.5 **Phones:** Making prank calls, nasty texts, photo messages, or videos.
- 2.6 **Webcams:** Making people do things on webcams that upset them, forcing them to do anything that they do not wish to do.
- 2.7 **Forums and Message Boards:** Ganging up on someone, excluding someone, making hurtful comments, or using someone else's profile to pretend to leave comments by them.

3 Keeping yourself and others safe

- 3.1 Don't post content that is very personal: keep information general.
- 3.2 Think carefully about posting pictures online: once it's there, anyone can see it or use it.
- 3.3 Don't share your password: keep your personal information private!
- 3.4 It's not a good idea to meet up with someone you meet online: you don't really know who they are.
- 3.5 Try to think carefully before you write things online: people can get the wrong end of the stick.
- 3.6 Respect other people's views: just because you don't agree with them, it doesn't mean you have to be rude or abusive.

4 What can you do if you are being cyberbullied?

- 4.1 Report it
If someone's harassing or bullying you online, you can [report it on the site or platform](#). Even if someone else has reported it, making a report yourself can help the site know it's bothering you. [Find out how to make a report](#).
- 4.2 Block people
Sites and apps all work differently, but blocking someone usually means that they won't be able to contact you and you won't have to see anything they write
- 4.3 Keep evidence
Don't respond to nasty messages or comment on photos or videos. But do take screenshots of what people are saying, it can help you if you do tell someone. However, please read the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Online Safety Policies with regard to images that may be illegal (which must not be shared or printed, other than by DSPs under strict external guidelines)
- 4.4 Make a note of the dates and times the messages are received.
- 4.5 Talk to someone you trust
You don't need to cope with bullying alone. Talking to an adult you trust can help you to find ways to stop the bullying.
- 4.6 Tell someone at school
If you're being bullied online by people at school, they still have a duty to support you. Try showing a teacher or someone you trust at school screenshots of what's been happening.
- 4.7 Take a break from checking messages
It's natural to want to see what people are saying when they're bullying you. But taking time away from your phone or device, even for a few minutes, can help to calm you down.
- 4.8 Have fun...but surf the internet safely!

5 What can you do if you know someone who is being cyberbullied?

- 5.1 Listen to them
It can really help to have someone to talk things through with and listen.
- 5.2 Help them to get support
You could offer to go with them to report the bullying and help them think about what they want to say.
- 5.3 Comment on their posts
This can help them feel like they aren't so alone when other people post negative messages. But don't reply to nasty or negative comments, or share videos of them as this can make things worse
- 5.4 Do things together
Help to take their mind off things for a short while. You could watch a film, play sports or go to the cinema.

6 What can you do if you are cyberbullying someone?

- 6.1 Accept that what you've done is bullying
You might want to dismiss what's happened as just a joke, or think that it's okay because you're not the only one. But if you've sent nasty messages, shared a post or liked something that's been made to make someone feel bad, then you've been a bully, and that's not okay.
- 6.2 Don't send any more posts or messages
Stop whatever you were doing to bully someone, don't post or share things and don't message the person.
- 6.3 Don't stay on group chats or pages
Even if you don't participate, if you stay on a group chat then you're encouraging other people
- 6.4 Delete the bullying
Go back and delete any upsetting or nasty posts, messages or videos.
- 6.5 Say sorry
Apologise to the person you bullied or sent messages to. Offer them support if you can, but respect their wishes if they don't want to talk to you.
- 6.6 Be the one to make a stand
Talk to others involved and encourage them to stop the bullying as well, sometimes it only takes one person to make a big change.
- 6.7 Plan for the future
Think about how you want to behave online in the future, and what you could do if you want to do this again.

7 Useful Links:

[The CyberSmile Foundation](#)

[NSPCC](#)

[Bullying.co.uk](#)

Information provided by <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/types-bullying/online-bullying/>

Appendix 3 – Parental Concern Response

What should I do if I think my son/daughter is experiencing unkind treatment from other pupils?

Dealing with these situations can be complex and there is almost always more than one side to the story. We will work to investigate any concerns thoroughly and to take the appropriate action as a result. Every case of bullying-type behaviour is individual and there is no simple solution which can be applied to every case. We are mindful of the possibility that a school's actions can exacerbate a situation and therefore will work closely with students to agree the best way forward.

What parents should do

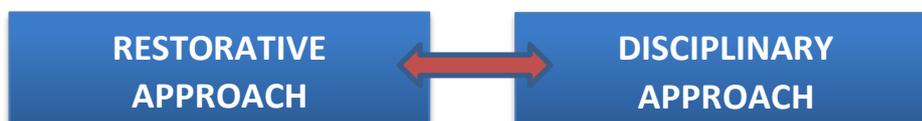
- Pass on concerns to the Pastoral team when your son/daughter first raises them and share as much, specific information as possible
- Encourage your son/daughter to speak directly with his/her Tutor, Form Teacher, Head of House or one of their teachers about what has been happening
- Reassure your son/daughter that we will work together to improve the situation: they may be reluctant for you to tell the school, but reassure them that we will all work together for a positive outcome

What the School will do

Once a concern about unkindness or mistreatment by other pupils is raised with the School, we will need to respond and follow-up on this concern. We will, however, discuss any action to be taken with you and your son/daughter.

We can:

- Reassure your son/daughter that we want to help them and will listen to their perspective on what has happened and what we should do next. (Alongside listening to the perspective of other individuals involved)
- Ensure that your son/daughter is part of the discussion about the steps to be taken and that they retain a sense of control.
- Adopt different approaches. The follow-up could be one of the following or a combination of the two*:



*Usually, we would expect restorative work to be undertaken as part of the process.

- Monitor the situation and check in with your son/daughter to ensure that issues do not resurface

We cannot:

- Do nothing
- Follow up concerns without specific information being shared with us
- Take action without investigating the situation fully
- Guarantee that we will not need to speak to your son/daughter or other pupils involved