



Best Futures School

Where Children Come First

Anti Bullying Policy

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Lead – Caroline Seagroatt

Status – Current

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sooner if Legislation is updated

Principles and Values

As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported. Bullying will not be tolerated. The school will seek ways to counter the effects of bullying that may occur within school or in the local community. The ethos of our school fosters high expectations of positive behaviour and we will challenge any behaviour that falls below this.

All the pupils at Best Futures have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and may present additional disabilities, e.g. sensory, physical, medical need, A.S.D, challenging behaviour or any combination of these. Our approach to anti-bullying therefore needs to take into consideration on the one hand, the impact of inappropriate behaviours on our physically and emotionally vulnerable pupils, while on the other, the influence of specific types of special needs on the behaviour of some children. While the school recognises this dilemma it is also dedicated to combating both the rare cases of 'true bullying' that may occur and the possible, while unintentional, incidents that may make pupils feel threatened, unsafe or afraid. The school will act promptly and firmly to combat bullying and aspects of behaviours that may impact upon the emotional and well-being of all, whenever and wherever it occurs.

Pupils are made aware of how they can draw their concerns about bullying to the attention of staff in the confidence that these will be carefully investigated and, if substantiated, taken seriously and acted upon. All staff will be made aware of their responsibilities for ensuring the safety of more vulnerable pupils who, because of the impact of their special needs or additional language issues, struggle to communicate any issues that arise. We work closely with the School Council to hear their views and opinions. (see Article 12, United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child). [Article 12 – Equal recognition before the law | United Nations Enable](#)

Objectives of this Policy

- The CIC directors and board, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should understand what bullying is.
- The CIC directors and board and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- Actively prevent bullying through education about equality, diversity, acceptance and building friendships.

Bullying can occur at any point in our lives and many people have different experiences regarding bullying severity and understanding. The overall aim of this policy is to work together to ensure that school is a safe place for children and adults to be, whether the school community is directly or indirectly affected by bullying or not.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. In other words, bullying at Best Futures is considered to be, “unacceptable behaviour which occurs **‘frequently, on purpose’.**”

Bullying can be short term or continuous over long periods of time.

Bullying can be:

Emotional	Being unfriendly, intimidation, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
Physical	pushing, kicking, hitting, vandalism, punching or any use of violence
Racial	racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, discrimination
Sexual	unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments or prejudices
Homophobic	because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
Direct or indirect	Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
Cyber bullying	<p>There are many ways of bullying someone online and for some it can take shape in more ways than one. Some of the types of cyber bullying are:</p> <p>Harassment - This is the act of sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages and being abusive. Nasty or humiliating comments on posts, photos and in chat rooms. Being explicitly offensive on gaming sites.</p> <p>Denigration – This is when someone may send information about another person that is fake, damaging and untrue. Sharing photos of someone for the purpose to ridicule, spreading fake rumours and gossip. This can be on any site online or on apps. It also includes people altering photos of others and posting online for the purpose of bullying.</p> <p>Flaming – This is when someone is purposely using extreme and offensive language and getting into online arguments and fights. They do this to cause reactions and enjoy the fact it causes someone to get distressed.</p>

	<p>Impersonation – This is when someone will hack into someone’s email or social networking account and use the person's online identity to send or post vicious or embarrassing material to/about others. The making up of fake profiles on social network sites, apps and online are commonplace and it can be difficult to get them closed down however there are ways to combat this.</p> <p>Outing and Trickery – This is when someone may share personal information about another or trick someone into revealing secrets and forward it to others. They may also do this with private images and videos too.</p> <p>Cyber Stalking – This is the act of repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm, harassment, intimidating messages, or engaging in other online activities that make a person afraid for his or her safety. The actions may be illegal too depending on what they are doing.</p> <p>Exclusion – This is when others intentionally leave someone out of a group such as group messages, online apps, gaming sites and other online engagement. This is also a form of social bullying and is common.</p>
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Prejudice-based Bullying because of a protected characteristic may be related to:

- Age
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Disability or Special Educational Need
- Marriage or Civil Partnership
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity

And can also be related to:

- Appearance or health condition
- Home circumstances

Bullying can take place in any area of the school and school grounds, on the journey to and from school, on residential trips, day visits, group activities and between

families in the local community. However, in today's society, it is most likely to occur online and can happen 24/7 through mobile phones, social media, chat rooms, online gaming and so on.

