ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

V2

December 2024

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1.0   Policy Statement

All Beckfoot Trust schools foster a welcoming culture of safety, responsibility and respect. We are committed to providing a positive climate where everyone in the school community feels safe, comfortable, and accepted. This caring, inclusive and safe environment enables all pupils to enjoy, learn and succeed.

All pupils are supported in their learning and encouraged to engage in every aspect of school life. Our inclusive curriculum celebrates diversity and promotes tolerance and mutual respect of others. We celebrate diversity yet emphasise commonality.

Beckfoot Trust has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. Bullying of any kind is not accepted in our schools. If bullying does occur, all members of our Trust community know how to report bullying and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly, proportionately and effectively.

At Beckfoot Trust safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, it is our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, this is our core safeguarding principle. In adhering to this principle, the following values underpin our approach to bullying and preventing child-on-child abuse:

- All children have the right to a safe, caring, positive and protective environment in school.
- Responses to bullying incidents will be robust, consistent and aim to prevent rather than control. Disapproval of bullying will be aimed at the behaviour and not the person with support for both victim and perpetrator, where possible through reconciliation.

It is the aim of Beckfoot Trust:

- To establish an environment where bullying is regarded as unacceptable and not tolerated.
- To raise general awareness so the whole school community actively recognises and prevents bullying by responding appropriately through clear reporting and support mechanisms.
- To raise awareness through the curriculum and assemblies to ensure children are informed of and vigilant of risk and are aware of wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, potential abuse, and the various forms it takes.
- To, where necessary, seek the support of families or other appropriate agencies as part of our early help and working together strategy to safeguard children.
- To prioritise staff training particularly around the ever-evolving online world and local risks within our community.

2.0   Scope and Purpose

This policy applies to all staff working in our Trust, including the Local School Committee, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and pupils.

Throughout this document, we have used the term 'families' to refer to our childrens' parents, carers or others that hold parental responsibility or 'PR', including the Corporate Parent for those to whom that applies.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Trust Policies:

- Trust Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Trust Equality and Diversity Policy
- Trust Behaviour Policy

- Trust Care and Control Policy
- Trust Online Safety and IT Use Policy
- Trust SEND and Disability Policy
- Trust Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- Trust Suspension and Exclusion Policy

This policy is underpinned by a legal framework and we are aware of our duty to prevent bullying in our schools, specifically including:

- The Education and Inspection Act 2006
- The Education (Independent School standards) Regulations 2014
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children Act 1989
- Preventing Bullying (DfE Guidance, 2017)
- DfE Cyberbullying advice for Headteachers and school staff
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)

3.0 Overarching Principles

At Beckfoot Trust we take the view that bullying may happen even if we do not witness any incidents or are not made aware of this. We are aware that students of any age and gender are capable of abusing their peers and that abuse can occur inside and outside of school settings. We therefore take a proactive approach to challenging unkind or bullying behaviours.

3.1 Defining what is bullying

3.1.1 Bullying is behaviour by an individual, or group of pupils, usually repeated over a sustained period of time (although proportionate support and intervention at the first signs, even following a potentially isolated incident, can be preventative) that intentionally hurts either physically or emotionally another individual or group of pupils.

3.1.2 The term 'bullying' is commonly used to describe these behaviours and its meaning is established in both education and society in general but using it can lead to minimisation of the seriousness of the behaviour if not also understood as a safeguarding concern for both the perpetrator(s) and victim(s) involved. Perpetration of bullying is a negative behaviour that can and should be managed within the behaviour routines of the school and the behaviour policy of our trust, but it also falls within the definition of 'child on child abuse' as described in Keeping Children Safe in Education, and it is crucial that the term 'bullying' is not used euphemistically resulting in harmful behaviours not being fully addressed.

In addition, bullying is often motivated by difference, or perceived difference, and prejudice against particular groups and therefore has further intersectionality with the Equality Act and protected characteristics such as race, religion, gender, sexual orientation and disability. For this reason, the management of bullying cannot be through response to incidents alone but must be underpinned by a whole school culture that celebrates diversity and seeks commonality as the norm.

3.1.3 Bullying can take many forms, including both in person and remotely via the internet or phone/text, and can involve both physical and emotional/psychological harm. Ensuring the immediate and ongoing physical safety of all pupils is a priority for all schools, but we also acknowledge that non-physical forms of abuse can be equally damaging and must be met with the same level of seriousness

and urgency as incidences of physical harm. A more detailed definition of child-on-child abuse, incorporating bullying, can be found in our Safeguarding Policy and in Keeping Children Safe in Education itself.

