Kings Langley School
Unlocking Potential for Life

Action on Bullying Policy

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Character Development: Commitment to Equality and Diversity

This school is founded on a set of fundamental values designed to enable all students and adults connected with our community to flourish and succeed, regardless of background or circumstances. We are determined to be open to people, places, methods and ideas—and as such, equality and diversity are at the heart of everything we do. Our continued dedication to social justice and equality of opportunity is embodied in everything we do.

We are creating an **inclusive** school community where:

- People are treated with dignity and respect
- Inequalities are challenged
- We anticipate, and respond positively to, different needs and circumstances so that everyone can achieve their potential
- We value diversity and we recognise that different people bring different perspectives, ideas, knowledge and culture, and that this difference brings great strength.
- We believe that discrimination or exclusion based on individual characteristics and circumstances, such as not wearing a face mask, age; disability; caring or dependency responsibilities; gender or gender identity; marriage and civil partnership status; political opinion; pregnancy and maternity; race, colour, caste, nationality, ethnic or national origin; religion or belief; sexual orientation; socio-economic background; trade union membership status or other distinctions, represents a waste of talent and a denial of opportunity for self-fulfilment.
- We recognise that patterns of under achievement at any level and differences in outcomes can be challenged through positive intervention activities designed to bridge gaps.
- We respect the rights of individuals, including the right to hold different views and beliefs. We will not allow these differences to be manifested in a way that is hostile or degrading to others.
- We expect commitment and involvement from all our staff, students, partners and providers of goods and services in working towards the achievement of our vision.

Rationale

This policy exists to promote a climate which enables all students to flourish, regardless of ability or special needs, and supports our desired outcomes of developing "strong character".

The aim of the Action on 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; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Bullying is repeated behaviour, whether intentional or not, which makes other people feel uncomfortable or threatened, and against which they find it difficult to defend themselves.

Bullying can take many forms, but the main types are:

- Physical – hitting, kicking, taking or damaging someone's property.
- Verbal – name-calling, mocking, making offensive remarks.
- Indirect – spreading rumours about someone, exclusion from social group, sending malicious emails or text messages on mobile phones.
- Excluding or insulting others because of individual characteristics such as unconventionality, ethnic origin, nationality, colour, sexual orientation or disability.

Bullying and prejudicial behaviour can happen anywhere, and all staff are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'. We should be aware of, and respond appropriately to all reports and concerns, including those outside the school or online. We must be aware of the importance of:

- Making clear that there is a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and prejudicial behaviours and it is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated and it should never be passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "Kids being kids".

- Challenging physical behaviour (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them; and

- Not recognising, acknowledging or understanding the scale of harassment and abuse and/or downplaying some behaviours related to abuse as it can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, an unsafe environment and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it; and

- Understanding that all of the above can be driven by wider societal factors beyond the school and college, such as everyday sexist, racist and other stereotypes and everyday prejudicial language. This is why a whole school approach (especially preventative education) is important.

The guidance applies to all staff, volunteers and governors in the school and is consistent with the procedures of the 3 safeguarding partners. It also applies to extended school and off-site activities.

We aim to create a supportive environment in school and minimise the risk of peer-on-peer abuse by doing the following:

Recognising the importance of taking proactive action to minimise the risk of peer-on-peer abuse, and creating a supportive environment where victims feel confident in reporting incidents.

To achieve this, we will:

- Challenge any form of derogatory or prejudicial language or inappropriate behaviour between peers, including requesting or sending images

- Be vigilant to issues that particularly affect different groups – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female pupils, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys

- Ensure our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent

- Ensure pupils are able to easily and confidently report abuse using our reporting systems

- Ensure staff reassure victims that they are being taken seriously

- Ensure staff are trained to understand:

    a. How to recognise the indicators and signs of peer-on-peer abuse, and know how to identify it and respond to reports

    b. That even if there are no reports of peer-on-peer abuse in school, it does not mean it is not happening – staff should maintain an attitude of "it could happen here"

    c. That if they have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told, and that victims may not always make a direct report. For example:

