# PREVENTING BULLYING POLICY

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A family of Schools

# PREVENTING BULLYING POLICY

Everyone at Lotus School has the right to feel welcome, secure and happy. Only if this is the case will all members of the school community thrive, and be able to achieve their maximum potential. Bullying of any sort prevents this from happening, and undermines the quality of life within the whole school.

As a school, we are firmly committed to the principles that there is no place for bullying at

Lotus, and that it is everyone's responsibility to prevent it from happening, and to stop it, if and when it does.

## AIMS

- To make the school a safe, secure and happy environment, in which each individual can flourish, and live and work without fear
- To create a climate in the school, whereby students who are being bullied, or others who know about a bullying situation, know how to report an incident, and feel they will be listened to seriously; and that the action taken will be appropriate and in line with this policy
- To develop an anti-bullying culture in the school community, where it is not acceptable to either bully another person, or to be a bystander to bullying

This policy is closely linked to the 'Student Behaviour Policy' and the 'Safeguarding Policy'.

## BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

We believe that a successful school environment is one in which there are strong interpersonal relationships between all the members of the school community. We aim to create an emotionally mature community with high quality relationships at its core. In order to support the development of this, all students have a daily opportunity to meet with their Keyworker to discuss any concerns or issues. Students are also actively encouraged to explore key issues regarding tolerance and acceptance, develop listening skills and emotional intelligence throughout the Curriculum, but particularly during PHSE, Intervention activities and through the Community projects.

## RESTORATIVE APPROACHES (REPAIRS)

When conflict develops, including bullying, we will endeavour to try and address this through a restorative approach, which aims to put right whatever harm has been caused, enabling relationships to be mended, and possibly improved, and all those involved to be able to move forward successfully. Repairs form a key part of our Behaviour policy, and support the students in taking ownership of their own behaviour.

This is not a 'soft' option. It requires all those involved to be honest about what has taken place, and also to take responsibility for their actions and for the impact of their actions.

## SANCTIONS

It may be necessary to use this approach in conjunction with appropriate sanctions, in order to meet the school's need to assure the safety of everyone within the school community, or to address ongoing issues, in which a previous restorative approach has not been fully successful. More serious consequences such as time spent learning outside of the main classroom environment and formal exclusion will be implemented alongside a repair meeting, if the incident is one that is on-going or has been deemed to have seriously put another student's physical or mental health at risk.

## DEFINITIONS

"Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, which intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally." Preventing and Tackling Bullying (DfE, Oct 2014).

Note: Whilst accepting this definition, it is also noted that bullying may, on occasions, take the form of an isolated incident in which there is an imbalance of power.

Bullying can take many forms:

- **Physical:** pushing, kicking, hitting, punching and any other forms of violence, including threats of violence.
- **Direct Verbal:** name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing.
- **Social (indirect verbal comments):** unkind comments made in the proximity of the victim.
- **Cyber-bullying:** abusive texts, e-mails, snapchats, or any other inappropriate use of social networking sites, including unkind communication or creation of webpages, sexting.
- **Emotional:** excluding, tormenting (i.e. hiding books, threatening gestures), ridicule, humiliation.
- **Racism/Faith related:** racial taunts, words, phrases and/or stereotyping, which includes reference to or signify a dislike or demeaning outlook on somebodies skin colour, hair type, religion, culture or faith.
- **Sexual:** unwanted physical contact, abusive comments, sexual gestures, sexting
- **SEND related:** SEN and disability targeted bullying.
- **Homophobic:** ridicule, name calling, unkind comments, humiliation which directly links to a young person's actual or perceived sexual orientation.
- **Gender:** Ridicule, victimisation, humiliation or/and harassment which directly links to somebody's gender including transgender and cisgender students and sexism.

The school works hard to ensure that all students know the difference between bullying and simply 'falling out'.

## VULNERABLE STUDENTS

The following definition of vulnerable students comes from the Department for Education:

*Bullying can happen to all children and young people and it can affect their social, mental and emotional health. School staff should support all students who are bullied. This means being aware of the effect that any form of bullying can have and being especially alert to where it may have a severe impact. The department has produced advice on preventing and tackling bullying which includes information on what constitutes bullying.*

*Some students are particularly vulnerable to bullying and may be severely affected by it, such as those with special educational needs or disabilities. Others may be particularly vulnerable because they are going through a personal or family crisis, or suffering from a health problem. Children in care that are frequently on the move may be vulnerable because they are always the newcomer. Those with caring responsibilities may be vulnerable because they are socially isolated. This list is not exhaustive and indeed any young people that are perceived to be different are also vulnerable. There is evidence to suggest that students that are badly bullied in school are more likely to be bullied out of school, for instance either on their way to, or from school, or through cyberbullying. These vulnerable young people may also be at risk of turning to social media for consolation or retaliate by resorting to cyberbullying themselves.*

## STRATEGIES

### Preventing Bullying

We aim to create a supportive, anti-bullying climate, through raising student awareness of bullying as an issue, ensuring students understand that preventing and stopping bullying is everyone's responsibility, and creating a 'telling' environment within the school, in which bullying is always reported.