3.1.4 Bullying may also manifest as a series of smaller, apparently minor or unconnected incidents, e.g. 'looks', using nicknames that the person does not like, borrowing equipment, or not letting someone join in with an activity. Vigilance and timely, proportionate response to behaviours such as these underpins a culture of safety and respect and can prevent escalation to more serious behaviours taking place. This can be achieved by:

- All staff understanding the role they play in challenging harmful behaviours, however minor or seemingly innocuous.
- All staff understanding that harmful behaviour should not be dismissed as a normal part of childhood, 'boys will be boys', or 'banter' etc.
- Always taking the voice of the child seriously when they disclose that the behaviour of another child is making them feel unsafe and / or unhappy in any way.

3.1.5 Early identification of potential bullying behaviour, and taking a strong stance against bullying in general, does not mean or lead to either the demonisation or criminalisation of children but instead ensures that both the perpetrators and victims of harmful behaviour receive the support and intervention they need sooner and that incidences of harm are prevented or minimized in most or all cases. Children come to school to learn, including to learn how to function in a community and treat others and be treated with respect – preventative education and response to bullying behaviour is a learning opportunity and supports all students to go on to live happy, successful and safe adult lives.

3.1.6 In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education terminology, we will be using the terms 'victim' and 'perpetrator' (or 'alleged perpetrator') throughout this policy as they are widely recognised and understood terms. It is important that these terms are used with care and as a means to describe incidents and behaviours and that they do not become associated with a child in a way that could affect their self-perception or the perception of others around them. Not all subject to bullying or child-on-child abuse will self-identify as a victim and it is important that the words used are ones that the child is comfortable with. Furthermore, it should be noted that the behaviour of a perpetrator of bullying or any form of child-on-child abuse could arise from them having been or being subject to abuse themselves and is always an indication that they need support and guidance. Careful choice of language used when speaking to or in front of children, and a consistent focus on the wellbeing, education and future prospects of all those involved, should be paramount throughout the response and follow up of any instance of bullying or other form of child-on-child abuse.

3.1.7 Bullying can take place within schools, including the outside spaces, during events, trips and residentials, in the community and via technology, including cyber-bullying and by phone or text.

3.2   Defining cyber-bullying

3.2.1 Cyberbullying is a form of bullying that occupies a unique space within the broader definition due to its scope, both in that it can take place at any time of day or night and the bigger potential audience size, and due to the fact it can (and typically does) take place away from the school site and beyond the parameters of the school day. Furthermore, the artefacts of cyberbullying, including things like youth produced sexual imagery or abusive comments, have the potential to travel to any other point in the world and there are few or no options to limit or retract once information has been shared in this way.

3.2.2 Cyberbullying has become the most common form of bullying that education faces in recent times. We believe that any act of harmful behaviour that occurs between members of our school community is our business and will be managed within the remit of our policies and routines.

3.2.3 Not all cyberbullying is criminal or meets statutory thresholds for referral to Children's Social Care, but there are laws that can apply in relation to threats, harassment and the safeguarding of children, and so the police or other services will be involved as and when necessary. The Education Act 2011 gives head teachers, and those authorised by head teachers, the power to seize and examine data or files and to delete these where there is good reason to do so.

3.3 Possible signs of bullying

3.3.1 Here are several possible signs and behaviours which might indicate a pupil is being bullied:

- Being frightened of journeying to and from school
- Unwillingness to come to school
- Withdrawn, isolated behaviour
- Taking an unusual route to or from school
- Becomes easily distressed
- Issues with eating
- Fear of the internet or mobile phone
- Complaining about missing possessions
- Truanting
- Feeling ill in the morning
- Self-harm, including thoughts of self-harm
- Difficulty sleeping
- Unexplained scratches, bruises and cuts
- Attempting to gain money for unusual requests (stealing is possible)
- Schoolwork begins to deteriorate
- Becoming aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Bullying other students
- Refusing to talk about what is bothering them
- Damaged or incomplete work
- Refusing to work in a group or with another student

4.0 Responsibilities and Arrangements

Beckfoot Trust is committed to creating a culture of safety by challenging harmful behaviours between peers and never downplaying or dismissing behaviour that is abusive in nature by saying things like "it's just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys will be boys". We have a 'zero tolerance' approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment or violence and bullying.

All incidences of bullying should be reported to the appropriate person within the school – this will be different depending on the phase, staffing structure and systems of the individual school, but is likely to be a Head of Year or Phase Leader, Designated Safeguarding Lead or member of the Senior Leadership Team and will be detailed in the local anti-bullying protocol.

The local anti-bullying protocol details specific procedures for respective schools within the trust in line with the agreed principles in this policy.