        - **Students** can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to
        - A friend may make a report
        - A member of staff may overhear a conversation
        - A student's behaviour might indicate that something is wrong

    d) That certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, gender identification, religion, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation

    e) That a student harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy

    f) The important role they have to play in preventing peer-on-peer abuse and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it

    g) That they should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they have any concerns

Equality statement

We recognised that some children have an increased risk of abuse, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

We give special consideration to children who:

- Have special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities or health conditions
- Are young carers

- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- Have English as an additional language
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- Are looked after or previously looked after
- Are missing from education
- Whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated

Purpose

1. To clarify for staff, students, and parents/carers the fact that bullying, in all its forms, is always unacceptable.
2. For every student to feel safe in school.
3. For every student to be given the necessary protection and support if he/she is feeling vulnerable.
4. To foster an environment within which individuals can flourish without fear.
5. To inform staff, students and parents of prevention strategies which are in place in school. For example, Learning Mentors, Assemblies, outside agencies, publicity campaigns.
6. To highlight the range of focuses of bullying in order to encourage reporting across the range of issues. For example, appearance/size, religion and belief, gender, sexualised, homophobic, racist, learning difficulty and disability, ability, class/socio-economic bullying.

Guidelines

Bullying should be addressed through the PHSE/Citizenship programme and in school assemblies and tutor times. Student surveys will also be carried out at various times of the year on bullying and the data will be carefully examined by the Pastoral Team.

Identifying the signs

Staff should be aware of the following changes in a student's behaviour that could indicate he/she is being bullied:

- Becoming withdrawn or nervous
- A distinct change in demeanour, behaviour or attitude
- Reduced work rate and the production of poor quality work
- Being tearful or clingy towards adults
- Truancy
- Having his/her possessions "go missing"

- Unwillingness to go to school
- Feigning illness
- Refusing to say what is wrong.

Encouraging the student to tell

If a member of staff suspects that a student is being bullied, they should talk to him/her privately.

- Students should be encouraged to talk and reassured that they will be listened to and taken seriously.
- Students should be reassured that appropriate action will be taken to protect them and that the information they provide will not lay them open to reprisals from the bully/bullies.
- Students should be assured that action could be taken to ensure that the bullying stops.

Procedures

- Students who have bullied or harassed others will be helped to understand why their behaviour is wrong and that there is a need for change.
- All students involved should record the facts of the bullying or harassment on an incident report form and all incidents will then be recorded on a purple form by staff.
- The subject teacher or form tutor should resolve minor incidents. They may only require an apology with an assurance that the behaviour will not be repeated.
- More serious incidents must be referred to the Pastoral Leader and/or the appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- The bully should be interviewed privately and made aware of his/her behaviour. An appropriate sanction will be given.
- Every effort should be made to resolve the matter between both parties, where this is realistic.
- Where it is not possible to resolve matters between parties, parents/carers should normally be informed that the matter is being dealt with and their support enlisted, if appropriate.
- For all bullying or harassment incidents a purple form must be completed and given to the Pastoral Leader.
- The situation should be carefully monitored and if bullying or harassment persists, stronger sanctions should follow.
- In severe cases, the Headteacher and external agencies, as appropriate, will need to be involved.
- Exclusion or suspension is an inevitable consequence for any student who bullies or harasses and fails to respond to support.
- In recent years, the school has become increasingly frustrated with incidents we are having to deal with as a result of abuse and intimidation via the internet.

Usually, such "cyber bullying" occurs via the use of mobile phones or more commonly via social networking sites. We remain frustrated that we are frequently left to deal with the aftermath of such incidents when we have no method of controlling access to such sites out of school hours. We believe that it is the responsibility of all parents to ensure that they monitor carefully what their children are doing on the internet and take all necessary preventative and remedial actions to ensure that their children are both safe and not involved in any misuse of social networking sites. Cyberbullying incidents outside of school that affect relationships inside school are matters that the school may intervene to address.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour, Child Protection and the Mobile Phone Policies.