ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Statement of Intent

The Beeches School recognises that young people with disabilities remain, in general, a vulnerable group in society.

Young people who attend The Beeches may, therefore, be likely to encounter bullying in the community as well as any they may encounter in their home/school environment. It is vital that staff are aware of this potential, given the cumulative effect of negative experiences that any one young person may suffer. Bullying is frequently described by young people on the Autistic Spectrum as the main reason for negative behaviour as retaliation.

At The Beeches we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our young people so they can live and learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. If bullying does occur, all pupils are encouraged to inform staff and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively yet sensitively.

 We are a <u>TELLING</u> community and value honesty and openness. This means that <u>anyone </u>who knows that bullying is happening is expected to inform the appropriate staff in order that it is dealt with immediately.

This policy has been written with reference to the DCFS guidance (DCFS 2007)

"Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools", and Preventing and Tackling bullying October 2014.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding possessions, threatening gestures)

Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence

Related to race, religion or culture including   racial taunts, graffiti, gestures

Cyber – bullying via technology (please see appendix i for more information)

Sexual/sexist - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments including sexting

Relating to sexual orientation - because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality

Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing,

Ostracising-including being left out and excluded,

Bullying of young carers or children in care or otherwise related to home circumstances.

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts; no-one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Young people who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

All staff have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of this Policy

All Directors, Managers, residential support workers, teachers, young people and social workers should have an understanding of what bullying is.

All staff should know what the companies' policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.

All young people and clients should know what the policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.

As a company we take bullying seriously. Young people should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

Bullying will not be tolerated.

Signs and Symptoms

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

- is frightened at any time
- does not want to take part in activities with others
- changes their usual routine
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- has clothes torn or property damaged
- has possessions go "missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or young people
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

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

Procedures, Please see appendix iii for more information.

Pupils should report any bullying incidents to staff.

Staff to share the information with the Head of Education if of a serious or continuing nature, further action will then be taken.

In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff. Any incidents occurring in school time will be reported to care staff in order that they may be vigilant in the home environment.

In serious cases, social workers should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.

If necessary and appropriate, other authorities will be consulted.

The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.

An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.

Bullying and its effects are covered in PSHE lessons and pupils will be reminded of the importance of telling someone of any bullying they may encounter.

Outcomes

The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place.

In serious cases, some form of sanction or exclusion from the other young person will be considered.

If possible restorative justice will be used to enable those involved to be reconciled.

After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be continuously monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place. The student who has instigated the bullying will also learn about bullying and its effects in PSHE and life skills lessons.

Supporting Pupils who have been bullied:

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:
- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a key worker or a member of staff of their choice
- Reassuring the pupil
- Offering continuous support
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence

Pupils who have bullied will be helped by:
- Discussing what happened
- Discovering why the pupil became involved
- Establishing the wrong doing and the need to change
- Informing parents or carers to help change the attitude and behaviour of the child

The Beeches role in preventing bullying:

The Beeches School will have an active approach to the prevention of bullying. The teaching staff will gather information regarding issues that may arise between students and will develop strategies to prevent bullying from happening. This could include the following:
- Discussions about personal differences,
- Learning about life style difference in life skills and PSHE.
- Learning about the impact of Bullying.
- Teaching staff demonstrating a polite, professional atmosphere where everyone is respected.
- Through all staff having a high standard of behaviour,
- Students are taught 1:1 or occasionally in small groups.

The beeches school will also:

· Involve parents to ensure that they are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied. Parents feel confident that the school will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child, and they reinforce the value of good behaviour at home

· Involve pupils- All pupils understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders.

· regularly evaluate and update their approach to take account of developments in technology, for instance updating 'acceptable use' policies for computers.

· Implement disciplinary sanctions- The consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable.

· Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender or sexuality. Also, children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities. Schools can also teach children that using any prejudice based language is unacceptable.

· Use specific organisations or resources for help with particular problems. Schools can draw on the experience and expertise of anti-bullying organisations with a proven track record and/or specialised expertise in dealing with certain forms of bullying.

· Provide effective staff training. Anti-bullying policies are most effective when all school staff understand the principles and purpose of the school's policy, its legal responsibilities regarding bullying, how to resolve problems, and where to seek support. Schools can invest in specialised skills to help their staff understand the needs of their pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGB&T) pupils.

· Work with the wider community such as the police and children's services where bullying is particularly serious or persistent and where a criminal offence may have been committed. The Beeches will also work with other agencies and the wider community to tackle bullying that is happening outside school.

· Make it easy for pupils to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on. Pupils should feel that they can report bullying which may have occurred outside school including cyber-bullying.

· Create an inclusive environment. Schools should create a safe environment where pupils can openly discuss the cause of their bullying, without fear of further bullying or discrimination.

