

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

*Review History:			
Date of review:	Reviewed by:	Reason for review:	Amendments:
September 2022	Compliance and Safeguarding Manager	Annual review	Addition of management statement on bullying
September 2023	Compliance and Safeguarding Manager	Annual review	Company branding
September 2024	Compliance and Safeguarding Officer	Annual review	Formatting, addition of reference to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024, change of terminology

**Policies will be reviewed annually or more frequently if there are any legal changes or as good practice requires.*

Aim

BSC Education Limited (the 'Company', 'We', 'BSC') aims to:

- Provide a safe environment in which both students and team members can develop and learn away from any adverse behaviour
- Create an honest and communicative environment for students and team members to give them the opportunity to talk about bullying
- Promote an atmosphere whereby allegations of bullying will always be taken seriously
- Affect any changes needed to negate bullying

Purpose

The BSC Group is committed to a safe and caring atmosphere by promoting good practice and challenging any bullying to ensure the welfare of all our students including children and adults at risk is upheld and expects all members of the BSC team to share this commitment.

Scope

This policy includes key information around our stance on anti-bullying of our students, and applies to all employees, agency workers, contractors, volunteers and interns.

BSC recognises the duty of care we have to all our students and team members regardless of age or language ability.

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1. Introduction

BSC takes seriously its duty of care towards its students and team members regarding bullying. Bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals. It can be a barrier to their learning and have serious consequences for their mental health.

This policy pays due regard to the following guidance:

- Prevent and Tackling Bullying (July 2017)
- Cyberbullying: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff (2014) - Education Act 2011
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024)

This policy sits alongside our other key policies such as safeguarding and our code of conduct.

There are no stereotypical victims of bullying however, it is stated that (Preventing and Tackling Bullying July 2017) 'bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves'.

At BSC we aim to foster caring relationships between all students, treating one another with respect and where all members feel valued. Our duty of care includes protecting all students and team members from harm from bullying. It is imperative that low-level disruption which can include offensive language is challenged appropriately and is not to be dismissed as 'banter'. Therefore, acknowledgement and early intervention is crucial to stop this damaging behaviour from escalating.

This policy outlines what is not acceptable behaviour and the process for reporting bullying, including our anti-bullying strategies.

2. Purpose & Scope

- Assisting in creating an ethos in which attending college is a positive experience for all college members
- Making it clear that all forms of bullying are unacceptable
- Enabling everyone to feel safe
- Creating an open environment which encourages everyone to report incidences of bullying
- Dealing effectively in how we manage and report bullying in a timely manner
- Supporting and protecting victims of bullying and ensure they are heard
- Helping and supporting those alleged of bullying to change their attitudes as well as their behaviour and understand why it needs to change
- Liaising with parents and/or carers and other appropriate professionals to reduce bullying
- Ensuring everyone at each BSC college location feels responsible for combating bullying

3. Management statement on bullying

Bullying of any kind will not be tolerated at BSC. Students and Team members are encouraged to report any kind of bullying whether that be experienced first-hand, witnessed within the college or during any immersive lesson or BSC student experience trip.

Any allegation will be taken seriously, investigated and dealt with accordingly including written warnings, suspension and expulsion. This decision will be made as part of the BSC Management Team for each college location and depending on the severity The Director of Operations will take overall responsibility for and suspension and expulsion of BSC Students.

All cases of serious bullying, reports will be kept and recorded in line with UKGDPR and good practice and will be discussed by BSC management team for each college location to ensure action is taken and to include what lessons can be learned and how BSC can improve its strategies and policies in the future.

This policy sits alongside our student handbook and discipline procedures and students should be aware of not only of our commitment to them and their learning environment but also their commitment to BSC which includes behavioural expectations towards other students and the wider BSC team.

According to our terms and conditions:

When a student makes a booking through us, they accept responsibility for the proper conduct of all parties included on their booking.

We reserve the right to cancel at any time any student's course, or course and accommodation, with no refunds, in the event that, in the reasonable opinion of the Company or the college, the student's behaviour is disruptive or unsatisfactory (including without limitation causes or is likely to cause danger, upset or distress to anyone else or damage to property). Our decision is final.

We shall be under no obligation whatsoever to pay compensation or meet any costs or expenses the student(s) may incur as a result of their course, or course and accommodation, being terminated.

4. Definitions of Bullying

For the purpose of this policy, bullying is defined as behaviour by an individual or group usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally, or there is an imbalance of power, which makes it hard for those being bullied to speak up or defend themselves. This can happen face-to-face or online, all forms of bullying can be from either sex, towards either sex, peer-on-peer and of any age.

