COGNITA

Duncombe School

An Independent Preparatory School and Nursery

Anti-Bullying Policy

September 2019

Date Policy Reviewed	Policy Reviewed By	Reason/Outcome	Next Review Due
1st September 2017	Nicola Sands	Review	Autumn 2018
4th September 2018	Nicola Sands	Review	Autumn 2019
2nd September 2019	Nicola Sands	Review	Autumn 2020

1 Introduction

1.1 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 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 Equality and Diversity Policy, and our approach to personal, social, healthcare and economic 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.
- The Independent School Standards Regulations 2014 (as amended

1.4 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 Policy.

1.5 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, we have 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 Bullying involves an imbalance of power which makes it hard for those being bullied to defend themselves. This may be seen or felt physically, online or psychologically, and includes social isolation or intimidation, as well as any threat of violence. It is defined as follows:-

- It is deliberately hurtful behaviour; and
- It is repeated over time.

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.

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.

2.3 We respect difference and welcome diversity in our children, young people and in society in general, and believe our school should be inclusive.

2.4 We believe that pupils should have the right to feel safe, secure and valued and that creating a safe environment and dealing with bullying is everyone's responsibility.

2.5 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.

2.6 Bullying 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 including transgender, special educational needs and/or disability, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Any prejudice based language is unacceptable.

2.7 Bullying is not a criminal offence. However, there are criminal laws in the UK 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.

2.8 School visits are a part of everyday school life and, as such, this policy applies in full when pupils are off site, on work connected to the school. Moreover, teachers have a power to discipline pupils 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.

2.9 Bullying which is deemed to be illegal must be reported to the police.

3 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.

3.2 Our objectives are to:

- Enable pupils to understand clearly what constitutes bullying and to understand that bullying, whatever its form, will not be tolerated by the school community;
- Make it easy for pupils to report bullying so that they feel assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted upon;
- Enable parents to feel confident that bullying incidents will be firmly dealt with by the school;
- Create a safe environment and promote an inclusive ethos in the school where pupils can discuss the cause of bullying without fear of further bullying or discrimination;
- Raise staff awareness of the presence of different types of bullying, and an awareness of groups of pupils 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 pupils are able to explain how we expect them to behave; and
- Celebrate success as an important way of creating a positive school ethos around anti-bullying.

4 Our Procedures

4.1 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 pupils, including special educational needs and/or disability and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) pupils.

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 to ensure staff feel confident to consistently tackle all forms of bullying and that pupils 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.

4.5 Parents of both parties are always kept fully informed about how the alleged bullying is being handled.

4.6 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. Following the incident, a senior staff member oversees the monitoring of the situation, liaising directly with the relevant teacher to check that further bullying is not occurring.

4.7 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. We talk with pupils through the curriculum about issues of difference and use dedicated project time and events such as special assemblies. We keep lines of communication open so pupils feel included.

5.3 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, British values, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate the whole school environment. We reinforce these messages through 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 into 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. 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 pupils that using any prejudice-based language is unacceptable and will not be toerated.

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 and email addresses for children to contact organisations such as ChildLine, Kidscape and CEOP.

6.12 We listen to our pupils' voice at all times and act accordingly.

6.13 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.

7 Our Procedures

7.1 The immediate priority is to stop the bullying, so instances will be dealt with without delay. The 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 It is important for the school to understand the motivation behind any bullying and whether it reveals any cause for concern about the safety of the perpetrator. This is because the bully may need support themselves.

7.3 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.

7.4 Our school uses restorative practice which includes a facilitated meeting being held to enable individuals and groups to work together to improve their mutual understanding of what has taken place and to jointly agree the best solution moving forwards. Sometimes a less formal approach is used with the same principles in place, depending on the nature of the incident. Restorative practice provides an opportunity for everyone to reflect on how they interact with each other and consider how best to prevent harm and conflict, recognising everyone has a part to play and is responsible as such.

7.5 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.

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

7.7 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 and will be applied fairly, consistently and reasonably, taking into account the needs of vulnerable pupils. Ultimately, bullies will not be tolerated at this school and permanent exclusion (expulsion) will be used if, at the Headteacher's discretion, it is considered appropriate and that the relevant procedures have been followed accordingly.

7.8 We have powers to search included within the Education Act 2011 to tackle cyber-bullying, including, where necessary, deletion of inappropriate images or files on electronic devices, including mobile phones. We use this power under the specific authority of the Headteacher only and where there is good reason to do so, i.e. that it could be used to harm children, disrupt teaching or break the school rules. We do not search pupils in a blanket way.

8 Monitoring and Evaluation

8.1 Each Headteacher is responsible for maintaining a behaviour log which includes instances of bullying.

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

8.3 Headteachers report on behaviour and bullying at governance meetings. This forms the monitoring and evaluation function of the proprietor.

8.4 Where there are concerns regarding the school's approach to dealing with bullying, these will be explored by the Director of Education (DE).

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Document sponsor (role)	Group Director of Education
Document author (name)	Karen Nicholson, ADE. Review John Coleman, ADE, 2018 Review David Baldwin, DE, 2019

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