



Anti-Bullying Policy

Date of Review Reviewed By Date of Next Review	September 2024 Kath Barclay September 2025
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This policy should be read in conjunction with the Bridge the Gap Malvern's Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy.

Statement

At Bridge the Gap Malvern (BTGM) we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a supportive and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is therefore unacceptable. If bullying does occur, all students should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING centre. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell staff.

Objectives of this policy

BTGM follows the anti-discrimination law. This means staff must act to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation within the centre.

- Bullying will not be tolerated.
- All staff, volunteers, students and parents/carers should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All staff should know what the centre policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All students and parents should know what the centre policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a centre we take bullying seriously. Students and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is when a person deliberately tries to exert power over another person, resulting in them being physically or emotionally hurt, intimidated or distressed. Usually, it is a repeated pattern of behaviour rather than an isolated incident. It is also a form of discrimination where people are treated differently because of a perceived difference or prejudice. These perceived differences can include race, religion, educational achievement, height, weight, gender, sexuality, accent, appearance, socio-economic background, or name.

Some forms of bullying are illegal and should be reported to the police. These include:

- Violence or assault
- Theft



- Repeated harassment or intimidation, eg name calling, threats and abusive phone calls, emails, messages or talk via gaming sites, social media sites or text messages
- Hate crimes

Bullying differs from a falling out amongst friends, because bullying is usually sustained, part of a pattern, and is deliberately designed to hurt and humiliate the victim. It is not normally a one off argument or fight.

Types of bullying include:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (eg. hiding books or making threatening gestures)
- Physical - unkind or rude gestures; assault, pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic - because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, making threats or noises
- Cyber - misuse of any technology such as the internet, mobile phones, social networking sites to hurt, intimidate or abuse

It should be noted that BTGM has the statutory power to discipline students for any misbehaviour, including bullying, during a centre-organised or centre-related activity. This includes misbehaviour in proximity of any alternative provision provided and during travel to or from the venue. Additionally, it can punish misbehaviour, including bullying, in other circumstances if it has repercussions for the orderly running of the provision, poses a threat to another student or member of the public or could adversely affect the reputation of the centre.

Why it is Important to Respond to Bullying

No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Students who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. The centre has a duty to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Signs and Symptoms

A student may indicate by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a student:

- is unwilling to go to participate in an agreed alternative provision
- changes their usual routine
- begins to stop attending a focused session
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other students or siblings
- stops eating



- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone

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

What to do if you are being bullied or suspect a student is being bullied

Students:

If you are being bullied:

- Talk to an adult, your Transition Coordinator or someone in the centre you trust. You will be taken seriously, and what you say will be passed to the Head of Centre.
- The bullying will be investigated, and appropriate action will be taken.
- If you're reporting cyberbullying, keep a record of the date and time of the calls, emails or texts - don't delete any messages you receive.

If you see someone being bullied:

- If you feel that the victim is in immediate danger, and it is safe to do so, step in and take the victim to a manager and describe what you have seen.
- If you are in any doubt concerning your own safety, find any adult and ask for their assistance
- If the victim is not in immediate danger, report the incident.

Parents:

If you suspect your student is being bullied (see 'Signs and Symptoms' above):

- talk to them to gather as much detail as possible.
- Contact your child's Transition Coordinator.

In some cases it may be appropriate to refer to bullying which is taking place outside the centre to the police. However, BTGM will always attempt to resolve bullying issues beyond the centre, and staff will cooperate fully with any police investigation.

Staff:

Any member of staff who receives a complaint will:

- Listen to the parent and/or student and will take the matter seriously. They will fill in an incident form and pass to the DSO.
- The parent/student should be reassured that they have acted correctly in reporting the bullying.
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
- The DSO will, if appropriate, listen to all people involved in order, as far as is reasonably possible, to reach the true picture.
- The DSO will generally be responsible for investigating the incident(s) as fully as possible, although other staff may be involved if appropriate.



Action will be taken as outlined in the centre's Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy, including a range of appropriate sanctions which may include the involvement of external agencies, an apology, or exclusion.

If appropriate, the police will be involved.

If all strategies have been tried and failed, then permanent exclusion will be unavoidable.

Work will be commenced to help the bully (or bullies) change their behaviour.

- Any bullying incident will be dealt with on an individual basis, and BTGM reserves the right to respond in different ways to different circumstances, while ensuring that consistency is preserved as appropriate.
- Data on bullying will be recorded and monitored carefully by the Head of Centre. Patterns and /or trends will be evaluated regularly, measured and action taken as appropriate.

Follow-up actions

The victim:

- Should be offered advice on how to deal with the incident or any possible subsequent incidents.
- Staff should follow-up later to check on progress.

The bully

- After the incident has been investigated and dealt with, and any sanctions imposed, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.
- If possible, and appropriate, the students will be reconciled using mediation.

Prevention

- Positive behaviour is encouraged at all times as an integral part of promoting a healthy centre.
- signing an anti-bullying contract as part of a student's induction
- writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying
- reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly
- role-plays
- having discussions about bullying and why it matters

Guidance on reasonable force for staff

Staff may use reasonable force to manage a student's actions or movements if it is necessary to prevent harm, property damage, disruption, or criminal behaviour. This includes actions like guiding a student to safety, holding their arms to stop a fight, or blocking their path. The force used must always be minimal and proportional to the situation, prioritising the safety and dignity of the student. Physical intervention should only be used as a last resort and with consideration for the student's individual needs and behaviour plan. Incidents are to be reported as soon as practically



possible to the Designated Safeguarding Officer and individual student risk assessments reviewed and updated.

Care and Respect

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a supportive and secure atmosphere. The expectations we have of all students and staff at BTGM, with regards to behaviour, are built on: Respecting oneself, respecting others, and respecting the environment.