POLICY: ANTI-BULLYING

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VERSION CONTROL

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Contents

POLICY: ANTI-BULLYING 1

VERSION CONTROL 1

AIM 2

STATUTORY DUTIES OF SCHOOLS 2

SCOPE OF THIS POLICY AND LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES 3

DEFINITION 3

IDENTIFYING BULLYING 5

DEALING WITH REPORTS OF BULLYING 5

DIFFERENT ROLES IN BULLYING THAT HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED: 6

ACTION TO BE TAKEN IF BULLYING IS FOUND TO HAVE OCCURRED: 6

SUPPORTING PUPILS WHO HAVE BULLIED: 7

SANCTIONS MAY INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING: 7

IF A PARENT IS BULLYING A MEMBER OF STAFF 8

BULLYING THAT OCCURS OUTSIDE SCHOOL 8

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES 9

EXAMPLE ANTI-BULLYING PLAN 9

MONITORING, AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE 10

AIM

It is a basic entitlement of all children at Norwich Steiner School that they receive an education free from humiliation, oppression and abuse. 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, and that staff are free from fear of bullying by pupils or by parents.

Throughout this policy the term 'parent' is used to mean a pupil's parent, carer or guardian.

This policy has been produced with input from pupils.

Statutory duties of schools

All schools have a legal duty under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to draw up procedures to prevent bullying among pupils and to bring these procedures to the attention of staff, parents and pupils.

Under the Education Inspections Bill 2006 the duties are extended to include preventing/responding to bullying that happens outside school, where it is reasonable to do so. Government guidance advises that the policy should also address the bullying of staff by pupils ('Safe to learn' DCSF 2007).

The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 require that independent schools ensures that bullying at the school is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy.

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – 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. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, any person who sends an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender, is guilty of an offence if their purpose in sending it was to cause distress or anxiety to the recipient.

When there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm', a bullying incident will be addressed as a child protection concern under the Children Act 1989 and staff will follow the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures.

Scope of this policy and links to other policies

This policy includes:

- Bullying of pupils by pupils within school
- Bullying of and/or by pupils outside of school, where the school becomes aware of it
- Bullying of staff by pupils and/or parents within or outside school

Allegations about bullying of pupils by staff will be dealt with under the school's Safeguarding Policy.

This policy has links to the following school policies and procedures:

- Equality and diversity policy
- Behaviour & code of conduct policy
- Safeguarding (child protection) policy
- Parental concerns and complaints procedure

DEFINITION

Norwich Steiner School has adopted the following definition of bullying:

"When a person's or group of people's behaviour, over a period of time, leaves someone feeling one or more of the following:

- Physically and/or mentally hurt or worried
- Unsafe and/or frightened
- Unable to do well and achieve
- Badly different', alone, unimportant and/or unvalued
- Unable to see a happy and exciting future for themselves

……..it ***could*** be bullying.

When a person, or group of people, has been made aware of the effects of their behaviour on another person, and they continue to behave in the same manner, this ***is*** bullying."

If someone is made to feel like this, or if they think someone they know feels like this, it should be investigated. This should happen straight away as it can take a long time to build up the courage to

tell.

However, lots of things can make people/us feel bad, sometimes it depends on the situation we are in, and it is not always bullying. It is also important to note that children's relationships to others in the school can vary tremendously. Children can be the best of friends one day and at loggerheads the next. Parents and staff therefore need to be aware that temporary breakdowns in relationships do not necessarily constitute bullying.

To take this into account, the following definition, adapted from one written by the Anti-bullying Alliance, is also useful:

Bullying is any behaviour by an individual or group that:

- Is meant to hurt –the person or people doing the bullying know what they are doing and mean to do it;
- Happens more than once –there will be a pattern of behaviour, not just a 'one-off' incident
- Involves an imbalance of power –the person being bullied will usually find it very hard to defend themselves.

It can be:

- Physical, e.g., kicking, hitting, taking and damaging belongings
- Verbal, e.g., name calling, taunting, threats, offensive remarks
- Relational, e.g., spreading nasty stories, gossiping, excluding from social groups
- Cyber, e.g., texts, e-mails, picture/video clip bullying, social media, instant messaging

Where individuals or groups bully different people, this will be seen as a pattern of bullying behaviour and treated as such.

In 2022, the School switched from a paper based, to a more centralized software system for recording behaviour and safeguarding. We now use 'CPOMS' which allows the school to readily identify patterns of bullying behaviour. A termly review of pupils has been introduced of pupils being monitored for bullying, to assist in this process.

Norwich Steiner School recognises that bullying that is motivated by prejudice is a particular concern, for example racist, sexist, homophobic or transphobic bullying and bullying related to perceptions about religion, disability and/or special educational needs. Pupils who are adopted, are young carers or with SEND are at particular risk of bullying.

We aim to provide all staff with appropriate training in equality and diversity, so that they are equipped to tackle these issues on a wider scale as well as in relation to bullying, and to enable pupils to talk about 'difference' as part of PSHE. Further details of our commitment to this can be found in our Equality and Diversity Policy.

If an incident of bullying outside the school premises or online is reported to the school, it will be investigated and appropriate action taken.

Identifying bullying

All concerns about bullying will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly. We are aware that pupils who are being bullied may not report it. However, we recognize that there may be changes in them if they are being bullied, including:

- Withdrawn behaviour
- Deterioration in work, including lacking concentration
- Erratic attendance or spurious illness
- Persistently arriving late at school or truanting
- General unhappiness or anxiety
- Clingy behaviour around adults
- Physical symptoms, including headaches, stomach aches, fainting fits, vomiting or hyperventilation.

All staff are expected to be alert to the signs of bullying and to act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with this policy.

