

BISHOPSTEIGNTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Governing Board

| Anti-Bullying Policy | | | | | |
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| Parents / Carers and School Staff / Volunteers | | | | | |
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Introduction

Bishopsteignton Primary School has a no-tolerance approach to bullying. We recognise that nobody deserves to be bullied and that bullying is never the victim's fault. We expect pupils to understand their personal and collective rights and to recognise and adhere to the corresponding responsibilities that go hand-in-hand with them. In addition, we expect parents/carers to share this philosophy and demonstrate this when dealing with school staff and volunteers.

Any forms of unacceptable behaviour towards our staff/volunteers such as bullying has a detrimental and negative effect on individuals and ultimately the educational needs of our pupils.

All parents/carers have a clear role to play in helping to create a positive working environment for our staff and volunteers. In particular, parents/carers should be aware of their own conduct and behave in a manner which ensures and promotes acceptable behaviour. Headteachers, Governors, managers and supervisors have a responsibility to raise awareness of this issue and challenge and stop unacceptable behaviour in the workplace.

All staff/volunteers should be prepared to take appropriate action if they observe or have evidence that a colleague is being subjected to unacceptable behaviour from a parent/carer.

Any unacceptable behaviour directed towards another, including harassment based on age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race (colour, nationality & ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation is unlawful and will not be tolerated in any form by this organisation. Action may be taken under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Equality

The Governing Body and the Headteacher have a particular responsibility to ensure that the processes described in this Policy are managed fairly, equitably, objectively and must not discriminate either directly or indirectly on the grounds of a person's race, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, disability, age, pregnancy and maternity or religion or belief.

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Related policies

This policy is applicable to all members of the School Community. However, anyone reading this policy, should also refer to:

- Bishopsteignton Primary School Anti-Bullying policy
- Devon County Council Acceptable Behaviour policy
- Bishopsteignton Primary School Equality & Diversity policy

Definitions:

Bullying

Persistent actions, criticism, or personal abuse in public or private, which humiliate, intimidate, frighten, undermine or demean the individual. People affected by bullying often feel the matter appears trivial or that they have difficulty in describing it. Bullying can be defined in many ways but is generally behaviour that is identified as a misuse of power.

Behaviour that is acceptable to some individuals may cause embarrassment, distress or anxiety to others.

Examples of what the School regards as unacceptable behaviour include:

- Using aggressive language, threatening, ridiculing, ignoring people or repeatedly shouting;
- Focusing only on weaknesses;
- Bringing up details of someone's private life inappropriately;
- Criticising people or maliciously gossiping about them in their absence;
- Ridiculing or demeaning someone – picking on them or setting them up to fail;
- Comments or jokes, about distinctive peoples and nationalities;
- Frequent comments about aspects of physical appearance or using forms of address that are demeaning;
- Threatening or implying, without reason, that, as a colleague, you will cause the person to lose his/her job or fail to get a promotion or suffer some other form of career difficulty or financial disadvantage;
- Coercing someone to join the harassment/bullying of another person;
- Excluding or marginalising someone or refusing to engage with them appropriately.

This list is not exhaustive. It is simply a guide to help individuals consider their own and others behaviour and gain understanding of what behaviours are unacceptable.

Harassment

Unwanted conduct relating to a protected characteristic (except pregnancy & maternity and marriage & civil partnership), which may also be based upon association or perception, that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. E.g. harassment based on a person's association with their disabled child or harassment based on a perception that a person holds a religious belief. It includes unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, verbal, non-verbal and physical conduct.

An individual may complain of harassment even if they don't possess the protected characteristic or the harassment is not directed at them.

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Victimisation

The Equality Act 2010 defines that victimisation as where one person treats another badly because he or she in good faith did a “protected act”, for example taken under this policy in a case of harassment. It also defines that victimisation takes place where one person treats another badly because he or she is suspected of having done this or of intending to do this. A person is not protected from victimisation where he or she maliciously makes or supports an untrue complaint.

Bishopsteignton Primary School will not tolerate victimisation against a member of staff because he or she has made, or intends to make, a complaint or allegation, or has given, or intends to give, assistance and/or evidence in an investigation regarding the action of a parent/carer.

