

Birmingham Independent College

Anti-Bullying Policy

Next review: January 2026

Introduction

BIC is committed to developing an anti-bullying culture where the bullying of adults, children or young people is not tolerated in any form.

This policy outlines what our college will do to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying. It is based on DfE guidance "Preventing and Tackling Bullying" July 2017 and supporting documents. It also considers the DfE statutory guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024". Reference has also been made to Childnet's "Cyberbullying: Understand, Prevent and Respond: Guidance for school/colleges".

Links with policies and practices

This policy should be read alongside the following BIC policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- **Exclusions Policy**
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- E-Safety Policy

Links to legislation

There are several pieces of legislation which set out measures and actions for school/colleges in response to bullying, as well as criminal and civil law. These may include (but are not limited to):

- The Education and Inspection Act 2006, 2011
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Independent School Standards (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2012
- The Children Act 1989
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Communications Act 2003
- Public Order Act 1986

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of:

- the Head of College to communicate this policy to the college community, to ensure that disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably, and takes overall responsibility.
- The Proprietorship will take a lead role in monitoring and reviewing this policy.
- All staff, senior leadership, teaching and non-teaching staff, will support, uphold and implement this policy accordingly.
- Parents/carers will support their children and work in partnership with the college.
- The college will ensure that students understand this policy and why it is important.

Definition

- Bullying can be defined as "*behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally*". (DfE "Preventing and Tackling Bullying", July 2017)
- Bullying can include name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; taking belongings; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.
- This includes the same unacceptable behaviours expressed online, sometimes called online or cyberbullying. This can include: sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos.

- Bullying is recognised by the school/college as being a form of child-on-child abuse. It can be emotionally abusive and can cause severe and adverse effects on children's and young people's emotional development.

Forms and types of bullying covered by this policy

Bullying can happen to anyone. This policy covers all types and forms of bullying including:

- Bullying related to physical appearance;
- Bullying of young carers, children in care or otherwise related to home circumstances;
- Bullying related to physical/mental health conditions;
- Physical bullying;
- Emotional bullying;
- Sexual bullying;
- Bullying via technology, known as online or cyberbullying.
- Prejudicial bullying (against people/students with protected characteristics):
- Bullying related to race, religion, faith and belief and for those without faith;
- Bullying related to ethnicity, nationality or culture;
- Bullying related to Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND);
- Bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic/biphobic bullying);
- Gender based bullying, including transphobic bullying;
- Bullying against teenage parents (pregnancy and maternity under the Equality Act).

College Ethos

In college, we strive to create a happy, safe and caring learning environment where everyone feels safe. All cases of bullying are serious and any behaviour that adversely affects the well-being of another will not be tolerated.

Some students may experience considerable difficulties with communication, social interaction and empathy which can affect their ability to reflect on the impact their behaviour has on others or to self-manage their behaviour. These difficulties can mean that some students are less likely to intentionally 'bully' others, although behaviour that could be bullying behaviour does occur on occasions. While these actions may not have the same degree of intention as is usual when describing bullying, the effect on the targeted individual or individuals is the same and therefore must be addressed.

The way staff members deal with such incidents of behaviour that challenges should take account of all individual needs.

Aims

Every member of staff has a responsibility to work towards eradicating any incidents and types of bullying in our college.

The aim of the policy is to help members of the college community to deal with bullying when it occurs and, even more importantly, to prevent it.

Every member of staff has a responsibility to report any incident of bullying that comes to their attention and work towards eradicating any incidents and types of bullying in our college. Reports of bullying will always be taken seriously. Reports of bullying will be logged on the digital recording platform.

The aims of the college's anti-bullying strategies and intervention systems are:

- To prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour;
- To react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way;
- To safeguard the student who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support for the student;
- To apply disciplinary sanctions to the student causing the bullying and ensure they learn from the experience, possibly through multi-agency support.

Recognising the indicators that bullying is occurring

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, appetite irregularities, feigning illness, refusing to attend college or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in personal habits, lacking concentration or high levels of distractible behaviour. A student may become super-vigilant. Individual behaviour patterns are well known to staff and when there are changes in these patterns the possibility of bullying must always be considered.

Students must be encouraged to report bullying. Advocates for the student **must** report possible bullying on behalf of their charges and where possible communication strategies must be put in place to allow students to express their feelings. Student's communications must be listened to.

Staff must be alert to the signs of bullying (in all its many forms) and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with college policy.

Understanding why bullying is occurring

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator/s and 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 several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Other reasons or motivations given for bullying include: bullying related to race, religion or culture; bullying related to special educational needs or disabilities; bullying related to appearance or health conditions; bullying related to sexual orientation; bullying of young carers or looked-after children or otherwise related to home circumstances; sexist or sexual bullying.

We carefully review the reasons why bullying is occurring on a case-by-case basis.

