



# OLD BUCKENHAM HALL

*A leading co-educational preparatory school for children aged 2-13 years*

## Anti-Bullying Policy

OBHPO3

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## **Statement of intent**

The aim of the anti-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. We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. If bullying does occur, all pupils should feel able to report and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

We do not tolerate unkind behaviour at Old Buckenham Hall. We believe that all members of our community can contribute towards making the School a safe and happy environment where bullying will have no place and where bullying will be challenged and eliminated. We actively encourage a culture of upstanding.

## **Why Do We Need an Anti-Bullying Policy?**

Persistent bullying can severely inhibit a child's ability to learn effectively. The negative effects of bullying can have an impact on a person for their entire life. We wish to promote a secure and happy environment free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behaviour. Therefore, this policy promotes practices within the School to reinforce our ethos of love and compassion, and to remove or discourage practices that negate them.

The school also recognises that boarding pupils who are being bullied (offline), unlike day pupils, cannot escape their bullies for long periods of time as they are not going home as often.

## **Scope of This Policy**

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the School's Behaviour Policy and Acceptable Use Agreement.

If the actions of a pupil online or outside of school potentially threaten the wellbeing or safety of any members of the School community, then the terms of this policy may become relevant.

Where the welfare, safety or continuing education of a pupil requires it we may investigate an event (or alleged event) outside school. Discretion will be exercised in determine what enquires are appropriate and proportionate. We may determine that it is appropriate to take action following an investigation.

## What Is Bullying?

Bullying occurs when an individual or a group uses strength or power to harm (physically or mentally) by intimidating, excluding or demeaning others. Bullying can be emotional, physical, racist, homophobic, bi-phobic, transphobic, sexist / misogynistic, ableist, targeting a person's religion or beliefs, verbal, written, face to face or online. It is usually persistent and often covert, and is a conscious attempt to hurt, isolate, threaten or frighten an individual.

Bullying can take many forms including:

- Physical bullying which can include kicking, hitting, pushing, and taking away belongings.
- Verbal bullying which includes name calling, mocking, and making offensive comments.
- Emotional bullying which includes isolating an individual or spreading rumours about them.
- Bullying where technology is used to hurt an individual - for instance messaging or posting messages / images on the internet or any form of social media.
- Social exclusion is bullying when a child feels alone or left out because of the manipulation of their peer relationships and social status. (Social exclusion is not bullying when people make new friends and distance themselves from old friends.)
- Racist bullying occurs when bullying is motivated by racial, ethnic or cultural prejudice.
- Sexual bullying is where someone makes unwanted physical contact or makes sexually abusive comments.
- Homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans people.
- Ableist bullying occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against people with any form of disability.
- Sexist bullying occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against someone because of their gender.

We should be aware that some forms of bullying should be reported to the police, for example:

- Hate crimes
- Sexual assault
- Harassment / intimidation
- Theft
- Physical assault

## **Anti-Bullying Procedures**

We believe that bullying in any form is unacceptable. It will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly.

### Staff Responsibilities

- To contribute to an environment where bullying in any form is confronted.
- To be familiar with the definition of bullying and the School's Anti-Bullying Policy and undertake training as appropriate.
- To deliver pastoral curricular material as appropriate to support the education of pupils regarding bullying.
- To be mindful of interactions between pupils in classrooms and around the site and to challenge prejudicial attitudes or bullying behaviours.
- To be observant to changes in behaviour of individuals and to report concerns to pastoral staff.
- To listen to all parties involved in incidents when investigating.
- To investigate incidents promptly and as fully as possible.
- To take appropriate action or to refer to pastoral staff as appropriate.
- To record in the appropriate students' files and in incident logs as appropriate.
- To work with parents / guardians of the victim and bully.
- To promote the use of a range of learning opportunities which challenge bullying behaviour.
- To promote the use of sanctions / interventions which are least intrusive and most effective.

### Anti-Bullying Strategies

- Ensure all members of the community are aware of our stance regarding anti-bullying.
- Regular anti-bullying / upstanding / empathy resources and material to be shared in assemblies / tutor time / tutorials / PSHE etc.
- A duty rota for staff so they patrol key areas before school, break, lunchtime, after school, and in the boarding houses during the evenings, overnight and pre-registration.
- Pupil concerns discussed at daily staff briefings.
- Use opportunities for pupil voice to research student views on how safe they feel in school and to support the review of policy and process.
- Year 8 Prefects and Peers Supporters involved in a range of opportunities to promote an anti-bullying culture.
- Communication channels open for reporting bullying.
- Strong teacher-pupil relationships so pupils feel comfortable reporting concerns.
- Inset opportunities for staff are provided as necessary.