4.1 The Headteacher and Local School Committee (LSC)

4.1.1 The Headteacher, held to account by the LSC, has to ensure the school is meeting its duty to prevent bullying in their school.

4.1.2 The Headteacher has the right to exclude a persistent perpetrator of bullying and will do so if they have evidence that the actions of an individual are undermining the safety of others (see Suspension and Exclusion Policy and Behaviour Policy).

4.2 All staff

4.2.1 All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children, this can happen both inside and outside of school, as well as online, and that no reports being made does not mean that this form of abuse is not taking place.

4.2.2 All staff must be responsive to allegations of bullying and be clear that no issue is too small. It is essential that students have the confidence that all allegations are taken seriously and acted upon. The incident will always be investigated and recorded.

- The first priority is to give protection and support to the victim, however the learning and support needs of the perpetrator are also paramount and should be addressed in order to safeguard their wellbeing and future.
- Any member of staff witnessing possible bullying will take immediate action to manage the situation, offer support and make clear that the behaviour is unacceptable, following their school's behaviour routines and prioritising the safety and wellbeing, including emotional wellbeing, of the students.
- Any member of staff being told by a child that they are being bullied will follow safeguarding procedures in place for the receipt of a disclosure i.e. give the child their full attention, reassure them that they are being taken seriously, ensure that no child is made to feel shame or that their disclosure is an inconvenience, never tell a child that you will keep a secret but reassure them that their disclosure will be treated as confidential and only shared sensitively and appropriately.
- Although it may be the case that a child is a victim in a specific situation or set of circumstances, and that a child may be behaving in a way that can be defined as bullying or child on child abuse, no child is inherently a victim or bully and using these labels as descriptors of them as a person can be damaging and even self-fulfilling, so every care must be taken to ensure language used is describing the situation and behaviour and not the child themselves.
- A thorough investigation will be made and appropriate responses for all parties be identified and actioned.
- Both the victim and perpetrator of a bullying incident are entitled to ongoing support to help them understand what has happened, develop skills and strategies for the future, rebuild self-esteem, and to move on from previous issues.
- All incidences of child-on-child abuse, including bullying, must be recorded on a 'bullying log' with clear response and follow up detailed. In addition, associated behaviours will be logged according to the school's usual behaviour system and any associated safeguarding concerns will be logged and followed up on CPOMS.
- Sanctions, if appropriate, will be decided on the individual incidents and circumstances and in line with the Trust Behaviour Policy and the school's behaviour protocol.

4.2.3 All staff are provided with regular CPD on the different forms of peer abuse, including bullying, and made aware of the indicators and signs as well as how to respond to it.

4.3 Response for victims

4.3.1 On discovering that there is bullying occurring, the first priority for any member of staff is to give protection and support to the victim, including ensuring that they feel safe, that the issue is being taken seriously, and that it will be managed sensitively and in a way that is not exacerbating (victims of bullying often fear that adult involvement will make the situation worse).

4.3.2 The response should be proactive, proportionate, and managed in a way that leaves the possibility of restoration and conciliation / reconciliation available.

4.3.3 Student voice is of paramount importance in both supporting the victim and managing the bullying issue itself.

4.4 Response for perpetrators

4.4.1 Incidences of bullying will be responded to in line with the Trust Behaviour policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding policy, and the school's own routines and protocols, and escalate to the appropriate level dependent on severity and whether it is a repeated or ongoing issue.

4.4.2 Wherever possible there will be direct restorative work to facilitate conciliation / reconciliation, genuine apology and moving forward positively for all parties. This will be led and supported by staff at all times.

4.4.3 It is crucial for maintaining a culture of safeguarding that bullying behaviour and all perpetration of child-on-child abuse is an indication of need for education and support, in itself a safeguarding issue because it is not conducive to that child achieving the best outcomes that they can and may be indicative of a child protection concern. For this reason, immediate and ongoing support will always be put in place for the perpetrator to understand their needs, safeguard their wellbeing and support them to make better choices in the future.

4.5 Preventative strategies

4.5.1 Bullying at our schools will not be tolerated and this message will be reinforced regularly. It is important that tackling bullying is seen as an on-going process which involves all members of the school community. To prevent child on child abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, we will educate our pupils and staff about abuse, its forms, and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others. Details of how the message is delivered is outlined in the school local anti-bullying protocol.

4.5.2 All incidences of bullying are opportunities for the school to learn and improve whole school protocols and routines to better protect all students in the future. This may include: - introducing new duty points to better supervise 'blind spots' in the physical environment - addressing issues through assemblies, PSHE or re-induction events - staff CPD - always informing families of the incident and outcome - informing the police in extreme cases.

