

Information for Parents

Bullying, Discriminatory and Hate Behaviours 2013/14

Oathall Community College
Appledore Gardens
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 2AQ



Oathall is committed to be a safe and inclusive college where everybody's well-being and equality is paramount. It is only in such an environment that learning and personal development will thrive.

Behaviour that causes harm or threatens the physical or emotional well-being or equality of members of the Oathall Community, (students, staff and parents), will not be tolerated in any form wherever it originates, be it home, college or outside school. In this context any reported incident will be listened to, taken seriously, followed up and dealt with as much as is reasonably possible.

What is bullying?

We define bullying as repeated behaviour or one incident that involves an unequal balance of power, in any event there is intention to hurt, frighten, intimidate or threaten another person so impacting on their well being.

What is discriminatory or hate behaviour?

We define discriminatory behaviour as conduct that by intention or unintentionally picks on a persons personal characteristics be it their age, gender, ability/disability, race, religion, sexuality or gender identity.

Such behaviour can become a hate crime when there is a deliberate attempt to cause upset or alarm.

Behaviour becomes discriminatory or hateful if it is perceived to be so by the victim or another person.

Victims

- can expect staff to listen sympathetically and privately
- can expect to be involved in discussions about solving the problem and particularly if they would like to have a restorative meeting
- can expect to have the matter followed up and dealt with
- can expect support and protection until the problem is solved

Perpetrators and Bystanders

- can expect to have the matter followed up with consequences for them
- will be helped to understand and change their attitude and behaviour
- can expect their parents to be informed and involved
- will be asked to take part in a restorative meeting with their victim(s)
- should understand it is for victims and adults to decide if the police need to be involved. (*Causing alarm, harassment and distress through bullying or hate behaviour, is an offence in Law*)

Behaviour Policy

Parents should be aware that Oathall, where appropriate, will act within its Behaviour Policy to impose disciplinary penalties to regulate bullying conduct of students away from school, even if the conduct originates from home. (*National Government Guidance September 2007*). This would be particularly pertinent in cases of cyber bullying,

Parents should also be aware that permanent exclusion from the college is a possible outcome for students who persistently bully or present hate behaviour.

As a parent if you see your child is:

- withdrawing more into themselves
- feigning illness and not wishing to come to college
- losing their confidence
- less motivated than before

you should talk to someone at Oathall

We advise you to contact one of our Student Services Assistants as follows:

for Year 7	for Years 8 and 11	for Years 9 and 10
Mrs J Saltmarsh	Mrs J Newnham	Mrs J Geer

Our Student Services team are trained and in a good position to deal quickly with your concerns and in any event will liaise with your son's/ daughter's group tutor or Year leader as appropriate.

Oathall staff make a pledge to make contact as soon as reasonably possible of a reported incident, with further subsequent communication taking place. Parents are encouraged to let the college know of further difficulties and for all parties to maintain an open dialogue in the proceeding weeks.

Involving the police?

Parents should feel relaxed about doing this. Nevertheless it is advisable to discuss steps with us first as many issues can be dealt with in college and can involve our Police Community Liaison Officer PC Kemp who regularly assists us.

PC Kemp can be contacted through the college -

Tel: 01444 414001 or at

Haywards Heath Police Station - Tel: 0845 6070999

If you choose to contact the police separately, we will support you in your decision. However PC Kemp asks that we point out that once it is recorded as an incident with the police, they have no choice other than to deal with it completely - even if you change your mind.

Seeking Guidance

The following organisations have a good selection of current resources and links to lots of other useful groups:

Kidscape - www.kidscape.org.uk

Anti-Bullying Alliance - www.ncb.org.uk/aba

BBC - www.bbc.co.uk/schools/bullying

Beat Bullying - www.bbcllc.com

Bullying Online - www.bullying.co.uk

Childnet - www.kidsmart.org.uk

Department for Education & Skills - www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying

