



BGA ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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BGA ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Statement of Philosophy

The BGA school community is based on an ethos of mutual respect and consideration. The school is committed to providing a safe and happy learning environment for all. We do not tolerate bullying, harassment, victimisation or discrimination of any kind and work hard to prevent these or to tackle them if they occur. Bullying is a whole school issue and we take a whole school approach in response. Any member of the community may bully or be a victim of bullying: we regard all incidences of bullying equally seriously and in turn expect all staff, students and parents to play their part in preventing and tackling bullying.

Aims of the Policy

This policy aims to:

- Try and prevent bullying, as far as possible, and
- Help staff, students and parents deal with bullying when it occurs.

What do we mean by bullying? Definitions.

The UK Department for Education defines bullying as 'behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally'. To reiterate 'bullying' occurs where there is hurtful behavior involving an imbalance of power sustained over time. This can include:

- Physically hurting, harming or humiliating another person or damaging their property.
- Verbal abuse such as name-calling or writing unkind notes.
- Emotional manipulation such as excluding someone or spreading malicious rumours about them, building negative alliances based on gossip, or deliberately betraying former confidences to humiliate or isolate another student.
- Cyberbullying, i.e. via social networking websites, phone calls, text messages, photographs or emails
- Unpleasant remarks or actions related to any of the following:
 - Race, religion or culture
 - Sex (i.e. talking to or touching someone in a sexually inappropriate way)
 - Gender
 - Sexual orientation (e.g. homophobic bullying)
 - Disability
 - Intellectual or other abilities
 - Being adopted or a carer

Please note that in isolation such behaviours as noted above may not necessarily be defined as bullying even though they may be perceived as such. However, all reports of such incidents are investigated and logged.

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Any behaviour that a reasonable bystander would say was intended to hurt or upset the victim is wrong and could constitute bullying, including complicity that may fall short of participating directly in the bullying. It is no justification that the perpetrator says or believes that the victim is not upset or hurt by his or her actions or words.

Much bullying is performed in subtle ways, which are not easy to detect; a bully can use a simple look, word or gesture to a victim to signal an intended threat or insult. Some students are adept at changing a bullying situation into an apparently harmless one when an adult approaches. This makes it all the more important for the victim or another student to be able to come forward to report bullying, and for staff and parents to be alert to symptoms of bullying.

Bullying is always hurtful to the victim and damaging to the whole school community. Anyone and everyone who is involved in, or witnesses bullying is affected by it. It can cause great distress, unhappiness and psychological damage and at its worst lead to suicide. It can also be a criminal offence, for example if the behaviour amounts to harassment or threatening behaviour.

BGA has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying. This means that we investigate all reported incidences and put in place actions to stop the reported bullying occurring. The school also uses awareness raising opportunities and reinforcement of positive behaviours (through PSHE sessions, mentoring, etc.) to prevent bullying incidents from occurring.

How does bullying differ from teasing or friendship difficulties?

Sometimes students can feel hurt or upset because they have been teased or have fallen out with a friend. This is not the same as bullying. Bullying:

- **Is deliberately intended to hurt or humiliate**
- **Involves a power imbalance that makes it hard for the victim to defend themselves**
- **Is usually persistent**
- **Often involves no remorse or acknowledgement of the victim's feelings**

School staff are ready to help and support students who have fallen out with friends, but such situations will not be treated in the same way as a case of bullying. However, the strategies we use may be similar because we acknowledge that over a period of time the impact on the student may be the same, and the situation could become bullying if it escalates.

Preventing Bullying

We aim to prevent bullying by:

- Fostering a whole school ethos of good behaviour, mutual respect, and consideration. We aim to create a safe, happy, and inclusive environment for learning, and encourage students to value diversity and difference, protect the vulnerable, and appreciate how their actions might affect others.
- Our staff, parents and older students setting a good example of how to behave towards each other.
- Raising awareness about bullying through opportunities in the curriculum, the PSHE programme, assemblies, and national events such as Anti Bullying Week, amongst others.
- Developing students' social skills, confidence, resilience and self-esteem; and defining the value of assertiveness in relationships as opposed to aggression, whether direct or indirect.
- Making it clear to all that there are effective procedures for reporting, investigating and tackling bullying.
- Making it clear to all that incidents of cyberbullying or bullying of any kind that occur off the school premises but have an impact on the classroom environment or relationships between students will be pursued with the same seriousness as bullying occurring within school.
- Making it as easy as possible for students who are being bullied to talk to someone they trust and get help confidentially.
- Having a strong pastoral team dedicated to student welfare and experienced in dealing with bullying issues. All our staff are trained in recognising and responding to bullying and staff awareness is raised

through regular discussion of student issues in pastoral meetings. Action is taken to reduce the risk of bullying where and when it is known to be most likely to occur.

- Taking students' views into account through the school council, and developing the roles that students can play in anti-bullying work, for example through fostering cross phase friendships.
- Ensuring all students sign up to the school's ICT Acceptable Use Agreements, which make it clear that cyberbullying is unacceptable. This message is regularly reinforced in lessons and pastoral sessions.
- Working in line with any UK national guidance, and the requirements of any UK/Georgia regulatory bodies.