LGBTQ+

The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBTQ+ is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are LGBTQ+ can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBTQ+ (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBTQ+. Best Futures will ensure that pupils have a trusted member of staff whom they can be open with and reduce additional barriers faced and provide a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

Please see the guidance for further information: Relationship Education, Relationships and Sex Education and health Education:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>

Bullies and Victims

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

(Preventing and Tackling Bullying Gov.uk 2017 Document Linked on final page)

Staff must remain vigilant about bullying and approach this in the same way as any other category of Child Abuse;

When there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection

concern under the Children Act 1989. Where this is the case, the school staff discuss with the school's designated safeguarding lead and report their concerns to their local authority children's social care and work with them to take appropriate action. Full details can be found in Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education. (See link to Keeping Children Safe in Education on final page)

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

As important it is to respond to bullying, it is just as important to proactively prevent it. Best Futures approach is a calm and safe environment where staff can identify children who may be vulnerable and who could fall victim to bullying as well as those who may demonstrate bullying behaviour. Children may not be aware that they are being bullied; they may be too young or have Special Educational Needs.

Bullying can have lasting impacts on victims, damaging their mental health and emotional wellbeing. In turn, this can lead to difficulties in forming positive friendships/relationships, trust, and emotional growth and maturity in adult life. In severe cases, bullying can lead to life changing injuries and even death or suicide.

No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everyone has the right to be treated with respect.

Pupils who are displaying bullying behaviours need to learn different ways of behaving, communicating and the importance of respect.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults at home and School should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- doesn't want to go on the school / public transport
- begs to be driven to school individually
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens of self-harm or suicidal thoughts
- threats or attempts to run away
- change of sleeping patterns or has nightmares
- often feels ill in the morning
- a change in their behaviour and or progress in schoolwork
- comes home with damaged books or clothes
- has possessions which are damaged or " go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home hungry (money / lunch has been stolen)

- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating or a change in eating habits
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- lack of eye contact
- becoming short tempered
- change in attitude to people at home, school or friendship group.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Outcomes

1. All known and potential incidences of bullying will be reported to the schools safeguarding team. This would then be assessed and investigated in line with the guidance from Preventing and Tackling Bullying, Keeping Children Safe in Education and Best Futures policies. *(Please see more information and links to the government guidance in the Associated Policies and Procedures section at the end of this document)*
2. If possible, the pupils will be reconciled via reflection and/or restorative interventions. Encouraging the bully (or bullies) to develop reflective decision-making skills and recognise their responsibility. Regarding their actions or inactions and consequences for the victim. The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise.
3. Other approaches may take place as a result of bullying reoccurrences, such as planned engagement activity intervention with pupils or specialised PSHE group sessions. The overall approach is to affirm and reaffirm positive communication between all pupils.
4. Parents of the victim and bully (or bullies) will be involved in any investigation relevant to any causes for concern of bullying and or about their own general concerns.
5. In some cases, outside agencies may be requested to support the school or family in dealing with bullying e.g., counsellor, Early Help Services, Children Services, young minds matters or police. etc.
6. After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be recorded in the bullying Log and monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.
7. In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered.

Prevention and Education

At Best Futures we use a variety of methods for helping children to prevent bullying through PSHE, Enrichment Activities, and Group Working. Varying methods depend on the pupils/class cognitive development, age and Special Education Needs. The sessions are adapted appropriately for each pupil to give them the best chance of understanding the topic and treating their peers, family and team around the child with respect.

The ethos and working philosophy of Best Futures means that all staff actively encourage children to have respect for each other and for other people's property. Positive, kind and friendly behaviour is regularly acknowledged and rewarded. Positive Communication, teamwork and fun group experiences are integral to the delivery of not only our school curriculum but assisting the personal development of all the pupils at our school as they continue their learning journey.

Issues associated with bullying and its management will form part of the PHSE curriculum schemes of work, these may involve: -

- Developing appropriate interactional and social skills,
- Exploring feelings and emotions,
- Exploring the impact of a person's behaviour on others,
- Exploring the hurt bullying behaviour may have on others,
- Role play to explore such feelings,
- Being kind to others, sharing,
- Developing group skills,
- Developing strategies that address challenging bullying behaviour,
- Not allowing someone to be deliberately left out of a group,
- Telling a member of staff what is happening,
- Telling the bullying student that they disapprove of his or her actions,
- At all times staff will promote and model co-operative behaviour and anti-bullying values,
- Discussions and agreement of school, class and playground rules,
- Identifying and celebrating individual differences and talents and promoting mutual respect for all.
- Practising Safe Internet processes, and how to alert parents/cares/teachers to any problems the pupil may be experiencing
- How to be safe online

Other Awareness Raising Activities

Throughout the school day there are many opportunities to raise awareness of anti-bullying, its effects, how to handle being bullied, positive communication and interaction between pupils. This extends to all parts of the school day, including session times, circle time, topic, lunch time and transport. Building friendships and positivity in our school is part of our school ethos and our core values.

