Governors' Policy Statement on Bullying

Issue No	Author/ Owner	Date Written/Revised	Approved by Governors on	Comments
1	NL	March 2012	25 April 2012	
2	NL	July 2015	8 July 2015	
3	DE	May 2017	17 May 2017	

1   Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the nature of the school's interventions designed to combat bullying within the school. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 makes clear the statutory obligation on schools and their responsibilities in responding to bullying.

2   Context

Backwell School is committed to ensuring that all students are able to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and is not tolerated at Backwell School.

We want everyone to know:

- What bullying is (as detailed in Appendix 1)
- Who to tell if they encounter bullying
- How they can tell someone about bullying
- How to behave to avoid bullying others
- How to use modern technology safely
- That the school will deal with all incidents, promptly and effectively

Through this policy we want all involved in school life (students, parents, carers, governors, teaching and support staff) and the wider community to:

- Understand what is meant by bullying
- Know that bullying is not tolerated at Backwell
- Know what Backwell's policy is on bullying, what they should do if bullying is reported and how it will be followed up if bullying is reported
- Be confident that they will be supported if they report any bullying
- Feel safe

This policy has been drawn up with the help of all elements of the Backwell community to ensure that all groups have had their say.

3   Procedures

Backwell School takes seriously the prevention of bullying and the dealing of incidents of bullying. The school employs three different strands of procedures to tackle bulling:

- Preventative (Appendix 2)
- Intervention (Appendix 3)
- Support (Appendix 4)

4   Monitoring

- It is the responsibility of the Assistant Headteacher (Enabling Learning) to ensure that the school bullying policy complies with legislation.

- It is the responsibility of the Assistant Headteacher (Enabling Learning) to lead and supervise the application of the policy.

- It is the responsibility of Pastoral Leaders to oversee the support for students within their Houses and ensure that the appropriate interventions are put in place.

- It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that they are familiar with the requirements of the school's policy and how they follow them.

5   Review

The school will review the effectiveness of our anti-bullying policy annually at a meeting of the Governors' Behaviour Committee.

The school will review the perceptions of students through general House discussions and an annual student focus group and from parents through parent meetings and questionnaires.

Appendix 1

Definition of Bullying

Bullying can be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour by either an individual or a group, repeated over time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves – there is an imbalance of power.

Bullying can take many forms but in simple terms the two main forms of bullying as:

- Physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft)
- Emotional (e.g. sexism, name calling, racist remarks, homophobia, cyber bullying, spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups)

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school.

Bullying can take place electronically, through text messages, emails, social networking sites and internet websites (see cyber bullying section below).

Bullying can include acts of prejudice, including for reasons of gender, race, religious belief or sexuality.

Students should also be aware that the school will not tolerate students being bystanders where bullying occurs. A bystander is **someone** who sees or knows about bullying or other forms of violence that is happening to **someone** else; they can either be part of the problem (hurtful bystander) or part of the solution (helpful bystander). Hurtful bystanding sends to message that the behaviour of the bully is acceptable and as such the school will not tolerate this. Helpful bystanding does not always require direct action and intervention but could also be in the form of reporting to staff as soon as able.

Cyber bullying

The school's aim is for new technologies to be embraced by the school community and to this end students will be regularly advised on how they can use new technologies safely. The school's Safe Internet Usage Policy (to which parents, carers and students sign up) highlights the school's expectation surrounding the use of new technologies.

The use of new technologies for insulting and bullying purposes nationally has increased significantly over the past few years. This has led to activities carried out by students off site having a direct impact on students in school. In these instances the school will use its designated authority to take action.

Cyber bullying can lead to students having no respite from bullying activities and feeling as though their privacy at home has been invaded. The nature of social networking sites can also lead to the number of students involved increasing through the action of merely clicking one button.

