



**Bosworth  
Independent  
College**

# **Anti-bullying and Cyber-bullying Policy**

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## Introduction

Bosworth Independent College is committed to providing an environment where students, teachers and all employees have the right to be free from harm and intimidation. Each member of the College community is valued and respected and has basic rights. Bullying is not acceptable behaviour and every member of the College community has a responsibility to contribute to this safe environment. Staff members receive regular training in awareness of, monitoring and responding appropriately to bullying. Anti-bullying, awareness of bullying and how to respond are part of the College's PSHEE curriculum for all cohorts.

Bullying can be defined as any deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time that intentionally injures another person. Victims may be either student or employee and a characteristic of bullying is that it can be difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. Bullying is often motivated by prejudice. Bullying may involve complicity by manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone else. It may be overt and intimidatory, but is often hidden and subtle.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- Physical (including sexual) assault
- Verbal abuse by name calling, teasing or making offensive remarks
- Banter or joking at someone's expense
- Cyber-bullying – use of IT, often social media, by an individual or a group in a way that is intended to upset others. Examples include social websites, mobile phones, text messaging, photographs, email and video
- Indirect emotional hurt by excluding from social groups or spreading malicious rumours

Bullying includes actions and comments that are racist, religious, cultural, homophobic, transphobic, sexist or sexual. It also includes comments that focus on physical attributes such including disabilities or any reference to Special Educational needs.

Bullying is one of the top concerns for young people and parents. Bullying can make the lives of its victims a misery undermining self-confidence and self-esteem and be psychologically damaging.

Bosworth College recognises that bullies may have complex reasons for their behaviour and may also need help. It recognises that those bullied in the past can themselves become bullies.

## Procedures

All members of staff should be aware of what to look for and what to do if they suspect bullying. Bosworth Independent College is proud of its open and friendly ethos, however this should not reduce our awareness to the potential for bullying behaviour at the College. It should never be considered 'Someone else's responsibility to report it'.

Student behaviour that may alert a member of staff to the possibility of bullying include

- Change of behaviour, perhaps the student is becoming nervous and lack concentration.

- Change in friendship groups or a student appearing isolated. Staff should be particularly aware of this in student 'down time' e.g. lunch times, the time gaps between classes or, for Boarders, evenings and weekends
- Being 'ill' on certain days or times.

Any incident of bullying should be reported to Course Director/Vice Principal/Principal as appropriate either using a Concern Form or by a direct approach. All reports of bullying are recorded by the Vice Principal in a central log with details of actions taken. Questions in the end of year student questionnaire ask directly and indirectly about bullying and areas/times in the day that students do not like. Bullying records are reviewed at least twice yearly by the Vice Principal reporting to the Pastoral Committee, to the Principal and to the Course and Assistant Course Directors' Meetings. Bullying incidents are recorded on the Safeguarding Register and monitored if and when they occur. An overview of incidents of bullying and student responses in the questionnaire is included in the annual pastoral report to the Directors.

### The Role of the Personal Tutor

Because of their close contact and knowledge of students Personal Tutors have a particular role to play in identifying and dealing with bullying. As well as the responsibilities outlined above for all staff, Personal Tutors must make sure their students know what to do and how to report any bullying that they suffer or see.

This includes the following advice:

If you are the victim:

- If you feel able, confront the bully by telling them directly that you think what they are doing is wrong
- Share your feelings with someone else
- If possible talk to an adult – this could be PT, ACD, CD, teacher, House Parent, Supervisor, Student Liaison Officer (Jackie Aran), or anyone in College with whom they feel comfortable with
- Childline 0800 1111

If you see bullying;

- Support the victim by offering friendship and make it clear that in your opinion what is happening to them is wrong
- Encourage the victim to speak out by confronting the bully or, with their permission, confront the bully yourself
- Accompany the victim to a trusted adult or suggest you talk to someone (PT/ACD/CD etc) on their behalf
- Students must be encouraged to report bullying that they see.
- Students must be made to understand that being a bystander to bullying without reporting it or trying to stop it makes them complicit in the bullying.

