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# ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Bearwood College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, pupils and visitors to share this commitment.

All outcomes generated by this document must take account of and contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at Bearwood College.

The Bearwood College Policy Documents are revised and published periodically in good faith. They are inevitably subject to permanent revision. On occasions a significant revision, although promulgated within College separately, may have to take effect between the re-publication of the entire set of Policy Documents. Care should therefore be taken to ensure, by consultation with the Senior Management Team, that the details of any Policy Document are still effectively current at a particular moment.

While this current Policy / Procedure may be referred to elsewhere in Bearwood College documentation including particulars of employment, it is non-contractual.

Authorised by the Headmaster on behalf of the Governors, following Resolution by the Board in January 2012

# **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

## **Definitions**

The DfE (formerly DCSF) definition of bullying is: “Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.”

A further definition, which is provided by the Anti-Bullying Alliance, is: “The intentional hurting of one person by another, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It is usually repetitive or persistent, although some one-off attacks can have a continuing harmful effect on the victim”.

And from the DfE (2011 Preventing and Tackling Bullying): “Bullying is behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally”

In the context of this Policy, the following definition will be used, drawing as it does from a variety of sources:

Bullying is a consistent and persistent, inappropriate exercise of power, to the advantage or satisfaction of the bully. It may include violence, name-calling, intimidation, humiliation, extortion and other similar behaviours directed at a vulnerable person or persons by a more powerful individual or group. In the light of current legislation, specific reference is made here to harassment on grounds of disability, sexual orientation (including homophobia), special educational needs, race, gender, religion or culture (including cyber-bullying via social websites, mobiles phones, text messaging, photographs and email).

## **Principles**

- All scholars, staff and governors must know and are permanently reminded that Bearwood College does not tolerate bullying
- All members of Bearwood College, including scholars, staff governors, parents, guardians and visitors, are urged to do everything in their power to establish and foster a social environment in which bullying is institutionally and collectively rejected
- Bearwood College recognises that bullying can never be permanently and finally eradicated because of the changing nature of its (largely adolescent) population, and that the College must therefore always be on its guard to recognise and respond to any new incidents
- The College raises awareness of staff through training, taking action to reduce the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely to succeed

- Once it has been established that bullying has been or is taking place, then the College will intervene to protect the bullied and to re-educate, and where necessary to discipline, the bully or bullies
- If an incident of inappropriate behaviour is not targeted or is of too short-term a nature to be considered bullying, the College still recognises its responsibilities to support the victim and re-educate and discipline the offender
- Through the College Rules and their implementation, the curriculum (especially the PSHE programme), the rewards and accolades system, and the pastoral support provided in various forms to the scholars and through this specific Bullying Policy, the College seeks to
  - promote self-discipline and a proper regard for authority among scholars
  - encourage good behaviour and respect for others to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable the prevention of all forms of bullying among scholars
  - ensure scholars' standard of behaviour is acceptable
  - regulate scholars' conduct
- When a disclosure of alleged bullying is made, it must always be treated seriously.
- While others may not feel that certain actions or words are of a bullying nature, if the recipient feels they are being bullied, that may be sufficient evidence to treat the case as *prima facie* bullying

## **Procedure**

- The College strives to sustain and foster an ethos in which scholars are confident and willing to approach appropriate adult(s) to express concerns about bullying, either on their own behalf or on behalf of others, at an early stage. The College has a pastoral system that encourages open and, if necessary, confidential discussions between scholars, parents/guardians and other relevant adults, including non-academic personnel such as matrons and medical staff. Appropriate adults for scholars to approach with concerns include: their tutor, HMM, the Chaplain, a Matron, a subject teacher, a member of the SMT.
- The College will consult scholars during a PSHE or tutor period (probably using the opportunities afforded by 'AntiBullying week') on wide ranging issues regarding general 'Wellbeing' as well as bullying-specific issues. Due regard is taken in this Policy of the advice and information found in the DfE "Behaviour and Discipline in Schools: A Guide for Head Teachers and Schools Staff" (DfE 00058-2011).
- Signs of bullying, especially in the case of a special needs scholar or a scholar from a minority racial or cultural background, or a scholar with a different physical appearance, might include:
  - unwillingness to come to school / participate
  - withdrawn, isolated behaviour
  - complaining about missing possessions

