ODYSSEY HOUSE SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying Policy

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1. Introduction

We aim to establish a whole school positive culture in which all members of the community feel safe and confident, and treat each other with respect, kindness and courtesy, particularly with regard to individual differences. Students must feel safe and respected if they are to learn effectively. Since we are a school which sets high standards for our students it is important that we create an atmosphere in which bullying cannot thrive and in which no student has to suffer from harassment of any kind. Because bullying happens in all societies, at all levels, it is important that we make our students knowledgeable about bullying and teach them strategies that enable them to stand up for themselves without resorting to retaliation in any form. Because bullying is in the news and is a form of real anxiety for parents, it is important that we inform parents fully about our approach to dealing with bullying, so that parents are able to distinguish between what is bullying and what is not.

This policy should be read and understood in the context of our Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy, and our approach to personal, social, healthcare and economic education.

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.

- The Independent School Standards Regulations 2014 (as amended)

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 deal with the concern in line with the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The support of external services may be accessed to tackle any underlying issues which have contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

2. A definition of bullying

2.1.   There is no legal definition of bullying, however, our school definition of bullying is: **Repetitive Intentional** hurting of one person or a group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an **imbalance of power**. Bullying can be seen or felt physically, verbally or psychologically, and includes social isolation or intimidation, as well as any threat of violence. It can happen face-to-face or online.

2.2.   Bullying may take various forms, and is often motivated by prejudice, 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. This can happen at any time of day with a potentially wider audience and more accessories as people forward on with a simple click;
- Disability: because of, or focusing on, the issue of disability;
- Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures);
- Homophobic or Transphobic: because of, or focusing on, the issues of sexuality and/or gender identity;
- 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; and
- Verbal: for example, name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours.

It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on the grounds of race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

The following are protected characteristics and our role in school is to ensure that students are protected from discrimination in relation to these both in-person and online. The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment (transphobia)
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Maternity or civil partnership

2.3.   We believe that bullying is a behaviour choice and that anyone can be encouraged to change their behaviour. It can be an individual or a group. Bullying can result in long-term psychological damage and, in extreme cases, suicide. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is our first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical.

2.4.   The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click. Schools have wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 to give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyberbullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices including mobile phones.

2.5.   Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted on. The Headteacher will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a student. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

2.6.   Bullying can be (but is not limited to):

- Physical (hitting, kicking, theft)

- Teasing

- Making threats

- Verbal (name calling, racist remarks)

- Indirect (spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups)

2.7.   We appreciate that cases of bullying can be very complex with a range of roles involved, the terminology used can be seen in the appendix alongside a brief description of these roles.

2.8.   At Odyssey we understand that sometimes there is relational conflict between students. This is not defined as bullying where there is a balance of power. However, where there is unkindness

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between students the pastoral team will endeavour to support students and re-emphasise our core values.

2.9.   Education trips and visits are a part of everyday school life and, as such, this policy applies in full when students are off site, on work connected to the school. Moreover, teachers have a power to discipline students in a reasonable way for conduct on and off the school premises. As such, any bullying incidents occurring off the premises, such as on public transport, school buses or in the local community, will fall under this policy and be treated accordingly. If the matter involves criminal activity, the police will always be informed.

2.10.   The children and young people at Odyssey House School have a wide-range of complex needs. As a school community we understand that bullying in this context can have additional subtleties and raise issues that are in themselves complicated to resolve. Not all students at the school will recognise bullying behaviour if they experience it; equally not all students would recognise their own behaviour as bullying towards another individual. Cognitive understanding and communication impairment are strong factors in how/what the children and young people communicate. As such, the school will take into account the needs of the children and try and help them understand the impact of their actions or behaviours on other members of the school community (e.g. use of inappropriate language as a result of having tourettes)

Bullying will not be tolerated at Odyssey and will be dealt with robustly. The school community has a duty to protect all its members and provide a safe, healthy environment.

3. How we set the right ethos of being a 'telling' school

3.1.   A 'telling' school is one where students do inform staff when bullying is taking place.

3.2.   If students who feel they are being bullied are to tell us about bullying we must work together to create an atmosphere of trust. Students who are classed as targets must know that their concerns will be taken seriously and recognise that investigations take time.

3.3.   We must also make it as easy as possible to report bullying. They must understand that these may result in a number of different outcomes and be familiar with the content of the flow chart on page 4.

3.4.   We will educate students through assemblies, form time and the PSHE curriculum so that they understand bullying related to child-on-child abuse, and gender and sexual harassment linked to KCSIE safeguarding responsibilities.

