



# Anti-bullying Policy

Reviewed by (Headteacher/DSL):

Date: June 2017

Approved by Board of Trustees on:

Review Date: June 2018

Page left blank intentionally

## **Bristol Steiner School Anti-bullying Policy**

### **1. Rationale**

Bristol Steiner School (BSS) is committed to understanding and providing without exception a secure and safe environment, which will enable our children to grow naturally both as an individual and in the wider context of social integration. We take our responsibilities as guardians of our childrens' intellectual, physical, spiritual and social development seriously and ensure that at all times any difficulties that may arise both individually and within their social environment are dealt with effectively. Behaviour which can termed 'bullying', is dealt with immediately and with the utmost care. We want our children to grow naturally, feel secure, and approach themselves and each other confidently and without the fear of being bullied and with freedom for growth. Bullying is unacceptable anti-social behaviour: it affects everyone and will not be tolerated in our School.

Our Anti-bullying policy is an essential part of our Safeguarding practice. BSS is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults. We believe the welfare of the child is paramount and that no child should suffer harm of any form, either at home or at school. Everyone who works at or visits our school has the responsibility to make sure all our children are safe.

*For the purposes of this policy, 'staff' also includes agency staff, volunteers, and students working in our Schools, and 'parents' includes carers and legal guardians – unless this is clarified further within the text.*

### **2. Aims**

We aim to ensure that every child is free to develop naturally. It is absolutely essential to respond appropriately and effectively to bullying in order to ensure a secure and safe environment for both victim and perpetrator. Parents tend to send their children to Steiner schools because natural development is encouraged and not impeded. The individual who is being victimized, as well as the parent involved, need to be acknowledged, reassured that they are safe and can feel secure, and that the School does not tolerate this type of behaviour. Help will be given both within the School and at home where possible. The perpetrator as well as their parents will be made aware that their behaviour is upsetting and should be changed. They need to be helped to learn different ways of behaving both within the School and if necessary within their own homes. BSS therefore aims to:

- create an environment in which bullying is unacceptable;
- enable staff, children, parents and volunteers to work together to deal effectively with incidents;
- always investigate bullying, whether it is with children or with adults;
- minimise the number of bullying incidents;
- reduce the level of repeat incidents;
- ensure that all adults and pupils are aware that they have a responsibility to foster an anti-bullying ethos within the School.

### **3. Definitions**

Bristol City Council gives a broad definition of bullying:

## Policies and procedures: Anti-bullying Policy

'Bullying is behaviour which makes other people feel uncomfortable or threatened whether this is intended or not. Bullying is about power. Victims feel less powerful to stop it. Others, such as parent/carers for instance, may feel powerless to know how to help.

- It is not deliberately hurtful behaviour
- It is repeated often over a period of time
- It is difficult for those being bullied to stop the process.'

It is important that incidents of bullying are distinguished from isolated incidents. Bullying is considered to be repeated violence, mental or physical, conducted by an individual or a group and directed against other individuals.

Bullying can be detailed as follows:-

- **Emotional:** being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, threatening gestures
- **Physical:** pushing, kicking, pinching, hitting, scratching, punching, biting, pulling
- **Racist:** racial taunts, gestures
- **Sexual:** unwanted physical contact, sexually abusive comments
- **Verbal:** name-calling, teasing, exclusion, intimidating

Bullying can seriously damage a young person's confidence and sense of self worth. It can lead to serious and prolonged emotional damage for an individual. Those who conduct the bullying or witness it can also experience emotional harm. The impact on parents and school staff can be significant.

Bullying can take place between students, between students and staff, or between staff. Bullying can occur for a variety of reasons, all of which should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately. Bullying may also occur outside of the school premises, or through social networking sites.

In this School there is a range of ages. Because of the developmental level of very young children in the Kindergarten, incidents that occur are likely to be unintentional and not likely to be repeated. Staff should still be sensitive to the effects of unwanted behaviour on children. These behaviours may be physical as in hitting, verbal as in name calling, or emotional, as in "I don't want to be your friend" - or a combination of the above. Some children may be more domineering than others. These isolated incidents of unsociable behaviour are dealt with in our Behaviour Policy. Bullying is treated as a separate issue as the effects on children are often more damaging.

#### 4. Implementation

This policy is the responsibility of everyone who works at, volunteers for or visits BSS. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will ensure that arrangements will be made to bring this policy to the notice of all staff (including new, temporary, and part-time employees), agency and other contract staff, volunteers, visitors and students during Induction and throughout their time at the School so that they fulfill their duties to co-operate with this policy. This policy and procedure will apply in all these contexts, including school activities taking place offsite. BSS delivers services at various venues, and this policy will apply in all these contexts. BSS expects services delivered by partner organisations to have safeguarding procedures in place. This policy should appear on the School website. Parents will be informed of the anti-Bullying Policy by including a summary in the prospectus.

## 5. Other policies

This policy works in conjunction with the following School related policies and procedures:

1. *Behaviour*
2. *Code of conduct (staff)*
3. *Complaints*
4. *Curriculum*
5. *Equalities*
6. *eSafety*
7. *Health and Safety*
8. *Parent Handbook*
9. *Parent Prospectus*
10. *Safeguarding and Child Protection*
11. *Staffing*
12. *Whistleblowing*

## 6. Monitoring and Review

BSS will seek to continually improve all its related safeguarding policies, procedures and guidelines. BSS will review this policy on a regular basis to confirm that content and approach is still appropriate. The review will take place whenever there are significant changes and not later than 12 months from the previous review date.

