ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

OPTIONS TRENT ACRES SCHOOL AND TRENT ACRES BROOKFIELD

Updated 1 September 2024

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1.0   INTRODUCTION

This policy seeks to identify bullying and to set out how we can practically manage it in school.

Implementation: It is appropriate that all members of the school are conscious of bullying, and demonstrate awareness that it should not be tolerated under any guise. Initial training at the launch of the policy should be compulsory for all staff members, and regular revisits will be made to raise awareness of bullying.

Compliance: This policy complies with all relevant regulations and other legislation as detailed below:

- Complies with Part 3, paragraph 10 3 (2)(a) of The Education (Independent School Standards Compliance Record) (England) (Amendment) Regulations.

- *Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2019): Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies:* DfE Guidance (Julne 2018): and the relevant aspects of *Safe to Learn, embedding anti-bullying work in schools*

- *Supporting children and young people who are bullied: advice for schools:* DfE Guidance (March 2014*)*

- *Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff:* (November 2014)

- *Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying:* (November 2014)

- Having regard for the guidance set out in the DfE *(Don't Suffer in Silence booklet)*

- Has regard to the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty

Options Trent Acres School is a specialist, independent day school offering places to pupils aged 5 to 19. Places are offered to pupils who have complex needs including ASC, ADHD. A high number of our pupils may also have experienced early childhood trauma and may present with attachment difficulties.

The school operates across 2 sites within the Staffordshire borough and offers up to 141 across both facilities.

Options Trent Acres School, based in Kings Bromley is set within 12 acres of Staffordshire countryside. The full national curriculum is taught from key stage 1 to key stage 4, adapted to meet the needs of individual pupils. Post-16 pupils can access a range of qualifications, including additional GCSE's and BTEC qualifications and a number of A-Level opportunities (please see Post-16 Policy for further information) The school is also home to a range of farm and domestic animals and reptiles who provide emotional support for pupils as well as curriculum enhancement. Additional opportunities to study animal care, land based studies, equine studies, psychology and engineering are also available to pupils.

Trent Acres - Brookfield is a purpose-built vocational college. We offer places for pupils aged 14 to 19, enabling them to study vocational routes into computer gaming and coding, hospitality and barista music production and health and social care. Students will also be able to achieve Functional Skills in English, Mathematics and ICT from Entry Level to Level 2. Many of the staff will work across sites, providing consistency and stability for pupils

2.0   AWARENESS: PROMOTING APPROPRIATE & GOOD BEHAVIOUR

To actively raise awareness of bullying and oppose it in all its forms, it is appropriate to promote 'Good Behaviour' from all staff, learners and visitors. This is achieved through: -

a)   Consistent models of good behaviour from staff demonstrating; acceptance of peers, learners and visitors, and listening to their points of view; courteousness; sharing and turn taking.

b)   Celebrating all achievements however small, taking into account that achievements are not only academic but can be an act of kindness or good behaviour.

c)   Staff demonstrating mutual support and understanding.

d)   Intolerance of taunts or negative behaviours relating to race, sex and gender, sexuality and age.

e)   Clearly defined rules relating to the schools aims in relation to behaviour, rewards for positive behaviour and sanctions for negative behaviours. (See Policy for Behaviour)

3.0 WHAT IS BULLYING?

According to Tattum and Lane (1989) Bullying is;

'A wilful, conscious desire to hurt another or put him under stress'.

Bullying can be conducted by individuals or groups and can take the form of physical violence, verbal abuse, psychological stress or a combination of all of these forms. It is usually focused upon an individual having intention to cause harm and distress.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance defines bullying as the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. This can either happen face-to-face or online.

Autistic children and young people can often be more vulnerable to bullying because they find it harder to 'read' social situations or demonstrate different behaviours, such as stimming.

They may also find it hard to communicate what's happening to them - all of this can lead to increased anxiety and isolation, or to school refusal.