## What Will Happen

The victim will be interviewed by the appropriate member of the pastoral team and asked to write an immediate account of events. They are given appropriate support and advice and the subsequent procedures and actions are explained.

If the member of the pastoral team is clear that a bullying offence has been committed they will inform the DSL. The DSL will pass the information to the Vice Principal, Head of Boarding and relevant Course Director. The bully and anyone else involved will be interviewed individually by an appropriate member of staff and asked to write an immediate account of events.

Details will be kept in students' welfare files and an appropriate course of action will be taken. Where appropriate a formal bullying warning will be issued making it clear that any further incident or discussion about the present situation would be considered as further bullying. It will be made clear why the behaviour was inappropriate and unacceptable. Support and counselling will be offered. Parents may be informed. For prolonged or extensive bullying or failure to appreciate the seriousness of the offence and accept responsibility suspension may be considered.

A second offence will always involve the Vice Principal and parents will always be notified. Suspension is a probable sanction.

All incidents of reported bullying will be followed up within the shortest possible time frame to make sure the situation has been dealt with and is resolved. Responses by senior staff to reports of bullying must begin within 24 hours of the report, including discussion amongst relevant staff, supporting victims and agreeing action to be taken.

In very serious cases it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or Social Services if the situation is of such gravity that it cannot be dealt with internally or a criminal prosecution is likely.

## Bullying of Staff by Students

The victim will be interviewed by their line manager and asked to write an immediate account of events. They are given appropriate support and advice and the subsequent procedures and actions are explained.

If the line manager is clear that a bullying offence has been committed they will inform the relevant member of the SLT. The bully and anyone else involved will be interviewed individually by an appropriate member of staff and asked to write an immediate account of events.

Details will be kept in students' welfare files and an appropriate course of action will be taken. Where appropriate a formal bullying warning will be issued making it clear that any further incident or discussion about the present situation would be considered as further bullying. It will be made clear why the behaviour was inappropriate and unacceptable. Support and counselling will be offered. Parents may be informed. For prolonged or extensive bullying or failure to appreciate the seriousness of the offence and accept responsibility suspension may be considered.

A second offence will always involve the Principal and parents will always be notified. Suspension is a probable sanction.

All incidents of reported bullying will be followed up within the shortest possible time frame to make sure the situation has been dealt with and is resolved. Responses by senior staff to reports of bullying

must begin within 24 hours of the report, including discussion amongst relevant staff, supporting victims and agreeing action to be taken.

## Cyber-Bullying

The College recognises that technology plays an important and positive role in the lives of its students. It is committed to helping all members of the College community to understand the benefits and risks associated with the various technologies and to assist them in learning how to use them responsibly and safely.

Definition: Cyber-bullying is the use of technology, typically mobile telephones or Social Media, to frighten or upset someone.

## Policy

1. Cyber-bullying is seen to be, and will be treated on a par with all other kinds of bullying
2. Responses to cyber-bullying will be largely similar to those for all other bullying
3. The College recognises that cyber-bullying can be more subtle than traditional bullying and therefore that it may be more difficult to detect
4. The College recognises that cyber-bullies may have a different profile from traditional bullies
5. The College recognises that there is a higher likelihood of staff being cyber-bullied than being traditionally bullied
6. The College recognises its duty to protect its members and provide a safe and healthy environment
7. College staff may request a student to reveal a message or other telephone content and may confiscate a telephone or device.
8. The College reserves the right to search the contents of a telephone or mobile device. We would consider the refusal to allow this, as a significant factor in any subsequent disciplinary proceedings
9. Students will be educated about cyber-bullying through Personal Tutor meetings, PHSEE courses and College Bulletins.
10. Research will be conducted to discover students' level of understanding regarding cyber-bullying
11. Awareness will be raised as a result of the feedback from the research on how to deal/reduce cyber-bullying
12. The College has Computer Acceptable Use Policies in place for staff and students.