Students can abuse other students. This is generally referred to as child-on-child abuse and can take many forms. This can include (but is not limited to): bullying (including cyberbullying which includes the use of social media, mobile phones, text messages or photography); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiation/hazing types of violence and rituals. More information on abuse can be found in our BSC safeguarding policy.

All BSC team members must be alert to & aware of how to counter bullying and the procedures to address and support not only the victim but the perpetrator.

Examples of Bullying

Physical bullying

Causing physical harm:

- Hitting
- Kicking
- Shaking
- Biting
- Spitting
- Scratching
- Hair pulling
- Intentionally throwing objects at someone

Racist bullying

Any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.

This can be in the form of:

- Verbal abuse, name calling, racist jokes, offensive mimicry
- Physical threats or attacks
- Bringing racist leaflets, comics or magazines to college
- Inciting others to behave in a racist way
- Racist graffiti or other written insults, even against food, music, dress or customs
- Refusing to co-operate in work or play related to diversity

Sexual harassment

- Sexual comments, remarks, jokes
- Comments about appearance
- Leering, staring or suggestive looks, this can include looking someone up and down
- Inappropriate and uninvited touching
- Brushing past someone
- Intrusive questions about a person's private or sex life
- Up-skirting (which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their knowing)
- Sexting (using social media to send sexual imagery or comments)
- In its extreme form, sexual assault or rape

Sexual harassment is a form of unlawful discrimination under the Equality Act 2010 This means that people are legally protected from sexual harassment in certain places – for example, at work, on transport and at college.

Faith or Culture based:

- Negative Stereotyping
- Name calling or ridiculing based on religion, faith or culture
- Degrading another person emotionally, mentally, or physically based on the individuals actual or perceived religious identity.

Sexual orientation and gender expression

There is evidence to suggest that homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic bullying is under-reported due to the nature and risk of the consequences of doing so. This form of bullying can happen even if students are not part of the LGBTQIA+ community, this type of bullying is based on negative attitudes or prejudice, beliefs or behaviour towards lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people and can come in the form of language, gestures or media which can be classed as hate crimes and in severe cases may escalate to police intervention.

This can be in the form of:

- Use of homophobic language
- Looks and comments about sexual orientation or appearance
- Name calling
- Comments on appearance

Cyber-bullying

This involves using technology to intentionally upset another person. The misuse of this technology in terms of bullying can happen at any point throughout the day and although the methodology for

this type of bullying is different it does not mean it is any less significant or damaging to the individual. All forms of bullying have no place in BSC culture and counter-measures must take a whole-college approach for tackling this issue.

It is important to recognise that bullying of team members by parents, colleagues or students is also unacceptable. This is in line with creating a caring and supportive environment for students to learn but it is also imperative to create a culture where by team members can also benefit from this in terms of being free from on-line harassment and bullying. Therefore, it is important for team members to understand policy on the use of social media, not leaving computers or any other devices logged in when not in use and ensuring that PINs are used to protect data loss or images and documents being lost, stolen or accessed by pupils. As regards social media, team members are aware not to accept 'friend' requests from pupils, past or present, nor leave themselves open to inappropriate on-line conduct and be aware of their reputation in terms of what they share, post or 'tagged'.

Cyber-Bullying can take the form of, but not limited to:

- Text messaging including; receiving threatening or disturbing messages or images and sexting
- Sexualised on-line bullying
- Sending video clips or pictures
- Having your account hacked – when someone else uses your password
- Phone calls
- Website bullying (including social media)
- E-mail messaging

Emotional bullying

Intentionally causing harm and covers many of the above forms of bullying:

- Deliberately ignoring someone
- Taunting – making fun of someone
- Calling someone names
- Gaslighting – actions to control and manipulate another person
- Blackmailing – making someone do something they don't want to do
- Taking someone's property

5. Code of Conduct

Students at BSC must show appropriate behaviour towards their peers, including showing respect to other students, housemates, home stay hosts, team members and visitors as well as members of the wider community.

They are encouraged to do this by:

- Being sensitive to others when they may be feeling vulnerable or sad
- Being a part of the praise culture within the college
- Taking responsibility for their own behaviour
- Reporting to team members any acts of bullying
- Following college rules which are clearly set out during their induction

BSC Team members are role models to their students and are expected to exemplify good conduct and follow this policy in relation to anti-bullying also.