Being aware – possible signs of bullying

Changes in behaviour that may indicate a student is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to go to school or return after a break.
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, work that appears to have been copied, or interfered with or spoiled by others.
- Belongings suddenly going missing or being damaged.
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, sitting in the library instead of going out at playtime).
- Changes in levels of self-confidence.
- Inability to concentrate.
- Anxiety, depression, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet.
- Repressed body language and poor eye contact.
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class.
- Reluctance to leave the classroom at the end of lessons or school day.
- Choosing the company of adults.
- Frequent visits to the medical centre with symptoms such as stomach pains or headaches, especially at particular times or during particular lessons.
- Unexplained cuts and bruises.
- Difficulty in sleeping, nightmares.
- Talking of suicide or running away.

Although there may be other causes for these symptoms, teachers, parents and fellow students should be alert for these possible signs of bullying and contact a Key Stage Coordinator if they are concerned.

Dealing with Bullying

If you are being bullied:

- Stay calm and try to appear confident. Tell the bully to stop and get away from the situation as quickly as you can.
- Do not suffer in silence: talk to a member of staff. This could be your class teacher, mentor, head of key stage, the school nurse, or any other member of staff you trust. If you are unhappy about talking to a member of staff directly, you could talk to someone in your family, a friend, a buddy or an older student etc. Telling does not make you a 'grass' or 'snitch': not telling means that the bullying is likely to continue. Remember you may not be the only victim.
- Be assured that we take every report of bullying seriously and will act upon it, even if it occurred outside the school. We will keep records of what has happened, and consult you and support you in whatever action we take.
- Remember being bullied is not your fault – nobody ever deserves to be bullied.

If you know that someone else being bullied:

- Talk to a member of staff, so that the school can take steps to help the victim.
- Stand up for them – studies show that one of the most effective ways of stopping bullying is for fellow students to show their support for the victim.
- Be sceptical about rumours concerning other students. Don't add to them. Put yourself in the position of the person targeted.
- Don't be drawn into simply standing by. Many perpetrators will not persist in bullying unless they have an audience to play to, and by not taking action it could be argued you are condoning what is happening.

What the school will do

The exact course of action will vary with each situation but the main objectives should be that bullying incidents are brought into the open and strategies agreed to help resolve the problem.

- All reports of bullying will be taken seriously and investigated immediately.
- Everything that happens will be carefully recorded. This is done through our system to track and log incidents and resulting actions and alerts staff that need to be aware.
- The most important thing is to stop the bullying and ensure the victim is safe. We aim for a peaceful resolution: revenge is not helpful for the victim or appropriate. The victim will be supported throughout the process.
- Depending on the case, the most appropriate strategies will be put in place including individual sessions with staff, group circle time style activities, reflection style activities etc.
- Guidance and help will be available for the perpetrator to help change his/her behaviour.
- Staff will monitor the situation to ensure that the bullying does not continue. If bullying recurs, further action will be taken.

When dealing with bullying an approach of restorative processes is followed whereby the following questions are addressed:

Admit negative behaviours

Acknowledge the negative behaviours, and the personal qualities and values it undermined.

Ask themselves and others how that made them feel and how they were impacted.

Accept the consequences of their negative behaviours.

Alter their negative behaviour to avoid repetition and repair relationships.

This should be guided by these key questions during conversations challenging negative behaviours:

- *What happened?*
- *What were you thinking at the time?*
- *What have you thought about since then?*
- *Who has been effected by what you have done?*
- *In what ways have they been effected?*
- *What do you think you need to do in order to make things right?*

In any serious case of bullying the Principal will be informed and the school will work with the parents of both the victim and the perpetrator. The school will remain in regular contact with parents until the situation is resolved.

A bullying incident will be regarded as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' (Children Act 1989). Where this is the case, after the Principal has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the relevant organisations in Georgia and in certain cases the police.

The school will keep a log of all bullying incidents through our bullying log which is monitored in order to identify trends and inform preventative work in the school and future development of policies and procedures.

Sanctions

Where students do not respond to the measures put in place to resolve the issue it will be necessary to use the sanctions outlined in the school's behaviour policy. Any sanctions imposed will be fair, proportionate and reasonable, take account of any special educational needs or disabilities that students may have, and consider the needs of vulnerable students.

Cases of severe or persistent bullying may lead to fixed periods of suspension.

Partnership with Parents

We believe that working with parents/guardians is essential to establishing the school's anti-bullying ethos and resolving any issues that arise.

Parents are encouraged to reinforce the principles of the Anti-Bullying Policy at home.

Parents are asked to let the relevant Key Stage Coordinator know directly if they have cause for concern, either on behalf of their own children or because of rumours about others.

In any serious case of bullying parents will be informed by the school and may be invited in to discuss the matter. We will keep in regular contact with parents until the issue is resolved.

Links to other policies

This policy operates in conjunction with:

School Code of Conduct / Behaviour Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

ICT Acceptable Use Agreements

PSHE Programme, including mentor and assembly sessions on cyberbullying