Promoting an anti-bullying culture:

- Providing bespoke Social Skills and Dealing with Feelings Interventions for students who need help in these areas.
- Promoting positive social skills during group activities such as P.E and Community based projects.
- Curriculum approaches (e.g. PSHE sessions, ICT, Drama, English).
- Posters and display boards to promote the anti-bullying agenda, alongside other publicity.
- Anti-Bullying Week activities including activities during Creative Curriculum time and PHSE.
- Training staff and students on Restorative Justice.
- Encouraging students to speak to their Key worker or record any worries in the 'Worry box' located outside of the Family Support worker office.

### Raising self-esteem

- Celebration of successes and achievements in class and through contact with parents/carers.
- Development of personal and social skills through PSHE, Community Projects and Theraputic Interventions.
- Encouragement and support from all adults within the school.

- Referral to other school staff as appropriate.
- Building relationships, and emotional intelligence and maturity which underpins all aspects of teaching.
- Providing opportunities for students to mix and build effective working relationships during lessons and also at the after school clubs.
- Using restorative conversations between students who have fallen out, or have friendship issues.

## Effective management and supervision of students

- Ensuring appropriate supervision of the site before and after school, and during break and lunch.
- Appropriate training for staff, to include:
  - Child Protection.
  - Anti-bullying strategies (general).
  - Anti-bullying procedures (specific).
- Training for staff in Restorative Approaches.

## Active involvement of parents

- Communication with school staff.
- Calendared meetings (e.g. parents' evenings, and parent information evenings).
- Home – School Agreement.
- Restorative meetings, as appropriate.

# REPORTING BULLYING

It is important that students who are being bullied, or others who know about a bullying situation, report such situations promptly to a member of staff. Being a bystander is not acceptable; students who see bullying taking place have a responsibility to report this.

Students can speak directly to their key worker or any member of staff who is available. They can also report incidents anonymously via the worry box outside the Family Support worker office

Parents/Carers can, of course, telephone, e-mail or write to the school to raise any concerns they may have.

Staff should be aware that students who are being bullied may not report it. However, there may be changes in their behaviour, which indicate that a student is a victim of bullying, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school. Any concerns of this nature should be reported to the class teacher and the student's keyworker.

## Reporting Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can take place in and out of the school. It is a different form of bullying, in that it can happen at any time of day or night, and potentially has a greater audience.

Students have lessons in the curriculum about internet safety, acceptable use and how to keep themselves safe when using technology.

Students are encouraged to report incidents of cyberbullying.

# RESPONDING TO BULLYING

All reported incidents of bullying will be investigated and taken seriously by staff members. It is probable that the initial investigation will be carried out by the class teacher and any evidence or investigation information will be placed on CPoms.

- Communication - must be made to parents/guardians.
- Log - The incident must be logged on CPoms.
- Action - should be agreed by the class teacher and a member of SLT and carried out. Restorative meetings scheduled. Parents made aware.
- Statements - must be taken and other investigations carried out.

## Parents/Carers

- Where bullying has taken place, parents/carers of both parties will be involved at an early stage.

- Parents/carers are a very important part of the solution, and will be asked to support any strategies agreed to tackle the problem.
- Outside agencies, with relevant expertise, may be involved, as appropriate, to work with the victim and the bully/ bullies.
- The situation will be monitored by a relevant member of staff to ensure that there is no continuance of the bullying.

When dealing with incidents of bullying, the school notes that, whilst bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, there are some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – that could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from

Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986. If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed, they should seek assistance from the police.

In dealing with reports of bullying, it is important to remember that the school has a specific statutory power to discipline students for poor behaviour outside of the school premises.

## BULLYING OF SCHOOL STAFF

Just as bullying of students can never be accepted at Lotus, the bullying of staff will also not be tolerated.

If students attempt to bully staff, staff should report such incidents immediately including a written summary of concerns. The member of staff concerned should be informed of the action taken and has the right to refer the incident to the Headteacher should they feel that the matter has not been addressed to their satisfaction.

If a member of staff feels that s/he is being bullied by another member of staff, s/he should discuss the situation with the Headteacher. It may be appropriate for details of the bullying to be recorded in writing and be given to the Headteacher. Note: Any written concern regarding another member of staff constitutes a grievance and must be dealt with under formal grievance procedures. The Headteacher will inform the member of staff concerned of action taken.

If a member of staff is being bullied by a parent or visitor to the school, the incidents should be recorded in writing and given to the Headteacher. Again, the Headteacher will notify the member of staff concerned of the action taken.

If after discussion with the Headteacher, the member of staff believes that the issues are not being addressed then they can appeal in writing to the Chair of Governors.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This policy will be monitored through collation and analysis of data collected from CPOms and student voice.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about current initiatives and resources to support the anti-bullying agenda:

- BeatBullying
- The Anti-Bullying Alliance
- Childline
- NSPCC
- Young Minds
- Department for Education document October 2014: 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' and
- March 2014 'Supporting Children and Young People who are being Bullied'