Unacceptable behaviour from parents/carers

Any staff member or volunteer experiencing unacceptable behaviour in the course of their work from parents/carers can expect the active support of the Headteacher.

Where Headteachers experience difficulties with parents, support will be provided by the Chair of Governors.

Informal Action

Any staff member/volunteer who feels that they or others have been bullied in a way that breaches this policy, should if they feel able, immediately tell the parent/carer that their behaviour is unwelcome, possibly offensive, and want it to cease. Examples of ways of highlighting this to the parent/carer include the following:

- We do not tolerate such language.
- If you continue to demonstrate this behaviour/use such language, then I will have to end this conversation.
- We do not tolerate such language I will end this meeting and we will reconvene when you have calmed down.
- How did you conclude I wasn't listening to you?
- Interrupting the parent/carer.
- Not allowing the parent/carer to interrupt and pointing out to the parent/carer if they do.
- Pointing out to the parent/carer that you disagree on the issue.

This may be sufficient to resolve the situation, especially if the person(s) responsible was/were unaware that the behaviour was causing offence.

Alternatively, the staff member/volunteer may also choose to raise the matter informally with their Headteacher.

Whether the approach is informal or formal, it is important that the staff member/volunteer keeps a note of the dates, times, list of witnesses and other relevant supporting evidence of the act/s complained of. This may be needed as evidence should the behaviour continue or subsequently recur.

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Formal Action

If a staff member/volunteer feels they are unable to raise the matter informally or, this approach has been tried but not worked, the individual may, at any time, use the formal procedure. This procedure applies to all staff/volunteers of the school.

The procedure is to be carried out for all allegations of bullying or harassment by the Headteacher or Chair of Governors on receipt of:

- Report or complaint from the member of staff / volunteer
- Reports from supervisory members of staff.
- Information from any other verifiable source.

The Headteacher or Chair of Governors must investigate the complaint as quickly as possible. With serious complaints, consideration should be given to suspending the parent/carer from entering school premises to avoid contact with the complainant.

During the investigatory interview the complainant, will be entitled to trade union representation or to be accompanied by another employee.

To begin to understand the complaint and establish the facts, there are certain questions that will need to be asked of the complainant, sensitively and tactfully:

- What happened and when?
- Was this the first such incident or had something similar happened before?
- Who was involved?
- Where did the incident take place?
- Were there any witnesses?
- Have you taken any action to stop further harassment?
- Have you discussed the incident with anyone else?

Detailed notes of the interview should be taken and with the complainant's agreement. A written statement should be obtained from the complainant and signed by them.

Discussing the Complaint with the alleged bully

The alleged bully must be advised of the nature of the complaint made against them, in direct, straightforward language. Ensure that it is understood that it is the effect of their behaviour on the complainant which may constitute bullying, not necessarily the type of behaviour itself or the intention behind it.

Alleged bullies must relate their own account of the incident. Again, detailed notes should be taken and with their consent. Alleged bullies should be asked to prepare and sign a written statement.

If the alleged bully denies the incident, an investigation should be undertaken to establish whether there were any witnesses or if any corroborative evidence exists. Statements and/or interview notes should be compared, and discrepancies resolved. The resolution of the complaint may then depend on the assessment of the credibility and truthfulness of those involved. Care must be taken not to make any biased assumptions.

If alleged bullies claim not to have realised the effect of their behaviour, they must also be told that such behaviour must cease. Alleged bullies must be made aware that any victimisation of the complainant will not be tolerated and would constitute a further act to be taken into account in any subsequent action.

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Reaching a Decision

Once the investigation is completed, a decision will be taken whether the incident constituted bullying. The decision should be promptly and clearly communicated, both verbally and in writing, to the complainant and alleged bully.

If the complaint is substantiated, the Headteacher and or Chair of Governors will take prompt action to stop the harassment or bullying and to prevent its recurrence. The Headteacher and or Chair of Governors should also recommend appropriate action. Depending on the nature of the case, this may amount to a warning or a ban on attending school property.