Implementation

Preventative Strategies include:

- Using our extensive knowledge of students, and strong relationships with home, to recognise any changes that might result in 'bullying' behaviours;
- Changes to individual behaviour plans;
- A functional assessment to understand the motivation underpinning the behaviour change;
- Talking to students about issues of difference through dedicated events or projects;
- Talking with students about how to manage their own feelings and emotions;
- Ensuring that all students are appropriately supervised;
- Ensuring that all members of staff are familiar with the policy;
- Watching for early signs of distress and where students are able to communicate, listen to what they are saying;
- Ensuring that appreciation and respect for all cultures are promoted;
- Ensuring that all students have the means to communicate, where verbal communication is challenging;
- Ensuring that teaching students about bullying and its impact is embedded throughout the curriculum offer.
- Ensuring that monitoring and filtering software is effective in protecting students from cyber based bullying

The following steps should be taken when dealing with incidents:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached;

- A clear account of the incident will be recorded on the digital recording platform and share with the appropriate member of SLT who will act with delegated responsibilities on behalf of the Head of College;
- The SLT member will interview all concerned and keep a record of their findings;
- Information is gathered about the incident before any conclusion is made about whether the incidents were bullying behaviour – both the student suspected of ‘bullying’ and the ‘victim’ will be listened to carefully;
- Relevant staff and parents/carers will be kept informed;
- If the issue persists, then further support meetings (with parents and staff) will be held;
- In cases where a crime has been committed or a learner is believed to be in imminent danger or risk, the appropriate authorities (police, LA) will be informed immediately prior to any internal investigation. At this point our Safeguarding procedures will be followed.
- If it is suspected that the bullying is in the form of staff on student then the disciplinary procedure will be acted upon and a safeguarding concern raised.
- If internet/social media based bullying is suspected steps MUST be taken to check if the filtering and monitoring software protection can be improved.

Students

Bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be dealt with immediately.

Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Immediate support and reassurance;
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence;
- Participating in a restorative justice conversation, where appropriate.

Students who have bullied will be helped by:

- The ‘bully’ to be informed in a suitable way that their behaviour is inappropriate and must stop;
- Discovering more about the situation to help restore positive behaviours;
- Informing parents/carers to help change the behaviour of the student;
- Participating in a restorative justice conversation, where appropriate.

We aim to use positive methods to create and restore appropriate behaviours. Action that is solely disciplinary is not considered the right choice within our environment and Positive Behaviour Support ethos.

Positive behaviours, social skills and emotional well-being are promoted within the curriculum (e.g. PSHE, Morning conversations, assemblies and subject areas, as appropriate).

Monitoring, evaluation and review

The college will review this policy every year and assess its implementation and effectiveness. This will be done through positive action based on Incident Reports and through ongoing feedback from staff and students (including Student Reviews).

The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the college and training will be given to staff as part of their induction package to ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and how to implement them.

Equal opportunities

Diversity activities are organised to give students the opportunity to share in, respect and appreciate a wide range of cultures and activities. Each child’s culture is recognised and treated with respect across the curriculum and where possible children are given the opportunity to share experiences and knowledge in order to raise self esteem.

Useful links and supporting organisations

- Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Childline: www.childline.org.uk
- Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk
- Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk

- MindEd: www.minded.org.uk
- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- The BIG Award: www.bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk/index.php
- PSHE Association: www.pshe-association.org.uk
- Restorative Justice Council: www.restorativejustice.org.uk
- The Diana Award: www.diana-award.org.uk
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
- Young Carers: <https://carers.org/about-us/about-young-carers>
- The Restorative Justice Council: <https://restorativejustice.org.uk/restorative-practice-schools>

SEND

- Changing Faces: www.changingfaces.org.uk
- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk
- DfE: SEND code of practice: www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25

Cyberbullying

- Childnet: www.childnet.com
- Internet Watch Foundation: www.iwf.org.uk
- Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk
- The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS)
www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis
- DfE 'Cyberbullying: advice for headteacher/principals and school/college staff':
www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying
- DfE 'Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying':
www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying

Race, religion and nationality

- Anne Frank Trust: www.annefrank.org.uk
- Kick it Out: <https://www.kickitout.org/take-action/resources>
- Report it: www.report-it.org.uk
- Stop Hate: www.stophateuk.org
- Tell Mama: www.tellmamauk.org
- Educate against Hate: www.educateagainsthate.com
- Show Racism the Red Card: <http://www.theredcard.org/>

LGBT

- Barnardo's LGBT Hub: [www.barnardos.org.uk/what we do/our work/lgbtq.htm](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_work/lgbtq.htm)
- Metro Charity: www.metrocentreonline.org
- EACH: www.eachaction.org.uk
- Proud Trust: www.theproudtrust.org
- School/colleges Out: <http://www.schools-out.org.uk/>

Sexual harassment and sexual bullying

- Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAW) www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk
 - Disrespect No Body: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disrespect-nobody-campaign-posters>
 - Anti-bullying Alliance: advice for school/college staff and professionals about developing effective anti-bullying practice in relation to sexual bullying: <https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/sexual-and-sexist-bullying> **Note: Additional links can be found in 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (July 2017)** www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying
- DfE research into anti-bullying practices:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/approaches-to-preventing-and-tackling-bullying>