Cyber bullying can:

- Be threats and intimidation; harassment or 'cyber-stalking'
- Be name calling/defamation; exclusion or peer rejection; impersonation
- Unauthorised publication of private information or images
- Take place across age groups and include school staff and other adults

Instances of cyber bullying will be investigated in the same way as bullying incidents as outlined in this policy but in addition the school will:

- Advise students to keep any emails/texts/messages as evidence.
- Advise students to consider what information they have in the public domain.
- Advise students, where appropriate, to change mobile phone numbers/privacy settings.
- If hurtful or embarrassing content has been distributed via mobile phone, the school will confiscate the mobile phone, ask student to delete the offending content and say to whom they have forwarded it. The phone will only then be returned to a parent.
- If hurtful or embarrassing content has been posted on line, the school will endeavour to get it removed from the web or may recommend families contact external agencies, for example the Police.
- Where the school believes that a possible illegal act has been committed the police will be contacted.

Appendix 2

Preventative Procedures

- An anti-bullying charter outlining core expectations.
- Assemblies to educate students on bullying matters and e-safety.
- Activities in PHSE/P&R lessons.
- General safeguarding procedures which aim to help students understand support they can get and how to have safe and healthy relationships. Safeguarding has an increased focus on safety and cyber aspects.
- Safe places for students to go at break and lunchtimes.
- Members of staff on duty around the school at breaktime and lunchtime.
- Student mentors.
- Social interaction groups for students showing behaviours that suggest a risk of them becoming bullies.
- Support of national activities such as National Anti-bullying Week.
- Information leaflets on bullying supplied to all new parents and students and also available via the school website for existing parents.
- Designated boxes where students can anonymously post information on bullying.
- Where friendship disputes/break-ups occur the school will endeavour to work with all parties to ensure that the friendship break-up does not lead to bullying.
- Students are given various avenues to seek support for themselves or others. These include the availability of staff to offer confidential support and guidance and a designated email address (studentsafety@backwellschool.net).

Appendix 3

Intervention Procedures

The School will take the following steps if bullying is suspected or reported:

- The incident will be dealt with, with the highest priority, by the appropriate member of staff.
- A clear account of the incident will be recorded on the appropriate student's file.
- Relevant pastoral staff will be kept informed of any incidents.
- Bullying incidents will be recorded by the acting member of staff through the bullying codes on SIMS.
- The Assistant Headteacher (Enabling Learning) will have school oversight over bullying incidents.
- Where bullying is seen to have taken place, the school will take the relevant and appropriate punitive measures after taking into account the wishes of the victim.

  These measures will include:

  o Formally apologising for behaviours.
  o Official warning to cease the behaviours.
  o Restorative justice meetings where the victim discussed with the bully their feelings surrounding the incident.
  o Contracts.
  o Detentions.
  o Banning students from certain areas of the school premises or from transport to and from the school.
  o Time in the Withdrawal Room.
  o Fixed term exclusions, ranging in number of days depending on the severity of the incident and past history of the bully.
  o Permanent exclusion.

- Parents and carers will be kept informed of any measures taken.
- The relevant Pastoral Leader will monitor the situation after any incident to ensure that there is no repeat of the behaviours.
- Police will be informed if appropriate, especially where cyber-bullying is involved.

Any student involved in a conflict situation will be advised that retaliation will not be tolerated by the school.

Appendix 4

Support Procedures

Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Having their voice heard
- Being offered an opportunity to discuss the experience
- Being given strategies to deal with situations if they should happen again
- Being introduced to a member of the peer listening team to act as support if required
- Having access to Learning Mentor, School Counsellor or wider agency support

Students who have bullied will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened and discovering why the pupil became involved
- Being offered support to change their unacceptable behaviour
- The school informing parents or carers of their concerns and engaging with the parents or carers to help change the attitude of the pupil.

Support from Parents

The school aims to work with parents to ensure that we are supporting all students. All new parents are given a leaflet outlining how they can support the school's approach to preventing and dealing with bullying.

Other support

Where required support can be found from:

- Police and other external agencies – primarily the Local Authority
- Charities
- Antibullying websites (for example http://www.antibullyingworks.co.uk/ and http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/)