## **Responding to Bullying**

Pupils are encouraged to speak with a member of staff they trust. All concerns raised will be taken seriously. Any member of the community with concerns about bullying behaviour is encouraged to communicate with relevant pastoral staff. Staff involved will seek to ensure that an investigation is carried out sensitively.

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Being offered the immediate opportunity to discuss their experience with a member of staff of their choice.
- Being reassured that they have done the right thing in seeking support.
- Being offered ongoing support.
- Having opportunities to rebuild their self-esteem and confidence.

Pupils who have bullied will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened.
- Having the opportunity to explore why they became involved in bullying behaviour.
- Understanding the impact and consequences of their actions on others and on themselves.
- Talking things through with their parents / guardians.

## **Investigating Bullying**

Appropriate pastoral staff will investigate as promptly as possible and will keep a record of the views of different parties involved. This will likely include, but not be limited to, the Deputy Head (Pastoral), Form Tutors and, if relevant, the Head of Boarding, Head of Pre-Prep or Head of Middle School. It is important to hear the voice of the victim, alleged bully and any witnesses / bystanders, to best understand the dynamics of the situation. The victim / witnesses should be reassured that they have done the right thing in speaking up. Accurate records will be kept and entered into CPOMS regarding statements taken from pupils and any conversations held with parents / guardians.

## **Intervention**

There are three levels of bullying behaviour (if appropriate, allegations may proceed directly to Level 2 or 3, dependent on circumstance).

### Level 1

Context: low level or a first event – this could be name calling for example.

Response: the focus will be on education and restorative practice. Staff will be looking to ensure that an individual understands the impact of their actions, can take responsibility, and can plan and take steps to restore their relationship with the victim. Parents / Guardians are likely to be informed.

Details of the event will be recorded on individual pupil files. Monitoring of pupils involved will continue in an ongoing manner following an event.

### Level 2

Context: repeated or persistent bullying behaviour (following on from Level 1). This could also be a more serious isolated incident or undiscovered and prolonged low- level behaviour.

Response: sanctions will be applied in a proportionate manner and on a case-by- case basis. Staff will expect that a pupil responsible for bullying behaviour is able to reflect on their actions and understand the consequences of these.

If the victim is comfortable, restorative steps should be taken between pupils. Parents / Guardians will be involved.

The severity of consequences of repeated future behaviour will be made clear.

Details of the event will be recorded on individual pupil files. Monitoring of pupils involved will continue in an ongoing manner following an event.

### Level 3

Context: a pupil fails to respond to prior interventions, their bullying behaviour is replicated with the same, or another victim or victims.

Response: any stage 3 allegation will be dealt with according to the Behaviour Policy. A pupil's place at our school may be at risk.

### **Parents / Guardians and Bullying**

All parents and guardians of Old Buckenham Hall pupils will be expected to recognise and abstain from any bullying behaviour towards staff, or any other member of the Old Buckenham Hall community.

In addition, we expect that parents and guardians will reinforce and espouse the School's aims and ethos and insist upon the value of good behaviour, and a rejection of bullying, to their children. Parents and

guardians are encouraged to report instances of bullying to the School that they may witness as bystanders.

Staff will inform the Headmaster if they are subject to bullying behaviour that they regard as unacceptable and that may constitute a form of bullying. The matter will be investigated by appropriate staff nominated to do so to determine if:

- parents / guardians have engaged in bullying behaviour
- parents / guardians have acted unreasonably
- the behaviour of parents / guardians has adversely affected, or is likely to affect, their child's progress at school
- the behaviour of parents/guardians has impacted on the well-being of a member of staff
- the behaviour of parents/guardians has, or may have, brought the School into disrepute.

At the conclusion of the investigation, it is most likely that restorative actions will be determined appropriate. In more serious and intractable cases, where the relationship between school and home has irretrievably broken down, the Headmaster may include consideration of the permanent exclusion (or voluntary withdrawal) of the pupil from Old Buckenham Hall.