

Anti - Bullying Policy

Owlswick School and Home

Approved by:	Sarah Hawke/Leon Creenan	Date: 28/3/18
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- **Introduction**

Owlswick is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of the young people who live and attend our school so they feel safe and secure. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and if it does occur then all young people should be able to tell and know that all incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Owlswick operates a 'telling' policy. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell staff.

We aim to operate a zero tolerance policy towards bullying. Staff induction, supervision and staff meetings enable staff to be informed and trained about the Owlswick approach to dealing with bullying as well as aiding understanding/learning that their role is to prevent and challenge any bullying behaviour whatever format this may take.

The young people are also aware that there is a zero tolerance approach to bullying and this is regularly discussed with them as individuals and as a group in both home and school. Owlswick is also aware that due to the nature of the environment in home and school then incidents of bullying may occur from time to time. Staff are vigilant about, and deal with, any incidents of bullying in a proactive manner seeking to ensure that this is a positive intervention for both the bullied and the bully.

- **Relationship to Owlswick Policies**

This policy should be read in relation to Owlswick's:

E-safety Policies

Social Media Policy

Behaviour, Consequences and Rewards Policy

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Self-Harm Policy

- **What is bullying?**

Bullying can be defined as the use of anger/aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can occur within both home and school and be carried out by both staff and young people. Individual young people can suffer in silence for a long period of time before they tell anyone or may be frightened, ashamed or embarrassed about admitting to being bullied. They may also be concerned about the person bullying them finding out about them telling an adult and that there may be reprisals from this. It can take great courage for a young person to admit to being bullied.

Bullying can occur towards an individual or group due to a number of reasons; the following is not an exhaustive list but may be due to:

Ethnicity

Religion

Culture

Sexual Orientation

Disability

Bullying can be carried out in many forms; the following is not an exhaustive list but may include:

Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching or any other use of physical violence. Any unwanted physical contact. Any unwanted/uninvited sexual or intimate contact and/or exploitative behaviour

Verbal: name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing and swearing. Derogatory or offensive comments due to an individual being of a particular gender/ethnicity/culture/sexual orientation.

Emotional: tormenting, excluding from a group, threatening gestures, being unfriendly and dismissive, pressurising to take part in an action or activity, pressurising to become part of a group or gang.

Harassment: taunting, tormenting and name calling, giving unwanted attention. Any unwanted physical contact. Any unwanted/uninvited sexual or intimate contact.

Cyber: all areas of the internet, chat room misuse, mobile phone threats, misuse of technology i.e camera or video facilities, grooming or sexting.

Peer Abuse

A young person may be bullied by a peer or a group of their peers. This may in the form of name calling, taunting, tormenting, pressure to become part of a group or being isolated from a group.

- **Why is it important to respond to bullying?**

Bullying hurts people and no one deserves to be the victim of bullying. Everyone has the right to be treated with respect and people who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

Owlswick as a home and school has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

- **Objectives of this policy**

All staff members from the care and education team, school governors (Proprietors), young people, parents and carers should have an understanding of what bullying is.

All staff members from the care and education team, school governors (Proprietors), young people, parents and carers should have an understanding of Owlswick's policy on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported,

All young people should know what the Owlswick policy is on bullying and what they should do if bullying arises.

All young people, parents and carers should be assured that they are supported when bullying is reported.

Bullying will not be tolerated.

- **Signs and Symptoms of Bullying**

A young person may indicate by signs or behaviours that they are being bullied. Staff members need to be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a young person exhibits any of the following. N.B this is not an exhaustive list.