It is our responsibility to ensure that we educate pupils to understand what bullying is and the impact this can have. Autistic children need additional support in understanding perception.

4.0   FORMS OF BULLYING

a)   Physical e.g. hitting, kicking, taking belongings.
b)   Verbal e.g. verbal taunts and name calling, making insulting and offensive remarks and suggestions.
c)   Indirect e.g. malicious gossip, exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of ridicule, for example through invention of untrue stories.

Specifically, bullies commonly take opportunities to distress and harm individuals through the following forms of bullying classifications, which includes bullying by race, gender, sexual orientation or disability. Any form of bullying that discriminates against protected characteristics is taken seriously and appropriate action is taken. (These categories are neither exhaustive nor definitive).

Racist Bullying The person/child is targeted for being a member of group within society. Racist bullying can consist of verbal abuse e.g. name calling, racist comments, jokes, offensive mimicry and physical attacks.

Sexual Bullying This form of bullying can affect males and females and can include abusive name calling, comments about appearance, homophobic taunts and inappropriate and uninvited touching.

Social Bullying This is sometimes referred to as **relational** bullying. It involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Social bullying can include:
- Leaving someone out on purpose
- Telling other children not to be friends with someone
- Spreading rumours about someone
- Embarrassing someone in public

Prejudicial Bullying is defined as bullying or harassment based on a disability. These disabilities can be physical, developmental, intellectual, emotional, or sensory; and pose physical vulnerability, social skill challenges, or intolerant environments challenges.

Disability Bullying People with a variety of disabilities can find themselves bullied because of the nature of their disability. Bullying within this category can present itself as mimicry, name calling and inappropriate joking. It is important that staff give clear messages that such behaviour will not be tolerated

Bullying and learners with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) As a school we need to differentiate between learners' behaviours that result from, or are associated with, ASD and those that can be described as bullying. Such behaviours pertaining to individual learners will be detailed in their Positive Behaviour Support Profile (PBSP). In order to be classified as bullying the behaviour should have the following characteristics; directed, intentional, wilful and be aimed at causing hurt or putting the person /child under stress.

Cyber bullying This can be defined as the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) - particularly mobile phones and the internet - deliberately to upset someone else. It can be an extension of face-to- face bullying, with technology providing the bully with another route to harass their target. However, it differs in several significant ways from other kinds of bullying because of the invasion of home and personal space, the difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages, the size of the audience, perceived anonymity and the profile of the person doing the bullying and their target

5.0   IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH ACTUAL OR ALLEGED BULLYING

General Principles for Managing Incidents of Bullying

a) Always act on suspected bullying as ignoring could lead to unnecessary distress and harm.

b) Be objective when dealing with any evidence, don't make premature assumptions.

c) Listen carefully to all accounts – try to get as full a picture as possible before making any judgement. However, delays can cause distress and can give an impression that such behaviour is acceptable. Accounts from a number of learners saying the same thing does not assure accuracy.

d) Adopt a problem solving approach, taking objective evidence from learners and working towards a resolve.

e) Monitor and review the situation ensuring that the instance of bullying has not reoccurred.

6.0   REPORTING BULLYING

a) Suspected or actual bullying should be reported to the member of staff's line manager, unless the concerns involve the line manager. In this case the reporting should be directed to the next appropriate person in the line management structure this could be the teacher, Deputy Head and/or Headteacher. Strategies for dealing informally with the bully should be identified and put into practice (see strategies below).

b) If there are very serious concerns or the strategies implemented are not successful, staff can make contact with Chris Groom – Regional Director. A formal meeting may need to take place to identify actions required.

c) All suspected or actual bullying should be reported on a Cause for Concern form and passed on to the Headteacher.