Joint Action Against Homophobic Bullying - www.intercomtrust.org.uk

The Mental Health Foundation - www.mentalhealth.org.uk

Stonewall (Homophobic Bullying) - www.stonewall.org.uk

Parentline

24 hour National free phone line -

0800 800 22 22

website -

www.parentlineplus.org.uk

email support -

parentsupport@parentlineplus.org.uk

Advice for Parents

Advice for parents of children who are being bullied

- Don't ignore the problem - talk to the teachers and work together
- Encourage your child to talk to you about his/her feelings
- Try not to over-react - it might frighten your child into silence
- Ask your child if he/she has any suggestions that would help
- Find out if your child feels safe and protected
- Take any threats of suicide or other desperate pleas seriously and seek help - children sometimes go to extremes if they are miserable
- Help your child develop strategies for dealing with and reporting bullying - Kidscape has advice on www.kidscape.org.uk
- Praise your child, tell him/her how much you love and support them
- Try to sort out the bullying at the start, as constructively as possible, with the college
- Encourage your child to develop new interests which might lead to a supportive group of friends - in college and out of college

Advice for parents of children who are bullying

- calmly ask your child if he/she can explain what has happened and why
- find out if there are ways you can work together to stop his/her behaviour
- Explain that the bullying must stop - there is no compromise on this
- Explain how frightening the bullying is for the victim and encourage empathy
- Criticise the bullying behaviour but don't reject your child or label him/her as a 'bully' ('What you did was wrong' not 'You're a terrible person or a bully')
- Look for good behaviour from your child and praise it
- Tell your child you know he/she can change bullying behaviour and that your child is NOT really a bully. Be confident that your child will change
- Help your child to develop new interests and/or friends away from bullies
- Spend as much time with your child as you can, especially listening to his/her concerns. Sometimes children bully as a way of getting attention
- Make it clear that you do not accept bullying behaviour and there will be consequences such as loss of privileges, if the bullying does not stop

Be aware that unlawful cyber bullying can and has resulted in the arrest of young people and the confiscation of home computers. Oathall would not wish this to happen to anyone.

Please impress upon your child that he/she should **'think before he/she acts - and be responsible'** when online or using mobile phones.



For those parents who suspect their child is being bullied, racially or homophobically abused, they should report the matter to the college

National surveys and research undertaken at Oathall reveals that students are reluctant to tell. Students **SHOULD NOT** think that telling parents or teachers will make it worse. Our experience tells us that reporting matters is the best way of supporting your child and helps us to correct any anti-social or unpleasant behaviour.

Most reported incidents are swiftly dealt with and brought to a positive conclusion. Some issues of this nature you can appreciate are complex, involving a difficult set of circumstances to investigate and manage. Oathall makes a pledge to act professionally and fairly with all reported incidents in the interests of all parties concerned.

We are grateful to parents for their full support in helping us to investigate and conclude matters fully.

Please emphasise to your child that they should not feel embarrassed, guilty or believe the situation will get worse. Unless we know as parents and teachers what the problem is, we cannot begin to resolve the situation.

It's OK to tell and keep telling

Types of Bullying or Hate Behaviour

Physical

Pushing, kicking, hitting, taking belongings or making threats of violence

Verbal

Name calling, sarcasm, spreading harmful rumours or stories, cruel teasing

Emotional

Excluding, tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, threatening gestures

Racist, homophobic or other

Using racist or homophobic taunts, comments, gestures or graffiti

Sexual

Making or writing offensive or abusive comments, slurs or gestures

Cyber or online*

from mobile phones -

Threatening or abusive use of mobile phones by phoning, texting, taking or sending films and pictures

from computers -

Threatening or abusive cyber conduct through emails, posting comments, pictures or films, chat rooms or forums, creating websites

* Cyber bullying or Hate Behaviour

'Bystanding' - A note of caution

With cyber bullying/hate behaviour, bystanders who react to material can become perpetrators by passing on or showing to others, images or words designed to humiliate. Such conduct is seen as actively supporting such anti-social behaviour by Oathall and the police.

A Code of Conduct

- Your child should always respect others and be very careful what they say online or in texts, taking care what images they send.
- Your child should **not forward** any rude or nasty messages or pictures about someone else that they have received as they could be seen as assisting and spreading the cyber bullying/hate behaviours themselves. If in any doubt delete the material straight