

## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

### **2024/2025**

Everyone at The Observatory School has the right to feel welcome, safe and happy.

#### **Introduction**

This policy is intended to state the school's approach to Anti-bullying specifically and should be read in conjunction with the following policies; Relationships Policy, PSHE policy, Behavioural Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, SEND/ Inclusion policy and the Equal Opportunities policy.

This policy has been developed through a variety of consultation methods involving children, parents/carers and staff. All views were taken into account when developing this policy. A reference copy is stored in the school office and is available on the school website. A full copy or summary will be made available to parents/carers, staff, governors and representatives of partner agencies upon request.

At The Observatory School we are committed to ensuring that all pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Our school is a place where every person has the right to be themselves, to feel safe, to be included and to learn. Everyone at our school is equal and should treat each other with respect and kindness. Bullying is anti-social behaviour that affects everyone.

We take all incidents of bullying seriously and feel that everyone has the right to be treated with respect. We also have a responsibility to support those involved in bullying to understand the consequences of their actions for themselves and others and to explore alternative ways of behaving. We acknowledge that bullying does happen from time to time and if bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell someone and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening at The Observatory School is expected to tell a staff member.

#### **The Observatory School will ensure that:**

- All pupils have a clear view of what a good behaviour in relationships look like

- A clear, consistent approach to dealing with all forms of bullying is adopted and regularly monitored
- Anti-bullying initiatives are an integral part of the assembly and PSHE programmes for all years
- Advice to parents and pupils is provided
- Appropriate in-service training for all staff is provided
- A physical environment that is closely supervised and where pupils feel safe and secure
- Active support of parents and outside agencies.
- Pupils' and parents' concerns are listened to

**Staff at The Observatory School will ensure that:**

- Incidents are promptly dealt with
- Restorative Practice approaches will be used where relevant (staff are to complete the RP request form)
- Incidents are verbally reported (to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher), before the end of the day
- Incidents are recorded on MyConcern and Sleuth

**Prevention of bullying**

In order to avoid bullying the school aims to establish a positive approach to behaviour.

Strategies may include:

- Reminders of the School Pledge
- Setting rules, goals/targets
- Raising self esteem
- The school values – rewarding kindness
- Helping pupils to recognise triggers and to avoid them
- Helping pupils to admit and acknowledge responsibility and to apologise
- Teaching social skills e.g. in class, in the playground, in the dinner hall
- Planned activities e.g. team building, PSHE, assemblies, social time
- Concentrating on behaviour rather than the child. (e.g. not labelling pupils as 'naughty' or 'a bully' or 'scape-goat')
- Encouraging the feeling of 'belonging' to a community and use peer group pressure to actively discourage bullying

- Celebrating all achievements
- Careful consideration of how adults in school talk to pupils
- Adults modelling positive interactions around school
- Keeping up to date through professional training
- Work with parents, if necessary, to develop their understanding of bullying

The school works hard to ensure that all pupils know the difference between bullying and “falling out”. Form Teachers, Learning Mentors and Teaching Assistants work with pupils who may encounter difficulties linked to friendships. This involves talking to pupils, running peer support groups and supporting peer mediation.

### **Definition of bullying**

‘Behaviour by an individual or group usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally’.

Bullying can manifest itself in any of the following ways:

- Physical bullying (e.g. hitting, pushing, unwanted physical contact)
- Direct verbal bullying – e.g. name calling or sarcasm, including comments related to race
- Using racist or sexually abusive comments
- Derogatory and discriminatory language
- Relational bullying
- Bullying related to special educational needs or disabilities
- Taunting
- Mocking
- Making offensive comments
- Taking or damaging belongings
- Cyber bullying – the use of information and communication technology, particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else
- Producing offensive graffiti
- Gossiping and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours
- Excluding people from groups
- Sexist/transgender/homophobic bullying
- Bullying related to race, religion or culture

- Bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances

Although bullying can occur between individuals it can often take place in the presence (virtually or physically) of others who become the 'bystanders' or 'accessories'.

There is no hierarchy of bullying – all forms should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately.

### **Signs to look for:**

Staff and parents/carers are in a position to observe changes in the behaviour of a pupil, which may indicate that they are being subjected to bullying. The following is a list of signs to look out for:

- Damage to or losses of items of clothing, property or schoolwork. If this occurs frequently, then start to ask questions
- Are there signs of physical injuries, e.g. cuts or bruises?
- Behaviour or learning behaviour is perceived to have changed in a negative way
- Playing truant or a reluctance to travel to and/or attend The Observatory School
- Being aware of pupils who are reluctant to attend learning sessions
- An unhappy pupil who may not wish to go out at breaks or lunchtimes
- A pupil who threatens to self-harm

Staff will listen to pupils when they are willing to talk about bullying. We will be sensitive to a pupil's need for privacy and respect, encouraging the ethos of 'it is safe to tell'. All staff will actively support the Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Policies using Restorative Practice approaches wherever possible.