3.5.   Everyone on the site has a responsibility to ensure that we live by our core values and that we all set a good atmosphere round school. We want to make it clear that this responsibility includes:
- Promoting an open and honest ethos that ensures that all members of the school community know and agree with our stance on bullying;
- Ensuring that all staff exhibit positive behaviours, demonstrate our Core Values and become positive role models to students;
- Treating other people with respect at all times;
- Doing nothing that could be construed as bullying;
- Doing nothing that could be construed as supporting bullying. This includes relaying distressing messages, relaying threats, laughing at bullying, watching a fight;
- Reporting to the proper person any bullying we witness or any behaviour which we feel could escalate into bullying;
- Engaging students in reviewing and developing our anti-bullying practices;
- Analyse available data to ascertain how the school environment and the journeys to and from school can be improved.

4. How to deal with bullying and who to tell

4.1.   We will remind our students to take the following action if they feel they are being bullied. These messages will also be reinforced throughout the year;
- If you feel able to, then let the perpetrator know that they do not like what is happening to them and ask them to stop;
- If the bullying doesn't stop, tell someone in school who will initiate action to sort out the problem. This will often be their form tutor, any teacher or any member of staff.

4.2.   If bullying behaviour is witnessed by our students, we ask that they too report their concerns using the above protocols. However, we emphasise that students must not use physicality or verbal abuse to try and resolve a matter.

4.3.   If parents or carers have concerns regarding bullying behaviour, we ask that this is reported to their child's form tutor or the safeguarding team. This will be logged, and the matter will be investigated.

5. What any adult – teacher, support staff, parent, contractor – who has been told about bullying should do

5.1.   Go to, phone or email the student's form tutor.

6. Who should investigate

6.1.   In the first instance we would expect the student's form tutor to discuss any issues with their tutees and suggest possible solutions. If this is ineffective or the form tutor believes he/she needs help in resolving an issue he/she will email the Pastoral team. An investigation into a complaint of bullying will be carried out in most cases by one of the pastoral team.

7. The need for gathering evidence

7.1.   To ensure we deal with incidents fairly, we must gather as much evidence as possible in order to establish what really happened.

8. How we deal with incidents that cross the inside/outside school boundaries

8.1.   Where incidents that happen outside school are clearly having a detrimental effect on the life of students in school we will investigate these and, in conjunction with the parents and the local police, take appropriate action.

9. What sanctions we use

9.1.   At our school, sanctions are applied fairly, proportionately, consistently and reasonably, taking account of any SEN or disabilities that pupils may have, and taking into consideration the needs of vulnerable children. Bullying by children with disabilities or SEN is no more acceptable than bullying by other children and it should be made clear that their actions are wrong and appropriate sanctions imposed. We expect all students to be proactive and seek help from members of staff if they witness another student being hurt or they are concerned about others.

9.2.   Consequences will be protective and educational and are outlined in the Behaviour Management Policy.

10. Engaging with parents and carers

10.1. We believe it is important for our school to work with parents/carers to help them to understand our approach with regards to bullying and to engage promptly with them when an issue of bullying comes to light, whether their child is the student being bullied or the one doing the bullying. We will ensure parents/carers are made aware of how to work with us on bullying and how they can seek help if a problem is not resolved. Some parents may need specific support to help deal with their child's behaviour. Where our school identifies that this is the case, we will initially provide support ourselves or signpost the parents to appropriate channels of help.

10.2. We will:

- Make sure that key information (including policies and named points of contact) about bullying is available to parents/carers;
- Ensure that all parents/carers know who to contact if they are worried about bullying;
- Ensure all parents/carers know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively;
- Ensure all parents/carers know where to access independent advice about bullying;
- Work with all parents/carers and the local community to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to bullying;
- Ensure that parents work with the school to role model positive behaviour for pupils, both on and offline.

10.3. Particularly during a lengthy investigation, or when there is a repetition of bullying, a target's parents may feel very anxious. It is very important that the investigator and the parents keep in contact but parents must understand that form tutors and senior staff do have other demands on their time. We will always endeavour to ring parents on the same day that the incident occurred; however, phone calls may not always be able to be made as soon or as frequently as the parent would ideally like.

11. How we monitor the situation

11.1. Pastoral staff will try to check at regular intervals on the welfare of a student who has been bullied, but we do rely on students reporting any repetition. Whilst the sanctions outlined above will be used as appropriate, both students and parents must understand that we cannot take action if we are not made aware.

12. Our Procedures

12.1. Effective staff training is an important aspect of our work to prevent and tackle bullying, including the different types of bullying. All staff have had relevant training and understand the importance of this policy. In particular, our Senior Leadership Team ensures that all staff understand the principles and purpose of the school's policy, the legal responsibilities, how to resolve problems and where to seek support. We use specialised skills to help our staff understand the needs of any students, including special educational needs and/or disability and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT+) students.