6. Procedures

In line with BSC values of creating an open and communicative learning environment all students and team members are encouraged to report any instances of bullying and the following guidance is adhered to:

Students reporting bullying:

- Tell a team member. We cannot help if we don't know it is happening
- Tell your family or somebody you trust what has happened straight away
- Get away from the situation as quickly as possible
Do not blame yourself for what has happened

If you experience bullying on-line, via mobile phone text messages, e-mail or social media:

- Block the bully
- Tell a team member. We cannot help if we don't know it is happening
- Keep any texts, emails, images as proof

What happens next:

- A BSC team member will talk to you about what happened
- BSC will put in place measures to stop and address the bullying
- Although bullying does not break UK law, an act of bullying might, and you may be asked if you want to involve the police
- All bullying allegations will be dealt with appropriately and in a timely manner

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Where the young person is under 18:

- Don't blame yourself for what has happened
- Any incident of bullying will be discussed with the young person's parents/guardians and parents/guardians will be consulted on action to be taken (for both victim and bully) and agreements made as to what action should be taken
- The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of the team who has been formally authorised by the Principal, that team member can examine data or files and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and colleges, and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

Where the person is 18 or over:

- Don't blame yourself for what has happened
- Where the young person has 'full capacity', their decisions on sharing information will be respected, but the college does reserve the right to contact external bodies, such as social services and the police where we feel that the young person's well-being is seriously at risk.

Our Search Policy needs to be followed by team members if they believe a student is carrying a prohibited item.

Parents/carers reporting bullying

If the person you are responsible for has been bullied or is bullying another person:

- Contact the college
- The college will ask for details about the incident(s) of bullying
- Reassure the person that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Explain that should any further incidents occur they should report them to a team member immediately
- The college will provide all students with support

- The college will not be able to discuss details with you about any other beneficiary

If the person you are responsible for is experiencing any form of electronic bullying:

- Ensure the person is careful of whom they give their mobile phone number and e-mail address to
- Where possible monitor internet use
- Check exactly when a threatening message was sent
- Where necessary, report incidents to the college or authorities
- Issue appropriate advice and guidance to stay safe

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7. Advice to Team Members

What to look out for:

- Students isolating themselves
- Changes in behaviour
- Anxiety or nervousness not previously displayed
- Attendance
- Bruises or unexplained marks
- Complaining of head or stomach aches
- Changes in academic achievement
- Damaged possessions
- Stolen items that cannot be easily explained

Responding to a student who may have been bullied:

- Take immediate steps to intervene to stop the bullying or violence such as separating the students involved to secure their safety;
- Provide reassurance to the victim that they are not responsible for the behaviour of the bully;
- Extra supervision or monitoring of students;
- All team members are required to report any concerns of abuse, including bullying, to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy in their absence and in line with the college's Safeguarding Policy;
- An offer to take part in some form of mediation led by an appropriate member of the team;
- Implement strategies to combat and prevent any further incidents.
- Log the incident via incident report form

Responding to a student who may have bullied another student:

- Clear discussion on what happened and how that student became involved;
- Discussion had by the academic or student experience team to clarify that bullying will not be tolerated at BSC and any such behaviour will be challenged;

- Opportunities for support and to discuss any concerns with an appropriate member of the BSC team.
- An offer to take part in some form of mediation led by an appropriate member of the team;
- At the discretion of the college, relevant sanctions will be actioned if deemed appropriate and proportionate

8. Consequences of breach of policy

BSC will investigate any student or team member found to be bullying other members of the college community and can expect to face disciplinary proceedings and consequences.

9. Anti-bullying Strategies

Teaching students about bullying needs to be pro-active and evident throughout the college and must be adopted by all BSC team members.

The students who attend BSC may have difficulties with communication. Some students may use forms of behaviour to convey a message rather than talking about an issue. Team members will need to report any signs of possible abuse (such as changes in a student's behaviour) and/or emerging conflicts between students early on. This will help the team support students in recognising and making good choices and avoiding acts of bullying.

The college adopts a range of strategies to prevent bullying, to raise awareness of bullying and to support victims and bullies.

- Support provided to develop students' communication
- Learning strategies to manage their own behaviour
- Acknowledge and respect British Values taught throughout college activities
- Awareness raising about the consequences of specific actions, such as the law
- Examples provided in the behaviour and conduct of managers and the team
- Weekly personal and support tutorials given to all students as opportunities to raise any issues
- E-safety included in sessions
- Parent/carer guidance
- Positive behaviour support plans
- Inclusion team
- Safeguarding training for all team members
- Level 3 Safeguarding training for all Designated **safeguarding** Leads and Deputies

Useful contacts

- [NSPCC Helpline – 0808 800 5000](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/08008005000)
- [Anti-Bullying Alliance - https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/](https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/)
- The BIG award - [Bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk](https://www.bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk/)
- National Bullying Hotline: <https://www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/contact.html>