



CITY OF BIRMINGHAM EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

**BASKERVILLE SCHOOL**

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## **ANTI BULLYING POLICY**

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Date reviewed: January 2016  
Next review: January 2017

BASKERVILLE SCHOOL, FELLOWS LANE, HARBORNE, BIRMINGHAM, B17 9TS

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## **VISION STATEMENT**

We will ensure the entitlement of each student to access a variety of opportunities to promote academic, social, emotional and physical development.

We will use autistic specific, empathetic approaches and an autistic sympathetic learning environment to promote student learning and personal development.

We will provide choices and challenges in order to maximise potential and build upon strengths and interests.

All the members of the school community are valued equally and work in partnership with parents, carers and the wider community.

We will work within a supportive school framework to promote and celebrate individual success, integration into the wider community and prepare students for life after school.

## **1 INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE**

All of the students have autistic spectrum disorders; they have greater difficulty than other students with social understanding and communication. Therefore, it is essential that this policy be implemented consistently to support all students and maintain physical, social and emotional development. It is important to note that an individual's behaviour at school towards another pupil may be rooted in their disability rather than in a need to bully them. For the individual who is on the receiving end of unwanted behaviour the result may be the same.

Baskerville School takes the issue of bullying very seriously.

In talking to both parents and pupils, it is clear that what they want most for their children, and themselves, is to know that they will be safe at school.

Once the issue of how the school will adopt an anti-bullying stance is clarified, parents, pupils and staff feel more reassured.

This policy covers all of the departments of the school. For the residential department of the school, it is aimed specifically at standard 30.7.8 identified in the National Care Standards as a means of countering bullying.

## **The Problem**

Bullying by its very nature is insidious because children and young people are likely to feel that “telling” will only make matters worse for themselves, and leave them even more at the mercy of the bully/bullies.

Any strategy for dealing with bullying must ensure that it protects the child or young person being bullied. For example, it is more appropriate for a member of staff to approach the bully on the basis “We know what is going on” rather than to say that it was the victim who brought the matter to their notice.

## **Definition**

At Baskerville School we believe that bullying is inappropriate behaviour from an individual pupil or group of pupils towards another pupil which is deliberate, repeated over time and hard to defend against. It can take the form of physical actions, words or being excluded from a group for various improper reasons.

## **Examples of inappropriate bullying behaviour that have been identified include:**

- Hitting or punching another child
- Kicking
- Spitting
- Spoiling someone else’s belongings
- Calling names
- Teasing
- Giving nasty looks
- Making racist, sexist and/or homophobic remarks
- Making remarks about someone’s disability
- Spreading rumours
- Not letting someone join in a game
- Not talking to someone or getting other people not to talk to an individual

## **Emotional and physical symptoms linked to bullying.**

### *Emotional*

- Lost confidence
- Loss of self esteem
- Irritability
- Aggression
- Anxiety
- Panic attacks
- Depression
- Suicidal thoughts

### *Physical*

- Sleeplessness
- Nausea
- Shaking
- Heart racing
- Laziness
- Skin complaints
- Stomach aches
- Migraine and headaches

It is important that staff take the above symptoms as possible indicators of bullying, but equally important to remember that some of these signs can also be symptoms of autism. Therefore it is important that staff raise and appropriately record any concerns they have.

### **Inclusion and Bullying**

It is right that day pupils and residential pupils spend significant periods of time in inclusive settings within the community. However, adults within the school, and in resources used by our pupils, need to recognise that the behaviour of other children and young people towards our pupils, can be highly inappropriate.

Staff need to take seriously the concerns of our young people and to liaise with each other to support students accordingly.

Within the residential department some activities take place within the local community and staff need to be vigilant to act upon reports of bullying and harassment.

### **Bullying and Disability**

Pupils with autism are at risk of having their body language and behaviour misinterpreted by other children and young people whilst out in the community. This can lead them into difficulties as others may focus on their differences, or react to the individual's odd behaviours.

#### Examples of behaviour

- Rocking
- Staring at other people who interest them
- Answering questions in the "wrong way"
- Standing too close to other people
- Touching other people
- Muttering or talking to other people
- Not being able to walk away when someone wanted to argue with them
- Not being able to verbalise a response when questioned

## **The school's response to bullying**

Staff vigilance is the most potent deterrent against bullying. Children and young people who bully will then know that it will be dealt with, and the victims of bullying will have confidence for the same reason.

It is therefore important that at Baskerville we create a culture and communication network where children and young people are easily able to confide to staff if they are being bullied.

The above is addressed by the use of Circle Time, lessons or 1:1 time with key workers or tutors and the action that follows an incident.

Staff at Baskerville will all have access to the anti-bullying policy and awareness of the issue will be given a priority.

Within the classroom setting anti-bullying work will be addressed via the curriculum and in particular within PSHCEE lessons and PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Skills). Assemblies will be held on the subject of 'staying safe' throughout the year.

It is important to note that Baskerville School believes that both the bullied and the bully are viewed as in need of support. Although some bullying is an outcome of students' lack of empathy and poor social understanding it still must be dealt with as bullying. The bully needs to be told that his / her behaviour is unacceptable because it is bullying and the victim needs supporting.

Within the residential department a pupil's individual keyworker will use 1:1 time as a means of checking out that all pupils feel safe and secure. In school the tutor undertakes this.

Research has shown that bullying is most likely to take place when students are in unsupervised settings. Within Baskerville's structure and timing of activities, student safety is given a high priority and therefore staff are reminded to be extra vigilant during free time for students.

When an incident of bullying has occurred staff are to complete the School Incident Database. This will allow the management of the school to monitor the issue very closely and to respond to parental and staff concerns.

When staff are confronting a bully or bullies it is important that they try to include the following key features into their work –

- Be absolutely certain about the known facts.
- Confront the "bully" with the allegations.
- Make it clear that the behaviour is unacceptable.
- See each bully separately if appropriate.
- Be specific about sanctions if bullying does not stop.
- Follow up to check that behaviour has ceased.