

ANTI - BULLYING POLICY (INC EYFS AND BOARDING)

Rationale:

At Ockbrook School it is our aim that each student should reach their potential in all aspects of school life and that students and staff are able to work in a comfortable and unthreatening atmosphere. We promote a positive and safe environment where all may develop and flourish free from threat or fear. To this end no form of bullying will be tolerated.

Aims of this Policy:

To ensure that:

- Each individual is treated with consideration and respect at all times
- All individuals and groups are aware that they must not exploit or cause unhappiness to others
- There is an atmosphere of openness and trust where concerns can be raised at an early stage and dealt with swiftly
- Staff are aware of the different types of bullying, of strategies for preventing it and dealing with it should it arise
- Opportunities exist for students to express their worries and for them to be aware of the support available
- Although every situation is unique, staff, students and parents feel confident that a consistent approach will be taken and that concerns will always be treated seriously and sensitively

This Policy will be communicated with parents, staff and students. Students will be made aware of the contents of this Policy on an annual basis. Staff training will ensure that all staff know how to deal with incidents of bullying in accordance with this Policy.

Definitions of bullying:

Bullying is any behaviour which seeks to intimidate or humiliate and which is intentional, unprovoked or malicious such as to cause distress, unhappiness or insecurity. It may include:

- Verbal – teasing, insulting, spreading rumours, making racist, sexist or homophobic comments, mocking disabilities or religious or cultural differences
- Emotional – including deliberate silence, exclusion from group activities or interfering with belongings
- Cyber – including sending threatening or malicious texts or emails, posting information on social media sites, instant messaging or forwarding private emails without consent
- Physical – including pushing, kicking, hitting or other forms of violence including that associated with initiation rituals
- Sexual – making unwanted physical contact or comments of a sexual nature or pressurising another student to engage in sexting
- Encouraging others to engage in bullying behaviour
- Knowing that bullying behaviour is happening and not reporting it to an adult

Cyber Bullying: (see also Responsible use of Technology Policy and Acceptable Use Agreement)

The school sets down clear guidelines for the responsible use of technology. In addition a child-appropriate version of the school's rules for responsible use of technology forms the basis of the acceptable use agreement which is signed by all students (or their parents on their behalf, where appropriate). No student should use the photographic or video taking capabilities of any device unless directed to do so by a teacher. They should not share any images recorded within school. It is unacceptable for students to use phones or other mobile devices to bully other members of the school community. Students are reminded that the school has a legal authority to act on instances of cyberbullying occurring outside the school where this is deemed by the school to have had an effect within it. The school checks and filters digital content through a variety of network monitoring systems and devices.

The school takes a serious stance on cyber-bullying such as sending threatening texts/emails or posting embarrassing information on social networking sites.

The Effects of Bullying:

All bullying is damaging to those involved whether they are the victim or the perpetrator. The consequences of long term bullying can last into adulthood, undermine self-confidence, lead to lasting psychological damage or even suicide. Whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour and the School will uphold these if and when necessary.

Our Obligations:

- We are committed to providing a secure, caring and supportive learning environment in which bullying of any kind is seen as unacceptable
- We have a duty of care towards our students and appropriate actions must be taken to protect them
- We will create a climate in which students feel that they are able to report incidents to a member of staff knowing that there will be a prompt and effective investigation
- We will promote good practice in preventing bullying through the vigilance and cooperation of all members of the school community

We approach the issue of bullying through three routes – education, our pastoral care and disciplinary action.

Education:

Students learn by example and should experience adults behaving toward them, and each other, in a civilised and kindly way at all times. The PSHE course deals specifically with the subject of bullying as part of the spiral and age appropriate curriculum. This includes exploring experiences of bullying, reasons why it may happen, strategies for dealing with it and sources of support both in and outside school. Other subjects such as Drama, English and Religious Studies explore aspects of the topic and opportunities to discuss issues and ideas about relationships with others will present themselves in Form Time, assemblies and elsewhere in the curriculum. All students will be made aware of this Policy on an annual basis and will be regularly reminded of sources of support including the School Nurse and organisations such as Childline. It will form part of the induction programme for Sixth Form prefects and "buddies" and staff will be fully conversant with it. The Policy is available to parents via our website, and in hard copy on request, and they will be urged to contact the school promptly if they have any concerns.