Best Futures School is a safe place for pupils to learn and develop, we ensure every child is given the opportunity to learn about bullying and given the confidence to speak up and voice their opinion. As a school, we understand this delivery of information will need to alter from pupil to pupil, depending on their individual needs. We also find that group discussions can be very helpful and giving the pupils the chance to speak and share their ideas. We have in the past and will continue to take

part in Anti-Bullying Week in the years ahead and keep up to date with latest guidance in combating cyber bullying.

Staff as positive role models

Staff are to abide by our strict Code of Conduct, and display responsible, positive practice. This includes respect of all colleagues and pupils, visitors and organisations we work alongside. Staff are to follow the equality policy at all times and reinforce the importance of respect at school.

It is inevitable that pupils may not always get along, and staff are to be proactive in creating opportunities for positive interaction between pupils and work together to ensure pupils can resolve their differences and make amends.

Staff have a responsibility to:

- Have a clear understanding of the school Anti Bullying Policy and how it links with other school policies such as (but not limited to) equality, positive management of behaviour, Safeguarding and Media Policy.
- Provide a safe and secure environment for all,
- Respond promptly, report and record issues of bullying,
- Promote through the curriculum the development of appropriate responses to inappropriate behaviour and an awareness of the impact of one's own behaviour on others
- Provide/attend training opportunities for example online training provided by Anti Bullying Alliance and group training sessions on teacher training days.

Working with Parents/Carers

Best Futures keeps in close contact with parents and carers and provides up to date information regarding bullying, in most recent years this has focused on cyber bullying and internet safety. We share information with parents/carers on safe practices, the latest advice and where to get help such as Anti Bullying Alliance, among other helpful organisations. Best Futures keep Anti-Bullying information and signpost to helpful organisations on the school website, which is accessible for parents 24/7.

Keeping in close contact with families helps us to combat bullying of any kind in our school and helps us to resolve the situation as fast as possible to decrease the opportunities for bullying.

Bullying in the workplace

Bullying in the workplace will not be tolerated. Best Futures Code of Conduct explains how staff are expected to "Act as an appropriate role model, treating others with respect and tolerance". All Staff read and sign to agree they understand our Staff Code of Conduct upon commencement of employment. If staff need to report any concerns, in the first instance is their line manager, or they can speak to the Mental Health First Aider or Designated Safeguarding Lead. Please see our Dignity at Work Policy for more information.

Sources for help / Anti Bullying Organisations / Advice

UK Safer Internet Safety and Cyber bullying:
<https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/cyberbullying/>

Young Minds Matter: <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/feelings-and-symptoms/bullying/>

NSPCC: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/>

Staff Training and resources [Anti-Bullying Alliance | United against bullying \(anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk\)](https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/)

Government Advice: <https://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school>

Bullying and advice on coping and making it stop: <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/types-bullying/>

Bullying Advice from Family Lives, sources for help: <https://www.familylives.org.uk/>

How to Deal with Cyber Bullying: <https://www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying/how-to-deal-with-cyberbullying/>

Ditch The Label International Youth Anti-Bullying and Mental Health Charity:
<https://www.ditchthelabel.org/> (aimed at 12-25 year olds, but has some useful blog articles and mindfulness tips)

Associated Policies and Procedures:

The general principles and procedures presented in this policy are also supported through the following school documents: -

Positive Management of Behaviour

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Equality

Whistleblowing

Code of Conduct

Acceptable Use of ICT

PSHE

Government Policy on Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2017
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf

Keeping Children Safe in Education
[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf)

Equality Act 2010 <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/your-rights-under-equality-act-2010>

Independent School Standards Regulations 2010
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made>

The Education and Inspections Act 2006
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/contents>

Principal	Caroline Seagroatt	Signature	<i>C Seagroatt</i>	Date:	Dec 2024
CIC Board Member	Jenny Kinnaird	Signature	<i>J.Kinnaird</i>	Date:	Dec 2024
SEMH Lead	Callum Kinnaird	Signature	<i>C. Kinnaird</i>	Date:	29.11.2024
DSL	Kara Bradley	Signature	<i>K.Bradley</i>	Date:	02/12/2024
DSL	Abigail Moore	Signature	<i>A.Moore</i>	Date:	29.11.2024