- Is frightened of going to school
- Is frightened of doing something at the house
- Changes their usual routine
- Begins to truant
- Becomes withdrawn or anxious or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts to self-harm or threatens suicide
- Threatens or attempts to run away
- Goes missing
- Cries themselves to sleep or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to do poorly at school
- Has clothes torn or property damaged or go 'missing'
- Has other monies continually lost
- Asks for money or begins to steal money
- Has unexplained cuts and bruises
- Become aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other young people
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what is wrong

- Gives excuses for any of the above
- Is afraid to use a mobile phone or internet
- Is nervous or jumpy when a cyber-message is received
- Does not want to go out and see friends

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

- **Strategies to prevent bullying**

Staff are trained in the following techniques to manage and deal with bullying if and when it occurs:

- Listening to the young person and allowing them the space to express themselves
- Taking the allegation of bullying seriously and encouraging the young person to talk about their experiences
- Reassuring the young person that they are right to talk about their experience
- Not promising to keep the bullying a secret and stressing the importance for the young person to share their experience so that the bullying can be dealt with in an appropriate manner.
- Treating the bullying as an incident and reporting it in order for appropriate action to be taken

Staff will discuss all young people and how they are interacting as an individual and group on a regular basis in order to agree strategies to manage bullying as and when necessary as well as ensuring the staff team work in a consistent and supportive manner. If bullying is observed then staff will treat this as an incident and take immediate action to deal with the situation in order to ensure the bullying is exposed and managed. All staff are trained to work with the victim of bullying as well as the person undertaking the bullying in order for the individual to start to understand the effects of their behaviour and why they are acting in this way.

Staff are also vigilant about observing an individual or group and will approach an individual young person in a discreet manner if they suspect that they may be being bullied by their peers – this may also occur with an external peer group. These discussions are carried out in confidence but staff will inform the young person if they need to share or discuss their experience with colleagues or a manager if there is a perceived or known threat to that individuals (or others) health and safety or if there is any reason to suspect a child safeguarding issue. Young people are encouraged to discuss any issue that is concerning or affecting their health and well-being with their key worker or any other member of staff.

Staff will also discuss bullying with the young people as a group at the daily young person's meeting or on other occasions in order to raise awareness of bullying behaviour and encourage the young people to consider why it may be occurring at a particular time. Staff will also talk to the group and individuals about the different types of bullying and effects of this type of behaviour on individuals.

Staff will also remind the young people about how they can expect staff to behave towards them and the importance of telling another member of staff or a family member/social worker if they think they are being bullied by any member of staff at Owlswick.

All bullying will be recorded using the system in place to record bullying incidents and a bullying log will be completed to keep a track of patterns and trends of bullying incidents. The young people are aware that there will be a consequence if there are incidents of bullying. If the bullying behaviour continues then further action will be taken which may include or lead to a suspension of a placement or an eventual exclusion.

- **Procedure for the young people to report bullying**

The young person will report the bullying incident to a staff member in either home or school. A record will be made of the bullying, a bullying incident report completed and an investigation made. The young person will be reassured that it was important that they reported the bullying and it is being taken seriously and confidentially – they will also be made aware when information about the bullying needs to be passed on, if the bullying is a safeguarding issue for example. In serious cases of bullying, parents/carers and external agencies will be informed of the bullying incident and action taken to deal with the issue - including the police if required. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying will be dealt with in order for the bullying to stop and the bully/bullies themselves spoken to. The bully/bullies will be supported to change their behaviour and consider the effects of their actions on others. If the bullying constitutes a child protection issue then the child protection policy will be activated and/or a welfare concern form completed.

- **Outcomes of bullying behaviour**

The bullies may be asked to genuinely apologise and consider their actions and impact on others. Other consequences may take place and these may include being excluded from school, having a placement suspended or in severe cases consideration given to whether the placement needs to be brought to an end. If possible the young people will be reconciled but this will only occur after careful consideration has been given to the situation. After the incident has been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure that repeated bullying does not take place. Specialist external anti-bullying agencies will be contacted to provide support to the person being bullied as well the person doing the bullying.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Owlswick is committed to ensuring that young people are safeguarded in all aspects of their lives and that individuals can expect to feel safe and be kept safe in their home and school environment.

Safeguarding and child protection covers, and is related to, a number of areas which relate to the risks of young people being for example:

- Being bullied and/or acting as a bully
- Sexually exploited and a victim of child sexual exploitation
- Becoming radicalised
- Going missing
- Becoming involved in gang culture or crime
- Becoming the victims of crime
- Being radicalised

If a young person is being bullied or is acting as a bully then staff will inform parents/carers and external agencies as appropriate and where necessary involve them in tackling the problem. Specialist anti-bullying agencies will also be involved and asked to support the young person in conjunction with the support and involvement of the staff teams and key-worker.

