ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

AREA:	CHURCHWARD SCHOOL
AUDIENCE:	ALL STAKEHOLDERS
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OWNED & REVIEWED BY:	HEAD OF PROVISION / BRUNEL EDUCATION TEAM
APPROVED BY:	CHAIR OF BAT BOARD OF TRUSTEES
LAST APPROVAL DATE:	04 JUNE 2026

Brunel Academies Trust (BAT) is a company limited by guarantee with registration number 10074054 and registered offices at Unit B4C Orbital Retail Park, Thamesdown Drive, Swindon, SN25 4AN; BAT is the parent company and Sole Corporate Member of the subsidiary company, Brunel Education (BE) is a charitable company limited by guarantee with registration number 11991915, registered with the Charities Commission of England Wales (Charity Number 1214820) and with registered offices at Unit B4C Orbital Retail Park, Thamesdown Drive, Swindon, SN25 4AN

Tier 1 policies are centrally held policies relating to Education, Governance, People Services, Finance, ICT and Operations and are the direct responsibility of BAT. Tier 1 policies are created by the BAT Central Services Team but adopted and reviewed by the BAT Board.

We are committed to a sustainable future and to improving the social, economic, and environmental well-being of the community. We are dedicated to environmental improvements that foster a sustainable future and lead to social and economical improvements in the communities we operate within.

Amendments to policy		
Date	**Section**	**Amendment**
August 2025	All	Policy added to new template
May 2026	AI	Generative artificial intelligence (AI) section added

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'Every child is unique – in characteristics, interests, abilities and needs; and every child has the ability to enjoy his or rights without discrimination of any kind.'
(Thomas Hammarberg 1997)

Context

Churchward School is a **specialist provision for pupils with autism and social communication interaction difficulties.** The pupils have a wide range of complex needs. Our school community understands that not all pupils will recognise bullying behaviour if they experience it or/and may be unable to communicate if they have been a victim of it. Equally not all pupils would recognise that certain behaviours directed towards others may be undesirable or that they may be construed as bullying. Our pupils, therefore, are highly vulnerable and as research shows are twice as likely to be victims of bullying than non-disabled and/or non-SEND children and young people. We are committed to raising awareness of bullying, preventing and responding to it inside and outside of school, to ensure the safety and well-being of our pupils.

Ethos and Values

We are committed to providing an inclusive, caring, friendly and safe environment for all our learners so that they can thrive in a structured and secure atmosphere protected by trusted adults. Our school values are underpinned by the school motto: 'Recognising Strengths – Gaining Skills – Achieving Success' which employees are expected to model every day to the pupils.

Legislation

There are several pieces of legislation which set out measures and actions for schools in response to bullying, as well as criminal and civil law. These may include (but are not limited to):

- The Education and Inspection Act 2006, 2011
- **The Equality Act 2010**
- **The Children Act 1989**
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986.

In line with the Equality Act 2010, it is essential that our school:

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Under the Children Act 1989, a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'.

Where this is the case, the employees should report their concerns immediately to a member of the school's safeguarding team.

What is Bullying?

The school has adopted the definition provided by the Anti-Bullying Alliance:

'Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online.'

What does Bullying Behaviour look like?

We will always consider the context within which incidents and/or behaviours of concern occur. We will consider the motivations behind the behaviours and will take into account the disability and/or SEND, age and stage of development of the pupils involved.

Bullying behaviour may include, but is not limited to:

- Physical – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc
- Verbal – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling
- Emotional – isolating others, tormenting, hiding belongings, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimating, excluding, manipulation, coercion
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc
- Online/Cyber – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion etc.
- Indirect – can include the exploitation of individuals such as 'false friendships', criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation and radicalisation
- Prejudice-related – derogatory and discriminatory language and behaviour including that which is racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist in nature.

Generative artificial intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard.

Churchward School recognises that AI has many uses to help pupils learn, but may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

Churchward School will treat any use of AI to bully pupils in line with our Behaviour policy.

Signs of Bullying

Employees should be vigilant in looking out for signs of bullying or other child protection issues including:

- Physical: unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts, missing belongings, damaged clothes, or schoolwork, loss of appetite, stomach aches, headaches, bedwetting.
- Emotional: losing interest in school/learning, being withdrawn or secretive, unusual shows of temper, refusal to say why unhappy, high level of anxiety, mood swings, tearfulness for no reason, lack of confidence, headaches and stomach aches, signs of depression.

