Anti-Bullying and Anti-Oppression Policy	
Independent School Standards: paragraphs 10 and 34	
Policy content: ● Approach and response ● The role of families ● Listening to allegations and recording incidents	
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Links:	Safeguarding policy Community Accountability policy Complaints policy

Anti-Bullying and Anti-Oppression Policy

Aims

We take a whole-school approach to bullying, as we see it as a complex problem. We recognise that either someone being harmed, or someone who caused harm, can be risk factors for subsequent antisocial and violent behaviour that can have serious personal and social consequences and we believe that early intervention is the most productive path. We have a human need to belong and to feel significant; if this balance breaks down there is a motivation psychologically and socially to address this imbalance which are either adaptive or maladaptive. As such, both the person enacting bullying and the person harmed experience cycles of alienation (though they display different patterns of behaviour).

Introduction

Sometimes the use of the word 'bullying' by adults and young people lacks specificity and understanding. The term bullying for example may be used to describe behaviour that lacks intent to hurt or cause harm. Or a young person may say they have been bullied in a situation where both parties were unkind to each other. Whilst we of course think that such behaviour needs attention we don't classify it as bullying. We find an anti-oppression lens to be a useful tool in unpicking what bullying is.

What is bullying?

We define bullying as behaviour by an individual or group that:

- Targets and selects individuals or groups
- Is repeated over time
- Is intentional or pre-planned, hurting an individual or group either physically or emotionally
- Involves an imbalance of power between the 'offender' and the 'victim' that can manifest in several different ways – physically, emotionally (knowing what upsets someone), or by having access to the support of a group or the capacity to socially isolate.
- Is motivated by prejudice (based on race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or looked after children), or perpetuates harmful ideologies.
- Results in the threat of violence or results in isolation of the victim in person or online (cyber-bullying)

Cyber-(or online)bullying definition: the use of electronic communication, particularly mobile phones and the internet, to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or

threatening nature.

It can take a number of different forms: threats and intimidation, harassment or 'cyber-stalking' (e.g. repeatedly sending unwanted texts or instant messages), sexting (e.g sending and receiving sexually explicit messages, primarily between mobile phones) vilification/defamation, exclusion/peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorised publication of private information/images and 'trolling' (abusing the internet to provoke or offend others online). It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing the bully with another route to harass their target.

Cyber-bullying differs from other forms of bullying in several significant ways:
- by facilitating a far more extreme invasion of personal space.
- the potential for anonymity on the part of the offender. This can be extremely distressing for the victim
- the potential for the offender to play very rapidly to a larger audience so the scale and scope of cyberbullying can be greater than for other forms of bullying.
- through the knowledge that the data is in the world-wide domain, disproportionately amplifying the negative effect on the victim, even though the offender may feel their actual actions had been no worse than conventional forms of bullying
- the difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages as more people get drawn in as accessories.
- the profile of the offender and target can be different to other forms of bullying as cyberbullying can take place between peers and across generations. Teachers can be victims for example.
- many cyberbullying incidents can themselves act as evidence so it is important the victim saves the information.

What is the connection between bullying and oppression?
We define oppression as the system of mistreatment of one social identity group (e.g. trans and gender non-conforming people) to the benefit of another dominant group (e.g. cis people). There are four faces of oppression: Ideological, Institutional, Interpersonal, and Internalised.

Bullying is an interpersonal type of oppression, that can often be rooted in ideology. In these cases, while a young person who enacts bullying may not intentionally be targeting someone for an identity based reason, internalised oppression and the policing of norms are insidious ways of perpetuating oppressive ideologies.

For example bullying relating to:

- The way someone looks

- The way someone dresses

- The things someone does or doesn't own

- The way someone expresses their gender

- The way someone pronounces words or speaks

- Food someone eats or enjoys, or someone fasting

- Someone's access needs - glasses, mobility aids, asking a lot of questions in class

Can all be rooted in ideologies - such as Patriarchy and White Supremacy - which say that a white, middle class, Christian, cis-male, heterosexual, able bodied person is the norm, and that other identities (which deviate from this norm in varying degrees) are inferior. When young people bully others for deviating from these norms, they are 'policing' others and perpetuating these harmful ideologies.