- refusal to talk about the problem
  - being easily distressed
  - damaged or incomplete work
- Parents/guardians and seniors scholars are encouraged to look for these signs and report them to College staff if they are concerned.
  - Any allegation of or expression of concern over bullying is passed on immediately to the relevant HMM(s), who undertake(s) a thorough investigation.
  - The complaint and subsequent actions are logged in the ‘complaints’ file.
  - Bullies and victims are always interviewed separately.
  - Optimal witness information is gathered.
  - A written record of the incident, investigation and outcomes is kept by the HMM and the Headmaster.
  - The action taken by the College may vary in terms of its focus and severity, and in terms of who administers the action. At the lowest level, it may be sufficient for a tutor or other member of staff to “warn off” a potential bully. The HMM has a variety of responses available to him/her; these may include: imposition of HMM sanctions; mediation between relevant parties; obtaining an apology; providing appropriate training; providing mentor support for both victim and bully. Any sufficient or substantial incident of bullying is reported to the Headmaster, whose sanctions may include jankers, suspension or expulsion. A grave case of bullying is notified to the police.
  - Once a case of bullying has been dealt with, both bullies and victims are monitored by the appropriate pastoral staff members.
  - The College is concerned about the welfare of its scholars even when not directly under its jurisdiction. Cases of concern are approached where practicable through liaison with the appropriate external body (eg parents/guardians, bus companies, police, shopping centre management etc).
  - The parents/guardians of both victim and bully are kept informed of any significant incident.
  - Staff working at Bearwood College are equally protected by this Policy as scholars are.

## **Addendum: Cyberbullying**

### **Preamble**

Mobile, Internet and wireless technologies have increased the pace of communication and brought benefits to users worldwide. But their popularity provides increasing opportunities for misuse through “cyberbullying”. It is crucial that young people use their mobiles and the Internet safely and positively, and that they are aware of the consequences of misuse. Bearwood College is committed to being constantly vigilant, in order to prevent this form of bullying and tackle it wherever it appears.

The advent of cyberbullying adds new dimensions to the problem of bullying. Unlike other forms of bullying, cyberbullying can follow young people into their private spaces and outside school hours; it feels as if there is no safe haven for the person being bullied. Cyberbullies can communicate their messages to a wide audience with remarkable speed, and can often remain unseen and unidentifiable.

### **Cyberbullying: definitions**

"Cyberbullying" is a form of “bullying” as defined in this Policy Document; it is an intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact against a victim who cannot easily defend himself or herself.

Research commissioned by the Anti-Bullying Alliance from Goldsmiths College, University of London, identifies seven categories of cyberbullying:

- **Text message bullying** involves sending unwelcome texts that are threatening or cause discomfort.
- **Picture/video-clip bullying via mobile phone cameras** is used to make the person being bullied feel threatened or embarrassed, with images usually sent to other people. 'Happy slapping' involves filming and sharing physical attacks.
- **Phone call bullying via mobile phone** uses silent calls or abusive messages. Sometimes the bullied person's phone is stolen and used to harass others, who then think the phone owner is responsible. As with all mobile phone bullying, the perpetrators often disguise their numbers, sometimes using someone else's phone to avoid being identified.
- **Email bullying** uses email to send bullying or threatening messages, often using a pseudonym for anonymity or using someone else's name to pin the blame on them.
- **Chat room bullying** involves sending menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chat room.
- **Bullying through instant messaging** is an internet-based form of bullying where young people are sent unpleasant messages as they conduct real-time conversations online.

**Bullying via websites** includes the use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal polling sites. There has been a significant national increase in social networking sites for young people, which can provide new opportunities for cyberbullying.

## **The Law**

The **Protection from Harassment Act**, the **Malicious Communications Act 1988** and Section 43 of the **Telecommunications Act** may be used to combat cyberbullying. Offenders may be fined or sent to prison for up to six months.

## **Procedure**

Bearwood College is committed to ensuring that:

- bullying via mobile phone or the Internet is an understood component of our anti-bullying policies
- staff have sufficient knowledge to deal with cyberbullying in College details of which are in another Policy: INTERNET and INTRANET POLICY and PROCEDURES staff
- the scholars are informed about the risks of new communications technologies, the consequences of their misuse, and how to use them safely, see: Internet Policy (scholars)
- e-communications used on the College e-systems are appropriately monitored
- scholars know and understand College policies on the use of mobile phones in College and at other times when they are under the College's authority
- appropriate internet blocking technologies are employed and harmful sites blocked where reasonably practicable

Staff and scholars are aware of national guidance and good practice to make sure new communications technologies are used safely.

