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"Often, because of their disability, autistic children get bullied… They are often targets for backhanded bullying, where they are invited to play or offered friendship by those who find it funny to mislead them, wind them up, or even intentionally get them into trouble. Children with autism find it hard to know when someone is being genuine but often go along with suggestions hoping they can be accepted into a social group."
National Autistic Society & Kidscape, 'Being me', 2018

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Bullying in any form is unacceptable to the whole school community and will not be tolerated. Every school must have measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying. The Independent Schools Standards regulations 2018 provide that we are required to ensure that an effective anti-bullying strategy is drawn up and implemented. This policy sets out how we will achieve this practically.

Implementation: It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure that staff members are aware of and understand this policy and any subsequent revisions. It is appropriate that all members of the school are aware of bullying, and demonstrate awareness that it will not be tolerated in any form.

Compliance: This policy complies with all relevant regulations and other legislation as detailed in the *Compliance with Regulations & Legislation Statement*.

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations. It sets out the different ways in which it's unlawful to treat someone. A key provision is a new public sector Equality Duty, which came into force April 2011. The Public Sector Equality Duty is a duty on public authorities to consider or think about how their policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act.

The Duty has three aims. It requires public bodies (including schools) to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The Act also makes it unlawful for a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a student or potential student in relation to admissions, education, or access to any benefit, facility or service, or by excluding a student or subjecting them to any other detriment. Schools also have duties under part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 to ensure that pupils with special educational needs engage in the activities of the school together with children who do not have special educational needs.

2.0 AWARENESS: PROMOTING APPROPRIATE & GOOD BEHAVIOUR

To actively raise awareness of bullying and oppose it in all its forms it is appropriate to promote 'Good Behaviour' from all staff, learners and visitors. This is achieved through: -

- Consistent good behaviour from staff demonstrating; acceptance of peers, students and visitors and listening to their points of view; courteousness; sharing and turn taking.
- Celebrating all achievements however small, taking into account that achievements are not only academic but can be an act of kindness or good behaviour.
- Staff demonstrating mutual support and understanding.
- Zero tolerance of taunts or negative behaviours relating to race, sex and gender, sexuality and age.
- Clearly defined rules relating to the schools aims in relation to behaviour, positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviour.
- Refocusing/distraction from inappropriate behaviours. (See Policy for Positive Behaviour)

What is Bullying?

According to Tattum and Lane (1989) Bullying is;

'A wilful, conscious desire to hurt another or put him/her under stress'.

'Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies', DfE 2017 defines bullying as "behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. Early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and isn't acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating.

Cyber-bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff who has been formally authorised by the Headteacher, that staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

If an electronic device that is prohibited by the school rules has been seized and the member of staff has reasonable ground to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must give the device to the police as soon as it is reasonably material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, they can decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of school discipline. practicable. If a staff member finds material on the device that is suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, or that is a pornographic image of a child or an extreme pornographic image, should not be deleted prior to giving the device to the police."

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is a 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case Options Higford Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures must be followed.

Forms of Bullying

a) Physical e.g. hitting, kicking taking belongings.
b) Verbal e.g. verbal taunts and name calling, insulting and making offensive remarks and suggestions
c) Indirect e.g. malicious gossip, excluding from social groups, being made the subject of ridicule, for example through invention of untrue stories.

Technological advances have provided a new medium for 'virtual' or 'cyber-bullying' using email and the internet.

Specifically, bullies commonly take opportunities to distress and harm individuals through the following forms of bullying classifications, which includes bullying by race, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability. (These categories are neither exhaustive nor definitive)

Racist Bullying: The person/child is targeted for being a member of group within society. Racist bullying can consist of verbal abuse e.g. name calling, racist comments, jokes, offensive mimicry and physical attacks.

Sexual Bullying: This form of bullying can affect males and females and can include which abusive name calling, comments about appearance, obscene gestures, inappropriate and uninvited touching or suggestions.

Disability Bullying: People with a variety of disabilities can find themselves bullied because of the nature of their disability. Bullying within this category can present itself as mimicry, name calling and inappropriate joking. It is important that staff give clear messages that such behaviour will not be tolerated

Bullying and Students with Autism: As a school we need to differentiate between students' behaviours that result from, or are associated with, autism, and those that can be described as bullying. Individual learners' behaviour patterns and needs will be detailed in their Positive Behaviour Support Plan (PBSP). In order to be classified as bullying the behaviour should have the following characteristics: directed, intentional, wilful and be aimed at causing hurt or putting the person /child under stress.

Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour or communications could be a criminal offence (eg under Protection from Harassment Act 1997, Malicious Communications Act 1988, Communications Act 2003, Public Order Act 1986). If Higford staff feel that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, any person who sends an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which

is false and known or believed to be false by the sender, is guilty of an offence if their purpose in sending it was to cause distress or anxiety to the recipient.

3.0 IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH ACTUAL/ALLEGED BULLYING

General Principles for managing incidents of Bullying:

- Always act on suspected bullying, ignoring could lead to unnecessary distress and harm.
- Be objective when dealing with any evidence, don't make premature assumptions.
- Listen carefully to all accounts – try to get as full a picture as possible before making any judgement. However, delays can cause distress and can give an impression that such behaviour is acceptable. Accounts from a number of people saying the same thing does not assure accuracy.
- Adopt a problem solving approach, taking objective evidence and working towards a resolve
- Monitor and review the situation ensuring that the instance of bullying has not reoccurred.

Reporting Bullying

Suspected or actual bullying should be reported to the line manager, unless the concerns involve the line manager, using a 'Cause for Concern' form. In this case the reporting should be directed to the next appropriate person in the line management structure. Strategies for dealing informally with the bully should be identified and put into practice (see strategies below).

If there are very serious concerns or the strategies above are not successful staff can make contact with Graham Norris (Responsible Person). A formal meeting may need to take place to identify actions required.

Any discussions with staff, students, visitors or parents should be recorded and kept on file.

Approaches to Bullying

Curriculum Approaches

Issues around bullying can be highlighted and taught through a variety of planned opportunities in the school year, incorporating into the PSHE, Citizenship and Sex and Relationships curriculums, and Social Skills groups (supported by the Clinical team).

Issues that need addressing include: -

- Identifying what bullying is and the existence of the anti-bullying policy.
- Identifying the rights of a victim and what to do if bullying takes place.
- Teaching about forming and maintaining relationships.
- Why people become bullies.
- How bullying affects others.
- How to prevent bullying.

Key Strategies for counteracting bullying

The DfES document, 'Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence' outlines key strategies for counteracting bullying. A copy of this document is in the staff library in the Learning and Development Office and can be accessed on the internet. The document includes the use of:

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Group work, 'Circle-time', Circle of Friends, Befriending, Mediation by adults, Mediation by peers, Active listening and Counselling based practice.

Further sources of information can be found in 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies', DfE, 2017.

Childnet Cyber bullying: guidance
http://www.childnet.com/teachers-and-professionals/for-working-with-young-people/hot-topics/cyberbullying

Persistent Bullying

Where bullying carries on after measures and strategies have been applied without success, or it is felt that alternative approaches are needed, the education and care staff together with the support of the Clinical Team will need to meet to consider the most appropriate course of action, in line with appropriate DfE guidance.

Supporting the Victim of Bullying

It is imperative that the victim is supported throughout any instance of bullying, this may consist of: -
- Active listening
- Advice
- Assertive training
- Having a named individual for personal support

4.0 MONITORING

Monitoring after any incident of bullying should be a systematic set of routines to establish that the problem has been conquered and that possibility of reoccurrence is minimalised. To ensure this the following actions should be taken;

a) Identify a key member of staff to oversee monitoring of progression
b) Revisit the incident after a period of 2 weeks to ensure there hasn't been a reoccurrence.
c) Follow up again within half term of the original incident.
d) Ensure that both the victim and the perpetrator of the bullying are aware that monitoring and review will be conducted, thus reducing reoccurrence.
e) Ensure that documentation relating to individual incidents of bullying is kept in confidential student files until a time that is appropriate to the individual case. For example, if the bullying is an isolated case, with no reoccurrence with the same or other victim, it is acceptable to remove from the student's file prior to transition to any receiving service. However, should persistence or further incidents occur it would be appropriate to disclose the instances to any organisation assessing the student for a future placement, allowing for full and fair judgements to be made.

Regular training should be undertaken with staff to reinforce expectations and process and outline new documentation and or strategies

5.0 EVALUATION

The effectiveness of the policy to combat bullying should be evaluated on an annual basis. This evaluation should inform updates and amendments of the policy.

Consultation with staff, students, their families and Options Group Board should be carried out to fully consider any incidents, its management, the outcomes and progression for the future.

By raising awareness, everyone involved in the immediate and wider communities of the school will understand and share knowledge relating to expectations and the school's intolerance of bullying. This will in turn increase students understanding and make them more likely to feel comfortable to report incidents.

Links with other Policies

Single Equality Policy
Positive Behaviour Policy