### **Implications for Students**

A pupil who believes that they have been subject to harassment should, in the first instance, state that the behaviour is unwelcome, unwanted, unacceptable and/or offensive and ask the individual(s) concerned to stop.

Our procedures encourage pupils to report incidents of bullying. Pupils will recognise each other's rights and responsibilities to ensure the following:

- To be physically safe
- To keep own possessions
- To be free of insult, derogatory terms and teasing
- To be able to associate with other young people for companionship and friendship

The School Pledge at The Observatory School encourages pupils to ensure the physical safety of others, the security of everyone's personal possessions and freedom from hurt by name calling, teasing and the inclusion of all pupils in social and learning activities. Restorative Practice approaches will be used wherever possible.

### **Recording and reporting bullying**

Bullying may be reported by a pupil, a parent/carer, or a member of staff. In some cases, a pupil may admit to a member of staff that they have bullied another child. All reported incidents of bullying must be investigated and taken seriously by staff members; in the first instance this is by the pupil's form teacher. The following action should result:

- Discussion takes place in a quiet, safe place without distraction, as soon as possible. It is preferable that the teacher who receives the initial report is the one who pursues it in the first instance. If this is not possible then it is the pupils form teacher or TA
- No pre-judgement should be made. It is important to listen. The teacher should be as objective as possible to ensure fairness
- Establish the whole story, including, other pupils who may have been involved. To ensure accuracy, brief notes should be taken at the time using the language/words used by the pupil
- Talk to all pupils who are involved, including any bystanders or colluders who joined in but did not initiate any bullying.
- Avoid allocation of blame but discuss responsibility and actions needed.
- Tell victim what is happening throughout the process.
- Establish the long-term needs of all the pupils involved in an incident and put in place positive strategies. The Learning Mentors may

become involved and will support victims of bullying and those who take part in bullying.

- Inform parents of all children involved of actions taken and ask for support. Offer further information for dealing with bullying
- Seek professional advice (if appropriate).
- Record the incident on Sleuth and MyConcern and monitor the situation to ensure successful outcome for all those involved. This will be the responsibility of the staff member reporting the incident and all staff should ensure when the incident is recorded the Head teacher and Deputy Head teacher are notified.
- The Head teacher and other appropriate members of staff will monitor the situation closely afterwards. Records of bullying are kept during the pupil's stay at the school.
- The school will act firmly and promptly where bullying is identified. The range of sanctions may include; discussions with parents and pupils, referral to senior staff, withdrawal of favoured activities, or exclusion.
- In extreme cases the Head Teacher may consider exclusion from school as a sanction. The Head teacher may contact external services,
- If the bullying includes racist or homophobic abuse the Head teacher must be informed and the incident will be recorded.
- The Governors will receive regular updates from the Head teacher through the Head teacher's report to governors/trustees once a term. The Chair of governors will be informed of any serious incidents of bullying.

## **Involving Parents**

Parents need clear information about the school's anti-bullying policy and procedures and how incidents will be dealt with. A copy of this policy, and the Behaviour Management Policy, may be sent to those involved so that no confusion occurs as to the process.

Parents have a crucial role to play by discouraging their children from using bullying type behaviour and also by being vigilant for the signs of bullying. Parents should inform the school whenever they have concerns about their child's well-being and should contact the Class Teacher, in the first instance, then the Head Teacher if their concerns are ongoing.

Following an incident of bullying parents and staff should agree a timetable so that adequate time is given to the school to investigate and deal with any problems effectively and so that parents know by when they can expect a response.

It is so important that the facts are established first, allowing a considered judgement to be made.

Parents of the alleged bully/bullies need to be involved in positive ways to help resolve the problems. Parents, of either the bully, or the victim, will also be reassured that if they continue to have concerns, or if the problems re-occur, then they can return to the school and discuss their concerns with staff.

### **Monitoring and review**

The anti-bullying policy is the governors' responsibility and they review its effectiveness annually. They do this by examining the school's bullying incident log where incidents are recorded and by discussion with the Head teacher.

Governors analyse information for patterns of pupils, places or groups. They look for racist bullying or bullying directed at children with disabilities or special educational needs. The information reviewed by governors does not include children's names.