



## Anti-Bullying Policy

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

### **Mission Statement: “Excellence for Everyone”**

The vision for our pupils in their time at West Oaks School is to ensure that they are taught the skills and attitudes to be able them to become as independent as they can be. We aim for them to have an enriched and stimulating curriculum to give them every opportunity to reach their full potential regardless of their gender, race, learning disability or physical disability.

### **Introduction**

West Oaks SEN Specialist School and College recognises that communication, social interaction and positive behaviour management are fundamental aspects of educating pupils with special educational needs.

Our SEN specialism in ‘Communication and Interaction’ recognises the status these are given.

The school curriculum is highly adapted to meet the needs of our pupils; those with complex and multiple learning needs (PMLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), social, emotional and mental health issues (SEMH) and autistic spectrum condition (ASC).

Our curriculum aims to enthuse, engage, stimulate and maximise every pupils’ potential. We seek to provide a curriculum within which every pupil can achieve, be safe, be healthy and make a positive contribution.

Our positive behaviour management policy is a significant element of our provision which supports success in all aspects of school life and beyond.

It is therefore evident in all that we do at West Oaks School.

### **Philosophy**

We believe that in order to learn and develop emotionally and socially, children must feel secure and nurtured in their school environment. Therefore we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe place for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and safe atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell staff and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Staff should be vigilant for signs that bullying may be taking place and prompt to respond to it.

We seek to develop good pupil/staff relationships. We provide opportunities for pupils to interact with a variety of people and contribute to a range of projects, enabling our students to develop an understanding and respect for the diversity to be found within ours and the wider community.

We aim to give equal opportunities for all pupils, in order to make personal choices and to take on responsibilities according to their own ability. We encourage all pupils to value and respect people of all races, religions and cultural backgrounds. To promote recognition that it is their differences that make them special and valued, but seek common ground and shared values. We recognise that pupils who have a greater understanding of this diversity, are less likely to engage in bullying as a result of prejudice.

We provide for all pupils to work and play together, both in daily activities and through residential placements, thereby helping to build confidence and promote collaborative learning. A base has been established at Boston Spa School for KS3/4 pupils, to provide more opportunities to develop social skills.

We aim to provide a positive atmosphere in school at all times. We give all of the pupils the opportunity to

experience success. We encourage this success to be shared by classroom and corridor displays, achievement assemblies, certificates and awards and through the whole school positive behaviour policy (see 'Positive Behaviour Policy' document). We seek to be fair and consistent in our treatment of pupils and, therefore, meet regularly as a whole staff, in bases and in curricular area groups to ensure adequate briefing.

### **Objectives of this Policy**

All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.

All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff should know that the school policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported or observed.

All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.

As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

Bullying will be responded to promptly and with sensitivity and effort will be made to ascertain the root cause of any incident.

### **What is bullying?**

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic - because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Online - all areas of internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse including peer on peer bullying
- Mobile threats by text messaging and calls
- Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities
- Trans/gender - prejudice or negative attitudes, views or beliefs about trans people/genders.
- SEND - prejudice about someone's disability

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

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. It is important to recognise that those who bully are as much in need of support as those who are bullied. Being a bully is often a signifier of distress or a cry for help. Many of our pupils may fail to recognise that their behaviour constitutes bullying and causes upset. We have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

## Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Many of our pupils are unable to communicate verbally that they are being bullied and/or are unaware of what constitutes bullying. These pupils are particularly vulnerable. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a pupil:

- 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 the bully)
- Has dinner or other monies continually 'lost'
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Comes home starving (money/lunch has been stolen)
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Give improbable excuses for any of the above
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous or jumpy when a cyber message is received

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

## Prevention

Prevention is always more effective than cure. Wherever possible we will seek to prevent bullying before it begins. Many of our pupils have limited understanding or delay in developing social and emotional communication and interaction. We will seek to model through our own behaviour, how to treat others respectfully and with kindness. We will endeavour to teach appropriate social interaction and respect, through structured PSHCE and SRE lessons and during pastoral sessions and through events such as 'Anti-bullying' week.

We will use a variety of teaching methods for helping pupils to prevent bullying, as and when appropriate, these may include:

- Writing a set of school rules
- Signing a behaviour contract
- Writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying
- Reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly
- Looking at and discussing enactments of bullying scenarios
- Making up role plays
- Having discussions about bullying and why it matters

**Procedures**

- 1. Report bullying incidents to staff
- 2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff
- 3. In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem
- 4. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted
- 5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
- 6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour

**Outcomes**

- 1. The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise or express regret. Other consequences may take place. Individual passports may be consulted to ascertain how negative behaviours should best be responded to, according to individual need an understanding. From this, appropriate sanctions should be agreed.
- 2. If possible the pupils will be reconciled
- 3. Bullies may be given support to change their behaviour, through 1:1 lessons or mentoring
- 4. After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

**Monitoring and review**

This policy has been approved by the governing body and will be reviewed every two years or in the light of new guidance from the Department for Education or Local Authority.

Signed (Principal/Head of School): .....

Signed (on behalf of the governors): ..... Date:

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