## **Advice**

The College publishes a booklet “Digital Security” designed for parents, with advice about social networks, mobile use etc.

## **CYBERBULLYING: Advice to scholars**

### **If you're being bullied by phone or the internet**

Remember, bullying is never your fault. It can be stopped and it can usually be traced.

- Don't ignore the bullying. Tell someone you trust, such as a teacher or parent, or call an advice line.
- Try to keep calm. If you are frightened, try to show it as little as possible. Don't get angry, it will only make the person bullying you more likely to continue.

There's plenty of online advice on how to react to cyberbullying. For example, [www.kidscape.org](http://www.kidscape.org) and [www.wiredsafety.org](http://www.wiredsafety.org) have some useful tips:

#### **Text/video messaging**

You can easily stop receiving text messages for a while by turning off incoming messages for a couple of days. This might stop the person texting you by making them believe you've changed your phone number. To find out how to do this, visit [www.wiredsafety.org](http://www.wiredsafety.org).

If the bullying persists, you can change your phone number. Ask your mobile service provider (such as [Orange](#), [O2](#), [Vodafone](#) or [T-Mobile](#)).

Don't reply to abusive or worrying text or video messages. Your mobile service provider will have a number for you to ring or text to report phone bullying. Visit their website for details.

Don't delete messages from cyberbullies. You don't have to read them, but you should keep them as evidence.

Text harassment is a crime. If the calls are simply annoying, tell a teacher, parent or guardian. If they are threatening or malicious and they persist, report them to the police, taking with you all the messages you've received.

#### **Phone calls**

- If you get an abusive or silent phone call, don't hang up immediately. Instead, put the phone down and walk away for a few minutes. Then hang up or turn your phone off. Once they realise they can't get you rattled, callers usually get bored and stop bothering you.
- Always tell someone else: a teacher, parent or guardian. Get them to support you and monitor what's going on.
- Don't give out personal details such as your phone number to just anyone. And never leave your phone lying around. When you answer your phone, just say 'hello', not your name. If they ask you to confirm your phone number, ask what number they want and then tell them if they've got the right number or not.
- You can use your voicemail to vet your calls. A lot of mobiles display the caller's number. See if you recognise it. If you don't, let it divert to voicemail instead of answering it. And don't leave your name on your voicemail greeting. You could

get an adult to record your greeting. Their voice might stop the caller ringing again.

- Almost all calls nowadays can be traced.
- If the problem continues, think about changing your phone number.
- If you receive calls that scare or trouble you, make a note of the times and dates and report them to your Houseparent. If your mobile can record calls, take the recording too.

## **Emails**

- Never reply to unpleasant or unwanted emails ('flames') — the sender wants a response, so don't give them that satisfaction.
- Keep the emails as evidence. And tell an adult about them.
- Ask an adult to contact the sender's Internet Service Provider (ISP) by writing abuse@ and then the host, eg [abuse@hotmail.com](mailto:abuse@hotmail.com)
- Never reply to someone you don't know, even if there's an option to 'unsubscribe'. Replying simply confirms your email address as a real one.

## **Web bullying**

If the bullying is on a school website, tell a teacher or parent, just as you would if the bullying were face-to-face.

If you don't know the owner of the website, follow one of the online safety links below to find out how to get more information about the owner.

## **Chat rooms and instant messaging**

- Never give out your name, address, phone number, school name or password online. It's a good idea to use a nickname. And don't give out photos of yourself.
- Don't accept emails or open files from people you don't know.
- Remember it might not just be people your own age in a chat room.
- Stick to public areas in chat rooms and get out if you feel uncomfortable.
- Tell your parents or carers if you feel uncomfortable or worried about anything that happens in a chat room.
- Think carefully about what you write; don't leave yourself open to bullying.

## **Three steps to stay out of harm's way**

1. Respect other people - online and off. Don't spread rumours about people or share their secrets, including their phone numbers and passwords.
2. If someone insults you online or by phone, stay calm – and ignore them.
3. 'Do as you would be done by.' Think how you would feel if you were bullied. You're responsible for your own behaviour – make sure you don't distress other people or cause them to be bullied by someone else.