



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

COGNITA
TEACHING EXCELLENCE

KEY FACTS:

- ✦ **The policy defines bullying and sets out both statutory and non-statutory guidance.**
- ✦ **Cognita takes all concerns regarding bullying seriously.**
- ✦ **Consider whether the incident/s is/are child protection concerns.**
- ✦ **Its purpose includes, but is not inclusive of; establishing a non-aggressive school, parental confidence, clear procedures and strategies for prevention and intervention.**
- ✦ **As the ultimate sanction is exclusion, it is important that schools take both preventative measures and intervene in all cases.**

1 Introduction

- 1.1. Oakleigh House School aims to establish a positive school culture in which all members of the community feel safe and confident, and treat each other with respect and courtesy, particularly with regard to individual differences. To this end, bullying will be eliminated.
- 1.2. This policy should be read and understood in the context of our behaviour policy, our Equalities and Diversity policy, and our approach to personal, social, health, care and education.
- 1.3. Our policy has been written in the context of our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. The Act makes it unlawful in England and Wales for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil, exclude them or subject them to any other detriment.
- 1.4. We have taken full account of Welsh Assembly policy guidance for all schools outlined in “Respecting others: Anti-bullying overview” (050/2011), as well as good practice identified in “Action on Bullying” (Estyn, 2014).
- 1.5. 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, staff will report their concerns to their local authority children’s social care services, and inform the Cognita Education Officer, Education Compliance. The support of external services may be accessed to tackle any underlying issues which have contributed to a child engaging in bullying.
- 1.6. As a Cognita School, Oakleigh House School has signed up to the principles embodied within our Group associate membership of the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA), linked to the National Children’s Bureau, including access to specialist training of staff to support our best efforts to eradicate bullying in school.

2 What do we mean by Bullying?

- 2.1. We believe that bullying is a behaviour choice and that anyone can be encouraged to change their behaviour.
- 2.2. We respect difference and welcome diversity in our children, young people and in society in general, and believe our school should be inclusive.
- 2.3. We believe that students should have the right to feel safe, secure and valued and that creating a safe environment and dealing with bullying is everyone’s responsibility.

- 2.4.** We support a range of positive strategies to deal with bullying and actively challenge the use of humiliation, fear, ridicule and other similar approaches in an effort to reduce bullying.
- 2.5.** Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. It can result in long-term psychological damage and, in extreme cases, suicide. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.
- 2.6.** Bullying is not a criminal offence; however there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour. If we feel that an offence may have been committed our staff will seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
- 2.7.** There are various types of bullying, but most have three things in common:-
- it is deliberately hurtful behaviour;
 - it is repeated over time;
 - there is an imbalance of power, which makes it hard for those being bullied, to defend themselves.
- 2.8.** Bullying may take various forms, including:-
- Cyber - The use of electronic communications including email, mobile phones, text/multi-media messaging, photographs/video, online profiling, websites, social networks, and instant messaging; all with the intention to frighten, embarrass or harass;
 - Disability – because, or focussing on the issue of disability;
 - Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding tormenting (eg hiding books, threatening gestures);
 - Homophobic - because, or focussing on the issues, of sexuality;
 - Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence inflicted on another individual;
 - Racist/Cultural/Religious - racial, cultural or religious taunts, comments or gestures;
 - Sexual – sexually abusive taunts, comments or gestures;
 - Verbal – for example, name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.

3 Our Objectives

- 3.1.** Our policy is implemented whenever the school is responsible for the conduct and welfare of children and young people. The senior leadership team and all staff are responsible for its implementation.
- enable students to understand clearly what constitutes bullying and to understand that bullying, whatever its form, will not be tolerated by the school community;
 - enable parents to feel confident that bullying incidents will be firmly dealt with by the school;
 - create a safe environment and promote a non-aggressive ethos in the school;
 - raise staff awareness of the presence of different types of bullying, and an awareness of groups of students who are bullied disproportionately;
 - establish guidelines for action where bullying is evident;
 - develop a range of effective strategies for pupils to learn about moral and social issues;

- ensure students are able to explain how we expect them to behave.

4 Our Procedures

- 4.1. Training for staff is an important aspect of our work to prevent and tackle bullying, including the different types of bullying. At Oakleigh House school, staff have had relevant training and understand the importance of this policy.
- 4.2. We all understand that bullying can occur in any school and that we have a responsibility to be vigilant for incidents especially at times and in places where it is more likely to occur. We ensure that the physical layout of our buildings and our safety mechanisms such as CCTV all help to discourage and reduce the risk of bullying.
- 4.3. We aim is to ensure staff feel confident to consistently tackle all forms of bullying and that students are empowered to say “no” to bullying.
- 4.4. If a member of staff suspects that bullying is taking place, or a disclosure is made to them about an incident of bullying, they should always consult a senior member of staff. Under the guidance of a senior staff member, an age appropriate investigation should take place. Separate meetings, at which all conversations should be recorded in writing, should be arranged with those involved to establish their version of events and assure them that the situation will be dealt with sensitively but firmly and fully. Parents of both parties are always kept fully informed about how the bullying is being stopped.
- 4.5. Bullying behaviour will normally be addressed through the provision of counselling for all parties involved. A proven allegation of serious bullying will result in suspension or exclusion with the possible involvement of the police authorities. Following the incident, a senior staff member oversees the monitoring of the situation, liaising directly with the relevant advisor/class teacher to check that further bullying is not occurring.
- 4.6. Parents are asked to keep the school and staff informed of any concerns, and encourage their child to report any incidents immediately to an appropriate staff member. The Headteacher will ensure that the incident and any action taken are formally recorded in the behaviour/incident log.