The management team and Head Teacher will review if the person being bullied, or is acting as a bully, constitutes a safeguarding issue and inform and involve the appropriate external agencies as necessary to do so.

- **Cyber bullying**

Cyber bullying is a growing issue of concern for young people and one that Owlswick needs to ensure that young people are aware of. By using the internet safety policy guidance and agreed control mechanisms, staff aim to educate and ensure awareness amongst the young people about cyber bullying. This includes what this means in practice, what to do if they think someone is bullying them or what to do if they are in a conversation or communication which is making them feel uncomfortable, angry or upset.

Cyber bullying may occur as any of the following, this is not an exhaustive list.

- Sending abuse using instant messaging such as text messages or What's App groups for example
- Posting hurtful messages, photographs, personal comments, sexual comments and/or verbal abuse on social networking sites such as Facebook/Twitter
- Creating fake 'friends' or a 'profile' on social networking sites and encouraging a victim to enter a relationship and send messages which are then made public, shared to a wider audience and abuse then received in response.

Young people need to understand the potential consequences of putting personal information about themselves on-line and how this may be used by person/persons unknown to manipulate them into contacting them, encouraging them into private conversations or arranging to meet them without the young person knowing their real identity.

Young people are encouraged to report cyber bullying if they think this is happening to them and staff will treat this as an E-safety incident, take the appropriate action and offer the necessary support to the young person to resolve the situation. This may include reporting the incident to relevant external agencies, monitoring bodies and/or the Police

If any young person is accessing the Owlswick shared computers they are observed by a member of staff who sits in the room with the group in both home and school. All accessed websites are monitored using parental software controls and there are further controls in place to prevent access to a number of sites which contain adult content for example. All individual lap tops/mobile devices are regularly checked by staff members. If necessary external agencies including the police and child safeguarding teams will be contacted to report incidents or to seek advice. Please see the Internet Safety and Social Media policies for further guidance.

- **Owlswick Anti-Bullying Policy – School Specific Section**

The aim of anti-bullying policy is to ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; Owlswick School operates a zero tolerance approach to bullying. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will pupils be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at school.

The definition of bullying is defined as above as well as how pupils may respond to being bullied and any behaviours they may display.

All of the education team must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly against it in accordance with school policy.

The content of the above policy and specific sections within it are adopted by the school as part of its anti-bullying practice and the school operates a 'telling' policy.

Statutory duty of schools

Head Teachers have a legal duty under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and Keeping Children Safe in Education, statutory guidance 2016 to draw up procedures to prevent bullying among pupils and to bring these procedures to the attention of staff, pupils and parent and carers.

Implementation of the policy to deal with bullying

The following steps will be taken by Owlswick School when dealing with incidents of bullying:

If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached by the young person. A clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher will interview all concerned, record the incident and take the necessary action to resolve

and report. Care managers and staff will be kept informed about action taken to deal with the incident. Records of bullying incidents will be kept and monitored regularly by the Head Teacher in order to track patterns and trends in bullying incidents and behaviours.

Young People

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a teacher or other member of the care or education staff of their choice.
- Reassurance the first instance that the incident/incidents are being taken seriously and are being swiftly dealt with.
- A written communication from school to home to inform the care staff/parents and carers that an incident has taken place.
- Being offered continuous support and 1 to 1 time with a member of staff to talk through the issues and how they have impacted on the individual.
- Seeing a copy of the internal report about the incident.
- Being offered counselling time with an external professional if required.
- A visit from independent advocate can be requested.

Pupils who have bullied will be supported by:

- Discussion about what has happened.
- Discovering why the pupil became involved.
- Thinking about the effects on the other person and discussing how they can change their behaviours and the support they need to do so.
- Informing parents and carers to enable them to support their child
- Being offered counselling time with an external professional if required.
- A visit from an independent advocate can be requested.