

Oaks Park High School

Title of Policy: Anti-Bullying

Person responsible: R Manning

Date for review: 2017

Policy Statement

The aim of this Policy is to prevent bullying of any kind and ensure that everyone can operate in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone. It is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Everyone in the school community has a responsibility to report any incident of bullying that comes to their attention. These reports will always be taken seriously.

All members of the school community - teaching and support staff; students and parents/carers should have an understanding of what bullying is and be familiar with the school policy and have a responsibility for enforcing its principles. The aim of the policy is to help members of the Oaks Park community deal with bullying as and when it occurs and, more importantly, to prevent it.

This policy is formulated in line with current DfE Guidance – Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies (November 2014) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2016) and should be read in conjunction with the School's Behaviour Policy.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying may be defined as:

Any deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, which intentionally hurts another student or group, either physically or emotionally; where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves and is often motivated by prejudice.

Oaks Park High School will not tolerate peer on peer abuse as 'banter' or 'part of growing up' and victims of peer abuse will be supported.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- Physical (including sexual) assault.
- Verbal abuse – name calling; teasing or making offensive remarks.
- Cyber bullying - the use of ICT by an individual or group with the intention of upsetting others. Examples include using social websites; mobile phones; text messaging; sexting; photographs; video and email.
- Indirect emotional tormenting by exclusion from social groups or spreading malicious rumours.

Bullying may involve complicity that falls short of direct participation – for instance, by manipulating a third party to tease or torment another person. It may be overt and intimidating, but is often hidden and subtle. It includes actions or comments which are racist, religious or cultural, homophobic, transphobic, sexist, sexual or may focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape) or any reference to Special Educational Needs or disability.

The seriousness of bullying cannot be emphasised enough. Bullying is among the top concerns that parents/carers have about their child's safety and wellbeing, both at school and the journey to/from school. Bullying is also a top concern of children and young people themselves. It makes the victim's life miserable; undermines their confidence and self-esteem; destroys their sense of security and can be psychologically damaging. Bullying impacts on the victim's attendance and attainment at school and marginalises those groups who may be particular targets for bullies. It

can have a lifelong negative impact on some young peoples' lives. At worst, bullying has been a factor in student suicide.

It is acknowledged that bullies may have complex reasons for their behaviour and may well need help. It should also be recognised that the consequences of being allowed to 'get away with it' can be detrimental to them as well as their victim. All students deserve the opportunity to understand what acceptable behaviour is. Oaks Park students are educated through PSHE, assemblies and other lessons (such as drama) to raise awareness of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice. Some students also engage in mentoring, peer mentoring, and anger management sessions and social skills groups if there is an identified need by pastoral teams to support them. There is also high staff presence on lesson changeover and at break and lunchtimes to support all children.

Anti-Bullying Procedure

What to look for:

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous; feigning illness; taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school.

All members of staff and all members of the community must be alert to the signs of bullying and community members should, in accordance with school policy, act promptly and firmly against it. Surveys have shown that in the vast majority of bullying incidents, MOST people know that what is taking place is wrong. Sometimes people, either through lethargy, peer group pressure or tacit support for what is occurring, fail to take action.

What to do:

The way to stamp out bullying is for people to be aware of the issues involved and be clear in their own minds on the correct action to take.

If you are the victim:

- If you feel able, confront the bully by verbally making her/him aware that you think what s/he is doing is wrong.
- Share your feelings with someone else.
- If possible, speak to a member of staff, your form tutor or Head of Year about your concerns.
- If you would rather not go straight to a member of staff, talk to your friends, senior students, a mentor, prefect, school counsellor or any trusted adult. They may well be able to advise you on the appropriate course of action or involve other people who can.
- You can also report any bullying through the SHARP system on the school website

If you witness bullying behaviour:

- Support the victim by offering your friendship and make it clear that in your opinion what is happening to them is wrong.
- Encourage the victim to speak out on their own behalf by confronting the bully or, with their permission, confront the bully yourself.
- Take the victim to a trusted adult or suggest that you see their Head of Year or tutor on their behalf.
- You can also report any bullying through the SHARP system on the school website

Procedure for members of staff who either witness an incident of bullying or have it reported to them:

- Reassure and support the student(s) involved and take the time to listen to them.
- Advise that you are required to pass details onto the relevant member of the pastoral team.
- Inform an appropriate member of the pastoral team as soon as possible. Heads of Year must record all incidents of reported bullying and ensure that the relevant SLT line manager is informed. S/he will keep a central log of all complaints or incidences of bullying and record the way in which they were dealt with.

Anti-Bullying Procedure (cont.)

What will happen?

Victim

The victim will be interviewed on his/her own by the Head of Year or appropriate member of staff e.g. form tutor, pastoral assistant and asked to write an immediate account of events. The process of dealing with bullying will be explained clearly to them. The victim will also be given the opportunity to discuss their own reactions and behaviour towards the bully. The victim is given support, advice and counselling will be suggested if deemed appropriate and available.

Perpetrator

Careful consideration of all circumstances will be made before sanctions or next actions are decided. Once the appropriate member of staff or Head of Year are clear that a bullying offence has been committed, the perpetrator and any others involved, including witnesses, will be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events. The process for dealing with bullying will be explained clearly to them.

Process

Details of the incident will be recorded in the files of all students involved by the members of staff involved. The relevant SLT Line Manager will be copied in to ensure that it is recorded as a bullying incident and the pastoral team will then decide on an appropriate course of action. In the first instance (and depending on the seriousness of the situation) an appropriate member of staff or Head of Year may interview the student(s) whose behaviour has caused the distress, making it clear that any further incident or discussion about the incident will be considered to be further bullying. It will also be made clear why their behaviour was inappropriate and unacceptable; support may be offered, a resolution meeting may be convened and a suitable punishment issued.

If the Head of Year deems it appropriate, the relevant SLT Line Manager will become involved and the parents/carers of the perpetrator(s) informed by letter or telephone. The following sanctions may be applied:

Internal Exclusion:

The school may choose to place a student in academic isolation for between 1-3 days in the Time Out room (This is called an A1-A3 exclusion).

Fixed Term Exclusion: At the Headteacher's discretion.

Permanent Exclusion: At the Headteacher's discretion.

These are minimum sanctions. In very serious cases it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or Social Services; however it is the policy of the school to attempt to resolve such issues internally, using our own disciplinary sanctions, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely.

The school will raise awareness of the staff through training and take action to reduce the risk of bullying at the times and places where it is most likely to occur. The key points from this policy will be discussed with students during assemblies, tutorial sessions and PSHE lessons. It will also be reinforced in other areas of the curriculum as opportunities present themselves, eg. Through drama and physical education. Incidents of reported bullying will be followed up by tutors and Heads of Year to ensure that the problem has been resolved. A record of bullying offences will be

reviewed on a regular basis by the relevant SLT Line Manager and pastoral teams at Heads of Year meetings to monitor patterns and check that the policy remains effective.

References

- ◆ CDSF Safe to Learn, Embedding Anti-Bullying Work in Schools.
- ◆ DfE Guidance – Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies (November 2014).
- ◆ DfE Guidance - Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2016).