· Celebrate success. Celebrating success is an important way of creating a positive school ethos around the issue.

Students helping to Prevent bullying:
We will use various methods for helping young people to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:
- writing a set of rules
- signing a behaviour contract
- writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying
- reading stories about bullying or having them read to them
- making up role-plays
- having discussions about bullying and why it matters

Monitoring, evaluation and review,
The school will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

Support Agencies

Anti-bullying Alliance - the alliance brings together over 60 organisations into one network with the aim of reducing bullying. Their website has a parent section with links to recommended organisations who can help with bullying issues

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Kidscape
www.kidscape.org.uk
02077303300

Childline – advice and stories from children who have survived bullying
08000 1111

Bullying on line
www.bullying.co.uk

Parentline Plus – advice and links for parents www.parentlineplus.org.uk
08088002222

Parents Against Bullying
01928 576152

Useful sources of information

Stonewall - the gay equality organisation founded in 1989. Founding members include Sir Ian McKellen. www.stonewall.org.uk.

Cyberbullying.org - one of the first websites set up in this area, for young people, providing advice around preventing and taking action against cyberbullying. A Canadian based site www.cyberbullying.org

Chatdanger - a website that informs about the potential dangers online (including bullying), and advice on how to stay safe while chatting www.chatdanger.com

Think U Know - the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP), has produced a set of resources around internet safety for secondary schools www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Know IT All for Parents – a range of resources for primary and secondary schools by Childnet International. Has a sample family agreement www.childnet-int.org/kia/parents

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Appendix i- ANTI-BULLYING POLICY SUPPLEMENT
<div align="center"><u>**CYBER-BULLYING**</u></div>

WHAT IS CYBER-BULLYING?

There are many types of cyber-bullying. Although here may be some of which we are unaware, here are the more common.

1. Text messages —that are threatening or cause discomfort - also included here is "bluejacking" (the sending of anonymous text messages over short distances using "Bluetooth" wireless technology)

2. Picture/video-clips via mobile phone cameras - images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed.

3. Mobile phone calls — silent calls or abusive messages; or stealing the victim's phone and using it to harass others, to make them believe the victim is responsible.

4. Emails — threatening or bullying emails, often sent using a pseudonym or somebody else's name.

5. Chat room bullying — menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in web-based chat room.

6. Instant messaging (IM) — unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real-time conversations online using MSM (Microsoft Messenger) or Yahoo Chat – although there are others.

7. Bullying via websites — use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal "own web space" sites such as Bebo (which works by signing on in school, therefore making it easy to find a victim) and MySpace – although there are others.

Technology allows the user to bully anonymously or from an unknown location, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Cyber-bullying leaves no physical scars so it is, perhaps, less evident to a parent or teacher, but it is highly intrusive and the hurt it causes can be very severe.

Young people are particularly adept at adapting to new technology, an area that can seem a closed world to adults. For example, the numerous acronyms used by young people in chat rooms and in text messages (POS - Parents over Shoulder, TUL – Tell You Later) make it difficult for adults to recognise potential threats.

Our pupils are taught how to:

Understand how to use these technologies safely and know about the risks and consequences of misusing them.

Know what to do if they or someone they know are being cyber bullied.

Report any problems with cyber bullying.

If they do have a problem, they can talk to the school, parents, the police, the mobile network (for phone) or the Internet Service Provider (ISP) to do something about it.

We Have:

An in school/home agreement that includes clear messages regarding e-communications

1. Regular briefing for care staff on: e-communication standards and practices in schools, what to do if problems arise, what is being taught in the curriculum

2. Support for parents and pupils if cyber bullying occurs by: assessing the harm caused, identifying those involved, taking steps to repair harm and to prevent recurrence.

At our school, we take this bullying as seriously as other types of bullying and, therefore, will deal with each situation individually. The sanctions agreed through out the home/school/company are to be used as sanctions for cyber bullies in the same way as any other act of bullying. An episode may

result in a simple verbal warning. It might result in further agreed sanctions. Clearly, more serious cases will result in further sanctions. Please see Appendix ii for more information.

Appendix (ii)

"What to do if being attacked from Cyberspace!"

A guide for Young people

If you're being bullied by phone or the Internet

Remember, bullying is never your fault. It can be stopped and it can usually be traced.

Don't ignore the bullying. Tell someone you trust, such as a teacher or parent, or call an advice line.

Try to keep calm. If you are frightened, try to show it as little as possible.

Don't get angry, it will only make the person bullying you more likely to continue.

Don't give out your personal details online - if you're in a chat room, watch what you say about where you live, your email address etc. All these things can help someone who wants to harm you build up a picture about you.

