

## **Anti Bullying Policy**

### **Policy Statement**

Yorston Lodge community is based upon mutual respect, good manners and “fair play”. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption. Violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can develop his/her full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed, but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other and act according to the school’s published values.

It is a regrettable feature of the modern world that bullies can be found in many areas of life. Bullying is not confined to any particular age, nationality or job. In schools in the UK, bullying is thought to affect many thousands of pupils. This School regards bullying as particularly serious and firm action will always be taken against it.

Throughout this policy and its implementation, the School has regard to the Department of Education guidance “Preventing and Tackling Bullying – Advice for Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies” (updated October 2014), along with the “Keeping Children Safe in Education (2014) safeguarding guidelines and the provision of the Equality Act 2010 and subordinate legislation.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School’s policies on Behaviour and Discipline. The Anti Bullying Policy applies to all pupils in the school, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Yorston Lodge School prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents/Guardians have an important role in supporting the school in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and home have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. This policy is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils on request.

Bullying is wrong and damages children. It causes fear and distress for the victim and may distract him or her from school work and, in extreme cases, can lead to suicide. It often affects other children who witness the bullying. It may damage the atmosphere of a class and even the climate of a school.

Yorston Lodge School will not tolerate bullying, harassment, victimisation or discrimination. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable.

### **Aims of the Policy**

- Provide pupils with a safe and secure environment within which bullying is not ignored, condoned or tolerated.
- Produce a consistent response by the School to any bullying incidents that may take place – there are separate sections contained within this policy that outline the procedural steps taken at our School.
- To set out the measures of the School takes to prevent bullying, as well as the procedure for when allegations or incidents occur.

This policy applies in respect of all dealings between members of the School, which in the opinion of the School impact, or may impact, upon their conduct at School or upon the reputation of the School.

### **The School's Response To Bullying**

At Yorston Lodge School we always treat bullying, including allegations of bullying, very seriously as it conflicts sharply with the school's Policy on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles. Bullying can be so serious that it causes psychological damage, eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide and whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

Any behaviour which a reasonable bystander would say was calculated or intended to hurt or upset the victim is wrong and may well constitute bullying. It is no justification that the bully says or believes that the victim is not upset or hurt by the bully's actions or words. Sanctions of any kind against a pupil are the responsibility of staff and not pupils.

### **Signs of Bullying**

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to school.
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet.
- Failure to produce work or producing unusually bad work or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others.
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing or are damaged.
- Change to established habits (eg, giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary).
- Diminished levels of self-confidence.
- Frequent visits to the Medical Centre with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches
- Etc.
- Unexplained cuts and bruises.
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance.
- Choosing the company of adults.
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact.
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiencing nightmares etc.
- Talking of suicide or running away.

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers.

### **Definition of Bullying**

"Bullying may be defined as: *Behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurt another individual or group, either physically or emotionally*". Bullying is the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person by physical, verbal and emotional means. It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidating in nature.

## **Procedures For Dealing With Reported Bullying**

When bullying has been observed or reported, then the following steps should be taken

### **1 Interview the Victim**

When a member of staff finds out that bullying has happened he/she should inform the Headmistress.

The Headmistress will talk to the victim.

### **2 – Convene a meeting with the children involved**

The Headmistress arranges to meet with the group of children who have been involved. Preferably the same day.

### **3 – Explain the problem**

The Headmistress tells them about the way the victim feels, and in particular with the children, might use a poem, piece of writing or drawing to emphasise his/her distress.

### **4 – Share Responsibility**

The Headmistress does not attribute blame but states that he/she knows that the group can do something about it, something to help.

### **5 – Ask the Group for Ideas**

Each member of the group is encouraged to suggest a way in which the victims could be helped to feel happier. The Headmistress gives some positive responses but he/she does not go on to extract a promise of improved behaviour.

The Headmistress must stress that Yorston Lodge takes bullying seriously and that a record of the incident will be kept on file.

### **6 – Leave it up to them**

The Headmistress ends the meeting by handing over the responsibility to the group to solve the problem. This will be easier with the older children.

In Yorston Lodge the older children can assist by 'looking after' the victim.

The Headmistress arranges to meet with them again, individually, a week later to see how things are going. However, the Headmistress should monitor daily, the victim's participation at School.

### **7 – Written Report**

The Headmistress will write a full account of the incident.

## 8 – Follow Up

About a week later the Headmistress discusses with each child, including the victim, how things have been going.

## 9 – If Bullying Continues

If the anti-bullying approach has failed the Headmistress should arrange to meet the parent/carer of the bully(ies) and the victim, to explain the situation and encourage their involvement to prevent further occurrence.

## 10 – If all else fails

If all measures fail, the ultimate sanction to be applied, that of excluding the child (bully) from the play setting.

## **EYFS Children**

Even the youngest children are encouraged to behave towards each other with kindness and consideration. They have to learn to look after their own possessions and to respect other's possessions. We expect them to be honest, helpful and polite and to work hard and to listen to others. They should respect everyone and learn to value differences and diversity.

We explain to children why some forms of behaviour are unacceptable and hurtful to others. We rarely need to impose sanctions but sometimes we may remove a treat for hurtful behaviour. Occasionally a child may be sent to the Headmistress who will explain the inappropriateness of a particular action but such instances are rare. Parents are always informed when any sanction or reproof is needed and, in cases of repeated instances of hurtful or inappropriate behaviour, they will be invited into the school to discuss the situation with their child's teacher and the Headmistress and to agree a joint way of handling the difficulty.