4.6 All pupils

4.6.1 Pupils should be made aware that, as a school, we will not tolerate bullying. They must be told that they should not suffer in silence and that any teacher or staff member is prepared to help. They should always be encouraged to talk to someone.

4.6.2 We expect our pupils to report instances of bullying, no matter how small, and we constantly educate them on the effects of bullying on the individual. As part of our ongoing commitment to maintaining a culture of safeguarding for all pupils, staff and visitors to our schools, pupils will receive ongoing direct learning opportunities through PSHE as well as indirect learning opportunities through observing the behaviour of the adults around them.

This will include but is not limited to:

- Learning about different forms of child-on-child abuse and the effects it has on children and adults
- Learning about identity, protected characteristics, prejudice, and discrimination
- Learning about ways to seek help and support
- Building trusting relationships with staff
- Learning from the professionalism and conduct of staff

4.6.3   All students will be taught how and supported to reach out for support if they feel they are being bullied, or need help in any way, to reach out if they are worried about a peer – be an 'upstander', not a 'bystander' – as well as to seek support if they are worried about their own thoughts and behaviour.

4.7   Self-referrals

4.7.1   Children must feel confident that, if they feel unsafe or that they are being bullied, they can come forward and will be listened to. Any child can come forward to speak with any member of staff. All self-referrals must be recorded with actions taken and families must be contacted. In most cases, the member of staff that the referral is made to should speak to the appropriate person, either the designated safeguarding lead, head of year or phase leader, who will decide on the appropriate course of action. Because children may not always feel confident to come forward in person, each school needs to ensure that there are a range of options available for their students to self-refer.

4.8   Families

4.8.1   All families should be made aware of their chosen school's three-way partnership when their child enters the school. We expect families to work with us in tackling bullying and in upholding our positive culture. Our success as a trust is built on this three-way relationship between the home, school and child.

5.0   Review of Policy

The Trust Anti-bullying Policy will be reviewed annually. At each review, the policy will be approved by the Trust Board.

Appendix 1: Useful Contacts and Websites

- **Advisory Centre for Education (ACE):** https://ace-ed.org.uk/about/contact
- **Anti-Bullying Alliance:** https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/
- **Child Exploitation and Online Protection:** https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre
- **Childline:** https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/contacting-childline
- **Children's Legal Centre:** https://www.childrenslegalcentre.com/
- **Family Lives:** https://www.familylives.org.uk/how-we-can-help/confidential-helpline
- **KIDSCAPE Parents Advice Line:** https://www.kidscape.org.uk/advice/parent-advice-line
- **MindEd:** https://www.minded.org.uk/
- **NSPCC:** https://www.nspcc.org.uk/
- **PSHE Association:** https://pshe-association.org.uk/
- **Restorative Justice Council:** https://restorativejustice.org.uk/
- **The BIG Award:** www.bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk/index.php
- **The Diana Award:** https://diana-award.org.uk/
- **Victim Support:** https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/
- **Young Carers:** https://carers.org/
- **Young Minds:** https://www.youngminds.org.uk/
- **Youth Access:** https://www.youthaccess.org.uk/

Cyberbullying

- **Childnet Online safety for young people:** https://www.childnet.com/
- **DfE Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying:**
  https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444865/Advice_for_parents_on_cyberbullying.pdf
- **DfE Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff:**
  https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1069987/Cyberbullying_Advice_for_Headteachers_and_School_Staff_121114.pdf
- **Internet Watch Foundation:** https://www.iwf.org.uk/
- **Think You Know, CEOP Education:** https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/
- **UK Council for Child Internet Safety:** https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis
- **UK Safer Internet Centre:** https://saferinternet.org.uk/

SEND

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

Race, Religion and Nationality

- **Anne Frank Trust:** https://www.annefrank.org.uk/
- **Educate against Hate:** https://www.educateagainsthate.com/

- **Kick it Out:** https://www.kickitout.org/
- **Report it:** https://www.report-it.org.uk/
- **Stop Hate:** https://www.stophateuk.org/
- **Show Racism the Red Card:** https://www.srtrc.org/newsandevents/
- **Tell Mama:** https://tellmamauk.org/

Sexual Harassment and Bullying

- **Anti-bullying Alliance: Advice for school 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/preventing-sexual-and-sexist
- **Anti-bullying Alliance: Preventing and responding to Sexual Bullying:** https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/sexual-and-sexist-bullying/responding-sexual-and-sexist
- **Disrespect No Body:** https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disrespect-nobody-campaign-posters
- **Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAW)** https://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/