Keep and save any bullying emails, text messages or images. Then you can show them to your carer or teacher as evidence.

If you can, make a note of the time and date bullying messages or images were sent, and note any details about the sender.

There's plenty of online advice on how to react to cyber bullying. For example, www.kidscape.org and www.wiredsafety.org

Text/video messaging

You can easily stop receiving text messages for a while by turning off incoming messages for a couple of days. This might stop the person texting you by making them believe you've changed your phone number. To find out how to do this, visit www.wiredsafety.org.

If the bullying persists, you can change your phone number. Ask your mobile service provider.

Don't reply to abusive or worrying text or video messages. Your mobile service provider will have a number for you to ring or text to report phone bullying. Visit their website for details.

Don't delete messages from cyber bullies. You don't have to read them, but you should keep them as evidence.

Text harassment is a crime. If the calls are simply annoying, tell a teacher, or carer. If they are threatening or malicious and they persist, report them to the police, taking with you all the messages you've received.

Phone calls

If you get an abusive or silent phone call, don't hang up immediately. Instead, put the phone down and walk away for a few minutes. Then hang up or turn your phone off.

Once they realise they can't get you rattled, callers usually get bored and stop bothering you.

Always tell someone else: a teacher, key worker, or carer. Get them to support you and monitor what's going on.

Don't give out personal details such as your phone number to just anyone. And never leave your phone lying around. When you answer your phone, just say 'hello', not your name. If they ask you to confirm your phone number, ask what number they want and then tell them if they've got the right number or not.

Use your voicemail to vet your calls. A lot of mobiles display the caller's number. See if you recognise it. If you don't, let it divert to voicemail instead of answering it. And don't leave your name on your voicemail greeting. You could get an adult to record your greeting. Their voice might stop the caller ringing again. Almost all calls nowadays can be traced.

If the problem continues, think about changing your phone number.

If you receive calls that scare or trouble you, make a note of the times and dates and report them to the police. If your mobile can record calls, take the recording too.

Emails

Never reply to unpleasant or unwanted emails ('flames') — the sender wants a response, so don't give them that satisfaction.

Keep the emails as evidence. And tell an adult about them.

Ask an adult to contact the sender's Internet Service Provider (ISP) by writing abuse@ and then the host, e.g. abuse@hotmail.com

Never reply to someone you don't know, even if there's an option to 'unsubscribe'. Replying simply confirms your email address as a real one.

Web bullying

If the bullying is on a website (e.g. Bebo) tell a teacher or parent, just as you would if the bullying were face-to-face – even if you don't actually know the bully's identity.

Serious bullying should be reported to the police - for example threats of a physical or sexual nature. Your parent or teacher will help you do this.

Chat rooms and instant messaging

Never give out your name, address, phone number, or password online. It's a good idea to use a nickname. And don't give out photos of yourself.

Don't accept emails or open files from people you don't know. Remember it might not just be people your own age in a chat room.

Stick to public areas in chat rooms and get out if you feel uncomfortable.

Tell your carers if you feel uncomfortable or worried about anything that happens in a chat room.

Think carefully about what you write; don't leave yourself open to bullying.

Don't ever give out passwords to your mobile or email account.

Three steps to stay out of harm's way

1. Respect other people - online and off.

2. Don't spread rumours about people or share their secrets, including their phone numbers and passwords. If someone insults you online or by phone, stay calm – and ignore them.

3. 'Do as you would be done by.' Think how you would feel if you were bullied? You're responsible for your own behaviour – make sure you don't distress other people or cause them to be bullied by someone else.

The law is on your side

The Protection from Harassment Act, the Malicious Communications Act 1988 and Section 43 of the Telecommunications Act may be used to combat cyber bullying. People may be fined or sent to prison for up to six months.

Appendix iii- Reporting procedure for bullying in school

Child is being bullied

1st Stage
Staff member may be approached by:
the victim themselves
another pupil who the victim has confided in
another member of staff who has witnessed
something they unhappy with (clarification may
be needed to decide if bullying was taking place)

2nd Stage
If it is not the victim themselves who
reported the incident then the staff
member should speak to the pupil to
clarify the information they have been
given.

Staff member to suggest ways forward.
Short review time.

If bullying continues

Should bullying continue

3rd Stage
All parties to be interviewed and involved
in discussion.
Use will be made of suggested and agreed
actions and strategies to prevent further
bullying.
Care staff will be informed of plan of
action.
Short term review.

4th Stage
Head of Education (with anti-bullying
responsibility) to deal with the matter.
Directs to a variety of help strategies delivered by
trained personnel. These may include:

- Restorative justice
- Mediation/counseling
- Anger management training & self help
- Peer Mentoring/Buddy support
- External Agencies e.g. Connexions
- Circle of friends encouraged to provide
  support.