5 Preventative Strategies

- 5.1. As a successful school, we create an environment that prevents bullying from being a serious problem in the first place.
- 5.2. We proactively gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place.
- 5.3. We talk with pupils through the curriculum about issues of difference and use dedicated project time and events such as school assemblies.
- 5.4. We are aware that schools which excel at tackling bullying have created an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know this is the right way to behave. Values of respect for staff and other pupils, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate the whole school environment. We reinforce these messages by the behaviour and attitudes of our staff who set a good example.

6 Successful Intervention Strategies

- 6.1. We apply disciplinary measures to pupils who bully in order to show clearly that their behaviour is wrong. In accordance with our behaviour policy, we apply sanctions fairly, consistently and reasonably, taking account of any special educational needs or disabilities that pupils may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable pupils.
- 6.2. We also consider carefully the motivating factors which may have affected the bullying behaviour and whether it indicates any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is the case, the child engaging in the bullying behaviour may need support themselves.
- 6.3. We involve parents to ensure that they are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and that they are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied. At Oakleigh House School, we make sure that our parents feel confident that we will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way which protects the child.
- 6.4. We involve pupils so they understand our approach towards bullying and so they are clear in the part they have to play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders.
- 6.5. We regularly evaluate our approach and ensure that our policy and practice is up to date.
- 6.6. We make sure that the consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable.
- 6.7. We teach children that using any prejudice based language is unacceptable.
- 6.8. We work with the wider community such as the police and children's services where bullying is particularly serious or persistent and where a criminal offence may have been committed.
- 6.9. We make it easy for pupils to report bullying so that they feel assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted upon.
- 6.10. We draw on the expertise of specialist organisations with a proven track record in dealing with bullying to ensure our practices are effective and keep children safe.
- 6.11. We ensure that notices are placed around school which provide appropriate telephone numbers for children to contact organisations such as Childline, Kidscape and CEOP.

7 Our Procedures

- 7.1. The immediate priority is to stop the bullying so instances will be dealt with without delay. Oakleigh House School takes the standpoint that most pupils involved in bullying do not intend to inflict significant harm. As a first recourse those who bully will be counselled by pastoral staff, an appeal will be made to 'better nature' and a commitment to correct the behaviour will be elicited. The bully should apologise to the victim.
- 7.2. In serious or persistent cases parents should be informed and may be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem, and if necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted. All attempts will be made to help the bully or bullies change their behaviour. This may include referral to outside agencies or specialist programmes of support.
- 7.3. Incidents of bullying will be recorded by relevant pastoral staff. This will enable patterns to be identified, and keeping records of bullying incidents will also enable the school to:-
 - manage individual cases effectively;
 - monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies;
 - celebrate the anti-bullying work of the school;
 - respond effectively and swiftly to concerns from parents.

7.4. The most obvious strategy is the use of disciplinary sanctions and learning programmes to deal with those pupils who are found to be bullying. Such disciplinary measures have three main purposes, namely to:-

- impress on the perpetrator that what he/she has done is unacceptable;
- deter him/her from repeating that behaviour;
- signal to other pupils that the behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from doing it.

7.5. Sanctions for bullying are intended to hold pupils who bully to account for their behaviour and to ensure that they face up to the harm that they have caused and learn from it. They also provide an opportunity for the pupil to put right the harm they have caused. Sanctions available are detailed in the school's behaviour policy. Ultimately, bullies will not be tolerated at this school and permanent exclusion will be used if, at the Headteacher's discretion, it is considered appropriate and that the relevant procedures have been followed accordingly.

8 Monitoring & Evaluation

8.1. We regularly report to our senior leadership team on the views of our pupils, and in particular, the incidences of bullying in school including which types are prevalent so that we can continuously improve our practices.

8.2. A termly account of all bullying incidents recorded are reported to our Governors' meeting where any patterns or trends are identified and strategies to be adopted are outlined.

9 Related Policies, Guidelines, Templates and Forms

- Special Educational Needs
- Safeguarding including Child Protection Procedures
- Accessibility Plan
- Health & Safety & First Aid
- Behaviour including written statement of behaviour principles
- Exclusion from School
- Accident & Incident recording & reporting
- Assessment
- Teaching & Learning