Pastoral Care:

Staff will take every opportunity to build confidence and self-esteem by recognising the achievements and positive qualities of every individual. They will adopt strategies to ensure that all students are involved in lesson and group activities and will challenge and express disapproval of any unkind remarks or behaviours witnessed. Staff will maintain vigilance at all times including those where supervision is less formal e.g. lunchtimes or social activities. Boarding House staff will regularly visit dormitories at bedtime and after lights out and will spend time with students in the evenings and at weekends encouraging cooperative behaviour and monitoring relationships. House Staff will routinely see students on a one-to-one basis to provide regular opportunities for any concerns to be expressed.

Staff will remain vigilant for possible signs of bullying including physical distress, tearfulness, withdrawal from group activities or isolation on the part of the victim and excluding of others or passing comments on the part of the perpetrators. Through this vigilance staff may prevent the friction caused by normal changes to adolescent relationships from becoming more serious. Any concerns will be raised with the Form Tutor, Head of Sixth Form/Uppers/Lowers, Head of Boarding or the Deputy Head at an early stage. Early intervention is important to prevent patterns of behaviour from becoming more entrenched.

Senior Students are extremely influential in establishing the culture in the School. They often become aware of problems at an early stage. They will be supported in adopting the approaches outlined above.

Disciplinary Action:

Sanctions may include a verbal or written apology, a restorative justice meeting, detention, class/group changes, fixed term or permanent exclusion. These actions will be recorded and kept on file to enable us to evaluate the effectiveness of this Policy and to track any patterns or trends.

What to do if bullying is taking place**Students:**

If you are the victim of bullying you should not keep quiet about it. Speak to your parents, your Form Tutor or any other member of staff who will help you.

If you are not the victim but know, or suspect, that bullying is taking place you have a duty to report it to an adult. Standing by and letting bullying happen is almost as bad as taking an active part in it.

If you are guilty of bullying and realise that what you have done is wrong you should speak to a teacher and ask them to help you to deal with the situation. We will support students in modifying their behaviour. However, we will not tolerate bullying.

Parents:

If you know or suspect that your child may be the victim of bullying then please report the matter to the Form Tutor or Head of School. Students are often concerned that if an issue is reported it will make the situation worse. We will take all steps possible to support and reassure students and to maintain the student's desire for confidentiality. However, once we become aware of an incident we have a duty to act upon this information.

Staff:

If you become aware of any incident of bullying you should inform the Pastoral Lead in the first instance.

The victim or informer should be reassured that all reasonable steps will be taken to protect them from retaliation which may be feared following the disclosure.

You must never give a guarantee of confidentiality but should reassure the child that information will be shared with the minimum number of people to enable the matter to be dealt with.

Any student who reports a concern will be taken seriously. Specific incidents and more general feelings should be noted in writing.

If a concern is raised by a parent the same process will apply and the member of staff will agree a timeframe by which a progress report will be available.

The Head of Lower/Uppers/Sixth Form should be informed at this stage and they will inform the Deputy Head.

The matter will then be investigated. This may take a variety of forms depending upon the nature of the incident but will include an interview with the victim, the alleged perpetrator and any other witnesses. This interview may be conducted by the Head of School alone or in conjunction with the Deputy Head. In cases of serious allegations the Headmaster may also be involved in this process and will always be kept informed. Written records will be kept. A decision will then be taken about appropriate disciplinary action.

Some complaints of bullying are the result of changes in friendships, examination stress or friction between students. In these cases a swift resolution will be sought which brings about a reconciliation and parents will not be automatically notified in these cases.

Where the behaviour is established as bullying or where the situation continues or becomes more serious, parents of all students involved will be notified. Such incidents will be recorded and colour coded centrally on the Sanctions Register so that a clear picture exists of bullying incidents throughout the school. The appropriate member of staff will make this record:

Early Years, Mrs S Taylor (*Early Years Manager*)
Years 1-6, Mr R Beach (*Deputy Head of Primary*)
Years 7-9, Mrs F Faulkner (*Head of Lower*)
Years 10-11, Mrs R O'Reilly (*Head of Uppers*)
Years 12-13, Mrs K Moorhouse (*Head of Sixth Form*)

Preventing Bullying

We will seek to prevent bullying by:

- Promoting an environment where it is "safe to tell"
- Maintaining vigilance at all times
- Building self confidence in all our students
- Addressing issues directly through the PSHE curriculum
- Providing a positive role model to students
- Ensuring that all staff are fully conversant with the content of this Policy
- Ensuring clear communication between staff regarding student behaviour
- Recording incidents clearly and passing them on promptly
- Keeping parents informed when they raise a concern within a specified timeframe
- Training and utilising Sixth Form buddies for younger students

Reviewed September 2019