## 7. Prevention

The child's' world within the Steiner educational setting is one of love, peace and nurturing. The quiet calm love held and created by the teachers nourishes the child and encourages a non-violent culture. The teacher is also on a path of self-education and inward striving, and stands there as a help to the child in overcoming the hindrances we all encounter in our self-development. BSS aims to prevent bullying through:

- raising awareness so that the whole School community is clear about the anti-bullying stance the School takes;
- bringing this anti-bullying policy to the attention of staff, parents and students;
- promoting the Pupil Code of Conduct;
- raising the self-esteem of members of the School, thus lowering the chances of individuals gaining powers over others;
- providing opportunities within the curriculum to develop empathy and educate students about bullying issues;
- using circle time to give students an opportunity to speak openly with their class group and discuss issues and concerns they may have;
- ensuring students are clear about the roles they can take in preventing bullying, including the role of bystanders;
- using the peer support system to involve students in caring for and being aware of each other;
- providing pupils with the opportunity to control aggressive behavior;
- creating a listening environment where bullying incidents can be highlighted and dealt with;
- providing a series of clear guidelines for dealing with victims and bullies in a supportive way;
- providing protection for the more vulnerable members of the School;
- teaching children how to listen to each other and resolve conflict without resorting to violence;
- fostering good parent-teacher relationships;
- celebrating the success of anti-bullying work in the School;

- giving guidance on appropriate and safe use of the internet as detailed in the School's eSafety policy.

The School will cover all these aspects as part of our curriculum and will ensure all staff has a sound knowledge of child development and the consequent behaviour patterns linked to the age and stage of development of the child.

### **8. Possible Signs & Symptoms**

A child may indicate through signs and behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Staff should be aware of the following possible indications or signs and should respond as recommended within the policy:

- changes to their usual routine
- unwilling to go to playgroup/kindergarten (school phobic)
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in given tasks/projects
- comes home with clothes torn
- has possessions go 'missing'
- has unexplained cuts, bruises, scratches
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- considers imaginary revenge plans/retribution
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- wets bed / pants
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

It is important to note that these signs and behaviour could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

### **9. Procedures to deal with bullying**

The following steps may be taken when dealing with a bullying incident:

- The incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has witnessed the incident or been approached regarding it. The incident should be acknowledged and those involved assured that it will be dealt with.
- The staff member will record the incident clearly using a Safeguarding Concern form and give to the DSL.
- The relevant class teacher should be informed and initially take the lead in dealing with the situation and determining appropriate action relevant to the age of the children involved.
- Parents will be notified and kept informed.
- The DSL will be kept informed and may intercede where necessary.
- Subject teachers and break duty staff will be made aware of the situation.
- Investigations will be made as far as is practicable on incidents of bullying that occur away from the School premises, or through social networking sites.

Staff will always intervene where bullying is observed using the strategies in our Behaviour Policy. Children and adults will be encouraged to report incidents of perceived bullying to a member of staff by verbal reminders, assemblies, PSHE lessons and welfare notices throughout the School. It is important that staff report incidents of bullying as this means everyone knows that incidents of bullying will be taken seriously and it will also make the incidents that do occur much easier to deal with.

Incidents of bullying will be reported to parents as detailed in our Behaviour Policy, and parents consulted at appropriate points in our approach. The identity of children in bullying situations will not be disclosed to parents wherever this is possible.

### **10. Supporting Pupils**

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Ensuring that they are heard and can talk freely to their class teacher about any incident.
- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss their experience with a class teacher or guardian, or a member of staff of their choice.
- Reassuring them.
- Offering continuous support to rebuild self-esteem and confidence.

Pupils who have bullied will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened and why they became involved.
- Allowing them to face up to the damage they have caused and learning how they can take steps to repair it.
- Giving opportunities to develop empathy and emotional skills such that they do not cause harm in the future.
- Informing parents to help change the attitude of the pupil.

### **11. Guidelines for teachers**

Teachers handling a bullying incident may take a number of age appropriate approaches to the situation, which may include:

- talking with the children involved, separately and together if appropriate;
- talking with the class; this may involve a discussion in circle time;
- devising specific activities for those involved in the incident to help them face up to and repair the damage they have caused;
- creating a pedagogical story;
- facilitating friendships;
- creating a support group;
- focussing on feelings rather than facts;
- consultation and involvement of colleagues;
- implementing the school's disciplinary procedure; and/or
- understanding the nature of 'cyber' bullying and its impact.

Any approach agreed upon will be monitored closely by the class teacher and the progress reported back to the DSL and the parents of those children involved. Where appropriate, the School will use ideas from the 'no blame' approach which has four essential points:

1. The absence of blame
2. The encouragement of empathy

3. Shared responsibility
4. Problem solving

Action will be taken to address any recurrent bullying. Outside agencies will be consulted for advice and information as required. Staff observations will be made to ascertain a detailed picture of any bullying situation. If the child continues to bully other children the Headteacher may, for the safety of other children, temporarily exclude the child and seek to support the child through its outreach services.