- Behavioural: poor attendance, asking for money, 'losing' more items than usual, sudden changes in behaviour and mood, concentration difficulties.

Vulnerable Groups

We recognise that some groups of pupils may be more vulnerable to bullying, including:

- Looked After Children
- Children having caring responsibilities
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children
- Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)
- Children from ethnic minorities
- Children entitled to Free School Meals
- Children for whom English is an Additional Language
- Children who are perceived to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender
- Those suffering from health problems, including mental health

Prevention

- Employees have regular safeguarding training and are expected to be 'professionally curious' and look out for signs and indicators of bullying.
- The school's ethos and values encourage pupils to raise concerns with employees, knowing that they will be listened to, believed and supported. Daily Circle time and the use of Zones of Regulation which is a tool to teach pupils across the school how to self-regulate and control their emotions; empowers pupils to identify how they are feeling and why they are feeling a certain way to the trusted adults who will then support and share pupil concerns with the safeguarding team.
- We deliver a Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) and Relationships and Sex Education (SRE) curriculum in line with the DfE statutory guidance. This develops pupils' understanding of healthy relationships, acceptable behaviour and keeping themselves safe. This curriculum is broad, balanced and covers a range of safeguarding themes. It is progressive across the year groups.
- Our learners take part in key events throughout the year linked to anti-bullying:

  -Anti-Bullying Week

  -Safer Internet Day

  -Stay Safe Week incl. NSPCC Pants Campaign
- Parents are invited to key events and signposted to the website for important information that can support them in the home to keep their child safe.
- The school has a behaviour policy in place which is regularly reviewed and sets out the expectations about appropriate behaviour. Our policy makes clear that bullying is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up.
- Give children the vocabulary and opportunity to openly discuss bullying
- Consider the motivations behind bullying behaviour, and whether these raise any safeguarding concerns for pupils who bully or are bullied

- Carry out pupil voice exercises or issue a pupil survey to gather feedback on bullying for your senior leadership team (SLT) to reflect and act upon

Responding to Concerns about Bullying (including cyber-bullying)

Employees are trained as part of their annual safeguarding training to be prepared that bullying, may be taking place in a child's life i.e. inside/outside of school and look out for the signs and indicators. If an incident of bullying has been identified by an employee they will follow the school's safeguarding policy and procedures for reporting and recording a concern. This would then be responded to by a member of the safeguarding team. The incident would also be recorded on CPOMS.

Pupils are taught to tell a trusted adult in school if they are concerned that someone is being bullied or needs help. They will be reassured that they were right to tell an adult.

Remember:

- Bullying can have a huge negative impact on children – in the short and long term
- Be on the lookout for signs of bullying, and be aware of who might be more vulnerable
- Report any concerns you have
- Take prejudice-based bullying seriously and listen to pupils affected by it

Roles and Responsibilities

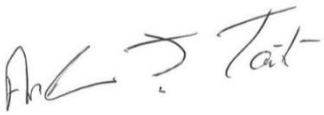
All employees are expected to uphold this policy and report a concern about a child who is or maybe at risk of being bullied offline/online and inside/outside of school immediately to a member of the safeguarding team.

Useful links

- Keeping children safe in education
- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Brunel Academies Trust Code of Conduct
- Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) – https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/
- Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008) "Safe to Learn – Bullying of Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – Embedding Anti-Bullying work in School"
- Department of Education (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying, Advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies' DfE (2011) Research Brief: "The Use and Effectiveness of Anti-Bullying Strategies in School"
- Anti – Bullying Policy DfE (2014) "Preventing and Tackling Bullying" GOV.UK (2017) "Bullying at School"
- See link for information on Zones of Regulation: https://www.zonesofregulation.com/learn-more-about-the-zones.html

This policy is adopted by the BAT Board of Trustees and will be reviewed every year or earlier if change to legislation.

Signed: CEO

Signed:  Chairman of BAT Board of Trustees

Date: 4th June 2026

This policy is adopted by Churchward School (part of the Brunel Academies Trust) **and will be reviewed every year or earlier if change to legislation.**

Signed: G Bailey Headteacher

Signed: Chief Education Director

Date: 28th September 2026