12.2. 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. Given the layout of our school building we are able to monitor students closely and staff support students during break times as well to ensure that they have adult supervision at all times.

We aim to ensure staff feel confident to consistently tackle all forms of bullying and that students are empowered to say "no" to bullying.

13. Successful Intervention Strategies

- We apply the relevant consequences (sanctions) as detailed in our Behaviour policy, to those who bully in order to show clearly that their behaviour is wrong.

- 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.

- 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. 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.

- We involve students 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.

- We regularly evaluate our approach and ensure that our policy and practice is up to date.

- We make sure that the consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident, so that others see that bullying is unacceptable.

- We teach students that using any prejudice-based language is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

- 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.

- We make it easy for students to report bullying so that they feel assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted upon.

- 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.

- We ensure that notices are placed around school which provide appropriate telephone numbers and email addresses for children to contact organisations such as ChildLine and CEOP.

- We listen to our students' voice at all times and act accordingly.

- We aim to use restorative approaches in school which focus on reconciliation with those who have been harmed. This enables all those affected by any incident to play a part in repairing the harm and finding a positive way forward, enabling everyone to prevent conflict and build relationships.

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; and

- Respond effectively and swiftly to concerns from parents.

The most obvious strategy is the use of appropriate consequences and learning programmes to deal with those students who are found to be bullying. Such consequences 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; and

- Signal to other students that the behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from doing it.

Sanctions for bullying are intended to hold students 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 and will be applied fairly, consistently and reasonably, taking into account the needs of vulnerable students. Ultimately, bullies will not be tolerated at this school and all members of the school community have the right to feel safe.

14. Roles and Responsibilities/strategies

The Proprietor

- Creating the right ethos for the school that ensures it is an inclusive environment.
- Review anti-bullying data presented by the senior leaders on a termly basis to ensure that the school practices are in line with its policies
- Ensure the school is promoting equality for its whole community.

The Headteacher & the SLT

- To deliver and organise any necessary training for staff to ensure they understand and implement the anti-bullying policy.
- To act as a port of call to advise staff on any bullying related matter
- To liaise with external agencies as necessary in partnership to support anti-bullying strategies
- Ensure regular review of the anti-bullying policy and practice to keep it up to date.
- Keep up to date on bullying related data from the school's behaviour report analysis and plan appropriate interventions either at an individual or whole school level.
- Promote anti-bullying week and anti-bullying work in general. Ensure the curriculum covers anti-bullying.
- Work with families so that they are aware of the school's policy/practice and specific circumstances if they arise.
- To ensure bullying is factored into any analysis of student behaviour
- Ensure that behavioural recording systems record any instances of bullying

All school staff

- To be constantly monitoring the students for bullying-related behaviour and follow the correct procedure where evidence points towards bullying taking place.

- To be constantly modelling high standards of behaviour and to have high expectations for all the students.

The Students' Voice

- School staff should be constantly vigilant for signs that a student may be subject to bullying behaviour expressed either through a student voice or from signs such as distress, change in mood, injury, change in behavioural norms. Claims or expressions of bullying made by students will be taken seriously.

Monitoring and evaluation

- The SLT is responsible for maintaining a bullying log which includes instances of bullying.

- The SLT is responsible for the implementation of this policy and for reviewing from time to time to evaluate its implementation and impact.

- The SLT reports on behaviour and bullying at governance meetings. This forms the monitoring and evaluation function of the CEO. The CEO will review termly, a report from a member of the Senior Leadership Team on instances of bullying during the year to ensure that procedures are adequate.

- Where there are concerns regarding the school's approach to dealing with bullying, these will be explored by the CEO.

- Staff will regularly evaluate and update their approach to bullying to take into account the developments in technology.

Appendix 1

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs of behaviour that he/she/they are being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school vehicle / taxi
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money to pay bully
- has possessions or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received

This is not an exhaustive list.

These signs and behaviour could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Appendix 2

The law and statutory guidance with respect to bullying

THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

Under the Equality Act 2010, new duties on schools and other public bodies came into force from April 2011. The Act strengthens and simplifies existing equality legislation. The Act brings together existing duties not to discriminate on grounds of race, disability and gender which schools are already bound to comply with, and it extends these to include duties not to discriminate on the grounds of age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or gender re-assignment. It places a requirement on governing bodies and proprietors of schools to eliminate discrimination and promote equal opportunities.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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 school staff should report their concerns to their local authority children's social care. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, schools may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child doing the bullying.

CRIMINAL LAW

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986. If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed, they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communication 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 to send an electronic communication 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.

BULLYING OUTSIDE SCHOOL PREMISES

Head teachers have a specific statutory power to discipline students for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives head teachers the power to regulate students' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, in a town or village centre, cyber bullying or via social networking sites.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The SLT should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the actions taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.