Any discussions with staff, learners or parents should be recorded and kept on file

7.0   APPROACHES TO BULLYING

Curriculum Approaches

We take a proactive approach with cyber bullying (see e-safety policy) ensuring pupils do not have unsupervised access to the internet – and no access at all to social networking sites - while in school. Meanwhile, through ICT lessons, they are taught how to use the internet safely and alerted to some of the issues around cyber bullying. Issues around bullying can be highlighted and taught through a variety of planned opportunities in the school year, incorporating them into the PSHE Citizenship and RE curriculum.

Issues that need addressing include: -

- Identifying what bullying is and the existence of the anti-bullying policy.
- Identifying the rights of a victim and what to do if bullying takes place.
- Teaching about forming and maintaining relationships.
- Why people become bullies.
- How bullying affects others.
- How to prevent bullying

Within PSHE lessons, pupils cover a range of topics including bullying types and the impact of bullying on all people involved, as well as healthy and unhealthy relationships. This includes recognising the features of exploitative friendships and also tackling attitudes and stereotypical thoughts which can lead to prejudice-based bullying. Pupils are taught these topics in an open and honest environment, where they can be free to discuss issues and concerns without fear of being judged or ridiculed. PSHE lessons are planned and designed to help raise awareness of the meaning and impact of bullying, and how to respond if they find themselves in difficult situations. Reflection time is also incorporated, to give pupils the opportunity to think about their actions and behaviours and how they can be addressed for the future.

8.0   KEY STRATEGIES FOR COUNTERACTING BULLYING

The DfE document, 'Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence' outlines key strategies for counteracting bullying. A copy of this document can be obtained from The Headteacher or can be accessed on the internet

The document includes the use of: -
- Group work, circle time, circle of friends, befriending, mediation by adults, mediation by peers, active listening and counselling based practice.

9.0 PERSISTENT BULLYING

Where bullying continues after measures and strategies have been applied, or it is felt that tougher measures are needed; the teacher's/group leader together with their line manager may wish to consider the following.

- Removal from the group
- Application of appropriate sanctions identified in The Policy for Positive Behaviour, including withdrawal of break and lunchtime privileges; removal from any outside activities that are not essential to the curriculum.

Supporting the Victim of Bullying

It is imperative that the victim is support throughout any instance of bullying, this may consist of: -

- Active listening
- Advice
- Assertive training
- Having a named person/learner for support

10.0 MONITORING

Monitoring, after any incident of bullying, should be a systematic set of routines to establish that the problem has been conquered and that possibility of reoccurrence is minimised. To ensure this the following actions should be followed;

a) Identify a key member of staff to oversee monitoring of progress.
b) Revisit the incident after a period of 2 weeks to ensure there hasn't been a reoccurrence.
c) Follow up again within half term of the original incident.
d) Ensure that both the victim and the perpetrator of the bullying are aware that monitoring and review will be conducted, thus reducing reoccurrence.
e) Ensure that documentation relating to individual incidents of bullying is kept in confidential pupil/student files until a time that is appropriate to the individual case. For example, if the bullying is an isolated case, with no reoccurrence for the same or other victim, it is acceptable to remove from the learner's file prior to transition to any receiving service. However, should persistence or further incidents occur it would be appropriate to disclose the instances to any organisation assessing the learner for a future placement, allowing for full and fair judgements to be made.
f) Bullying records are reviewed as part of the school's governance process.

Regular training should be undertaken with existing staff to reinforce expectations and process and outline new documentation and/or strategies. New staff should receive training related to the bullying policy as part of their induction to the school.

11.0 EVALUATION

The effectiveness of the policy to combat bullying is evaluated on an annual basis. This evaluation should inform updates and amendments of the policy.

Consultation with staff, learners, their families and the parent company – Outcomes First Group should be carried out to fully consider any incident, its management, the outcomes and progression for the future.

By raising awareness, everyone involved in the immediate and wider communities of the school will understand and share knowledge relating to expectations and the school's intolerance of bullying. This will, in turn, increase learners understanding and make them more likely to feel comfortable to report incidents.