

BRYANSTON

BRYANSTON SCHOOL ANTI BULLYING POLICY

Aim of this document

The aim of this document is to state clearly that bullying is always unacceptable and should form no part of life at Bryanston. Every pupil has the right to be safe at school and to be supported and protected when he/she feels vulnerable.

Bryanston seeks to promote the welfare of its pupils by encouraging an ethos in which tolerance is fostered, pupils feel secure and bullying is not tolerated.

These values will be outlined by means of the PSRE programme which incorporates discussion and via Assemblies, both at a School level and at a House level. Clear sanctions will be applied and support will be provided for pupils, as appropriate. The Second Master and Housemasters/Housemistresses will record incidents of bullying in order to see whether patterns can be identified.

Staff awareness of the issues will be raised through training and in meetings so that the school policy is understood and responsibilities are known. This will also include addressing those issues involving those with special educational needs and disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) pupils. Good practice is shared in relation to dealing with such problems and sources of support are identified. Staff will seek to foster an ethos of mutual respect between staff and pupils in order to encourage good behaviour. Prefects (both School and House) will be encouraged to show a good example to younger pupils and will also serve as a listening ear. Parents will be involved, where appropriate, and it will be made clear to all pupils the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders.

What is Bullying?

Bullying behaviour is behaviour which hurts or causes distress by taking advantage of the vulnerability of its victim, making him/her feel uncomfortable or threatened. Bullying is a serious issue, whether it is physical or emotional.

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms; for example, cyberbullying via text messages or the internet, which may involve social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email. It is sometimes motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, culture, Special Educational Needs, disability or adoption. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or by perceived differences. It may occur directly or through cyber-technology.

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 a number of ways. It may be physical or psychological/emotional, or it may derive from an intellectual imbalance. Alternatively, it can manifest itself by having access to the support of a group or the capacity to isolate socially. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online. A victim may be vulnerable because of his/her age, physical appearance, nationality, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation (homophobic or biphobic bullying) or because he/she is new to the school, appears to be uncertain or has no friends. Bullying behaviour may hurt or distress the victim and, over a period of time, can lower his/her self-esteem and make him/her depressed.

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur inside or outside school. Cyberbullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience. (Refer to *Bryanston School Policy on Cyberbullying*).

Aspects of bullying

Here are some examples of bullying behaviour:-

- hitting, kicking, pushing people around, spitting
- name calling, taunting, teasing, insulting
- intimidating, isolating or excluding from the group
- taking, damaging or hiding possessions
- spreading rumours or writing unkind notes
- cyberbullying, including inappropriate use of mobile phones and texting; inappropriate comments on email/social networking sites
- talking to or touching the victim in a sexually inappropriate way.

What should a pupil do?

If you are being bullied or you know someone who is being bullied, you should report what is happening to someone in authority. If you feel uncertain about taking this step you may want to talk first informally to:-

- your parents
- your Hsm, tutor or any other teacher
- your House Matron
- a senior pupil
- the Chaplain
- the School Counsellor or the Independent Listener
- the School Doctor or a Nurse in the Medical Centre
- the Head or Second Master

Pupils are advised that they may choose any member of staff to turn to when they experience or witness bullying. This can also include the Office of the Children's Commissioner (Freephone: 0800 528 0731).

What happens next?

Any of these people will be able to advise and support you and to help you to take this matter further. In most cases the action taken in the first instance will not be disciplinary - a bully will be asked to talk about his/her behaviour and encouraged to find ways to change it. It may sometimes be the case that the bully genuinely has not recognised the distress caused to the victim by his/her behaviour. If those responsible for the bullying behaviour repeat it, then sanctions may be applied. Ultimately a bully who will not change his/her behaviour may have to leave the school.

When bullying has been reported and action to prevent it has been taken, the situation will be monitored carefully by staff to prevent it recurring. Everyone involved has responsibility for helping the bully to change his/her behaviour. In addition, the victim may need help to deal with his/her feelings and to understand and overcome his/her vulnerability.

In some cases a victim of bullying does not want anyone else to know what is happening:

- he/she doesn't want to 'tell tales'.
- he/she doesn't want the bully to be punished.
- he/she is afraid of what the bully will do.
- he/she has become demoralised and feels he/she doesn't deserve any better.

However, if you are being bullied, it is better to tell someone:

- sharing what is happening will help you to deal with your feelings.
- bullying thrives on secrecy - it is best dealt with by being brought into the open.
- it may save other people from becoming victims of the same bully.

Overview

The school attempts to create an ethos of good behaviour (refer to Bryanston School Behaviour Policy) in which pupils treat one another and the staff with respect, because they know that this is the right way to behave (this applies to behaviour between pupils when they are in school and also when they are out of school). Values of respect for staff and other pupils, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how actions affect others permeate the whole school environment. This is reinforced by staff and older pupils who seek to set a good example to others. Issues about how individuals should interact with other individuals and groups are addressed regularly in school Assemblies, House Assemblies and in PSRE lessons. Housemasters/Housemistresses talk to small groups/individuals on an ongoing basis about how pupils should interact with other pupils. In addition, School Prefects are regularly briefed about setting a good example and are encouraged to be proactive both in the House and in the School. In addition, they are briefed about how to deal with bullying and their assistance is sometimes sought in dealing with specific issues.

The school will gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place. The threshold for reporting of bullying issues to external agencies is known.

Parents and pupils are encouraged to communicate with Housemasters/Housemistresses and to provide them with information about bullying incidents so that it is possible to build up an understanding of what is going on and to address issues and to deal with them.

This policy is prepared in line with the Department for Education (DfE) guidance 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying (October 2014)'.

This document should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Bryanston School Rules and Regulations
- Bryanston School Behaviour Policy
- Bryanston School Policy on Cyberbullying

Governors have an overview on the effectiveness of the Anti Bullying Policy, understanding their roles and duties and reviewing/making suggestions, as appropriate.

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Reviewer: Second Master, Head of Pastoral and Housemasters/Housemistresses
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Author: Second Master