Anti-oppression is complex, especially with young people. These ideologies are part of the society we live in, so interpersonal oppression is often rooted in things that the young person has learned from society all around them without being consciously aware yet. Furthermore, they might be acting from a place of their own internalised oppression - a young girl calling another girl names for spending time with boys is both upholding and internalising patriarchal gender norms.

Alongside the many other complex reasons that underpin bullying behaviour, including those that are informed by trauma, our approach to anti-bullying is informed by anti-oppression in order to support staff to unpick the difference between conflict and bullying, and to better direct our response.

Interventions

Our ongoing work to support Bullying is outlined in our Community Accountability Policy.

Specific to bullying and anti-oppression, however, the following preventative interventions are also in place:

- **PSHE lessons** that address the topic of bullying so that all young people understand what bullying is, the different behaviours that constitute bullying, and how to report incidents of bullying. These lessons are also a space in which we bring in topics that pertain to the lived experience of the young people, so that they can begin to make sense of their identities and experiences in a supportive and boundaried way. Older young people will also address the implications of, and issues relating to, power in society and issues of social justice.

- **Celebrating difference:** The idea of celebrating difference isn't new or radical in schools but, by naming the harmful ideologies at play, we make the reasons why we celebrate difference explicit. We celebrate difference as part of our anti-oppressive work. This means continued and ongoing work to include and celebrate different identities, but also includes (and is not limited to) the explicit observing of celebration includes, but is not limited to, the observing of Pride Week, and Black History month, as well as non-Christian religious holidays.

- **Staff awareness** of the school's anti-bullying and anti-oppression policy and annual training to determine when an incident constitutes bullying and to recognise and intervene in suspected bullying incidents. Staff are trained to never ignore bullying, and to follow the protocol below.

- **Whole school awareness**: All young people, paid staff, volunteers, and parents/carers are expected to assertively and appropriately challenge oppressive behaviour where they encounter it. Depending on the situation and the nature of the incident, time must be given to the young people to sort things out between themselves with appropriate support measures in place.

Response

Any harmful incident unresolved by the young people involved should be shared with a class teacher as the first point of contact. If the incident falls under the definition of bullying as outlined above, the class teacher will follow the following procedure:

- Listen to the person harmed and make relevant notes on the incident(s). This may include dates/times/people involved. If you are shown a bullying incident online, note clearly everything on the screen relating to an inappropriate text message or image, to include the date, time and names. Ask the young person to save the material.

- The issue will be documented on CPOMS and the Co-Headteachers and the Pastoral Lead will be altered. This team will inform the parents/carer of both the young person who caused the harm and the young person harmed and will then arrange either a Formal Community Conference, as outlined in the Community Accountbaility (Behaviour) Policy, or another bespoke approach decided in collaboration with the Pastoral Lead, Co-Headteachers, and Class Teacher.

- The Formal Community Conference aims to be participatory, addressing the wrongdoing whilst offering respect to each of the parties involved through consideration of the story each person tells about what happened, how they were affected, and what they need to feel safe again. The aim is for reintegration within the school community and personal growth for each of the young people involved. The Pastoral Lead will record the outcome in CPOMS, or if it needs a consensual statement that accommodates everyone's needs they will record it in writing to all young people involved.

- The Pastoral Lead is responsible for following up with both the 'offender(s)' and the 'victim(s)' to ensure their needs are being met.

- The Pastoral Lead may also need to call on external agencies to support one, both, or all of the young people involved, and the SENDCo and Safeguarding Lead may

also be involved.

- If one of our young people is found to be involved in a bullying incident outside our school either as the young person who caused the harm or the young person harmed, the school will apply the same protocol as above where possible and where not possible (for example the young person who caused harm is online and unidentifiable, or the school is unable to make contact with one of the parties involved), the school will investigate in collaboration with the relevant agencies, authority or social services.