All pupils will be encouraged to report bullying by:

- Leaving a message in the worry box
- Asking a friend to help them report bullying
- Talking to a member of staff of their choice
- Contacting local and national support agencies for advice/support

Staff who are being bullied will be encouraged to report it to a colleague of their choice or to one of the trustees.

Parents will be encouraged to report concerns about bullying and to support the school in tackling it, either directly to the class teacher/upper school guardian or by using the Parental Concerns and Complaints procedure.

Dealing with reports of Bullying

When a pupil reports bullying behaviour to a teacher, the teacher listens carefully and gets as much information and as many details as possible. Sometimes pupils may be resistant to direct intervention, or resistant to those who are bullying them to be challenged and we take into account these concerns in deciding appropriate actions.

However, in the school our experience is that sometimes pupils who are carrying out bullying behaviour are not aware of the impact of their behaviour; this is particularly the case with 'banter'.

Therefore, unless a pupil has specifically asked us not to, those responsible are called in for a meeting with a teacher and are initially read part of this policy 'Section 4 – Definition of Bullying' to give them context to the allegations against them. Depending upon the circumstances, the pupils responsible may be brought in individually or as a group.

A number of factors are taken into account in determining the next steps. These factors include:

- The type and extremity of bullying behaviour reported
- The response of those accused, including whether they demonstrate regret and responsibility
- Their role in the bullying behaviour – a ringleader for example may need a different response from the school to a reinforcer or bystander (see below)

Different Roles in Bullying that have been identified:

From DCSF guidance document (2007) *"Safe to Learn; embedding anti-bullying work in schools"*

- *The* Ring-Leader, the person who through their social power can direct bullying activity.
- Assistants/associates, who actively join in the bullying (sometimes because they are afraid of the ring leaders).
- Reinforcers, who give positive feedback to the bully, perhaps by smiling or laughing.
- Outsiders/bystanders, who stay back or stay silent and thereby appear to condone or collude with the bullying behaviour.
- Defenders, who try and intervene to stop the bullying or comfort pupils who experience bullying.

It should be noted, however, that the same pupil can adopt different roles at different times, or indeed at the same time (a bullied pupil might be bullying another child at the same time, or a seeming "reinforcer" may become a "defender" when the bully is not around).

Action to be taken if bullying is found to have occurred:

1. Class teacher or Upper School guardian and, if required an appropriate colleague, to meet separately with parents of both the child who is being bullied and the bully to discuss the situation and possible solutions and actions that could be taken.

2. A short anti-bullying action plan should be produced in order to:

    - Address any specific issues;

- Identify actions that are required so that the person being bullied can feel safe at school; this may involve restricting the movements and freedom of the bully if necessary;
- Provide clarity amongst pupils, parents and staff about actions to be taken/followed;

3. If appropriate, remind all the pupils in a class that they too must share the responsibility for caring for others; allowing something to happen is actually participation, although passive.

4. Follow up in the coming weeks and months by the class teacher and/or pastoral support group member in order to check bullying has not resumed.

If there are concerns that a pupil is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of bullying, it will be treated as a child protection concern and we will follow our safeguarding and child protection procedures.

Supporting pupils who have bullied:

- Pupils who have bullied will be helped if a trusted teacher is able to:
- Discuss with them what happened
- Discover why the pupil became involved /instigated the action
- Establish with the pupil the wrong doing and the need to change
- Inform parents to help change the attitude of the pupil
- Use specialist interventions or referrals to other agencies where appropriate
- Apply sanctions as appropriate

Sanctions may include the following:

- Reparative work – doing tasks of value to the wider community of school children, such as helping to weed/water the vegetable gardens or young trees,
- Official warning to cease bullying behaviour;
- Reduced freedom (due to lack of trust) – e.g., getting changed separately for games; walking only with the teacher between lessons or out to break time
- Staying inside during morning or lunch-time breaks;
- After school detention (with 24 hours written notice given to parents);
- Exclusion from a school trip or other event, if not an essential part of the curriculum;
- Separation from group – either in the same classroom (i.e., desk away from any other child) or within another supervised room, for a day.
- Suspension for a fixed period.

- Permanent exclusion (particularly in the case of violent bullying)

If a parent is bullying a member of staff

If the reported bullying involves a member of staff being bullied by a parent, the following procedure will occur:

- Designated trustee for personnel will be informed. If the member of staff belongs to a union, they will also be advised to utilize this route for support.
- The trustee will talk over the situation with all relevant parties; ascertain the problems behind it and discuss possible solutions with both the member of staff, and the parent.
- Until the situation is resolved, the member of staff should only meet with the parent (e.g., to discuss matters concerning the parent's child) with the support and in the presence of another member of staff.
- Written records will be kept of all incidents and responses.

Bullying that occurs outside school

If it is discovered that the bullying occurs outside school, in addition to discussions with the parents of the children concerned, the school may contact any other agencies as appropriate (e.g., youth clubs, transport providers, police) to provide information about the School's concerns and any actions being taken.

Whilst opportunities for cyberbullying to take place in school are limited due to the school's electronic devices and mobile phone policy, we understand that cyberbullying that occurs outside of school time can also have an impact on what happens inside school.

The Education Act 2011 provides for electronic devices such as mobile phones, to be seized by staff and for authorised members of staff (a member of the school's management team) to examine data or files and delete these where there is good reason to do so. Parental consent is not required before searching through a pupil's phone.

If an electronic device has been seized and the school has reasonable grounds to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, the device must be given to the police. Material on the device that is suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, or that is a sexual image of a child or

an extreme pornographic image, should not be deleted prior to giving the device to the police. If an authorised staff member finds material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, they can decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of school discipline.

Preventative measures

Where there is evidence of a culture of unkindness and the potential for bullying to develop, staff will work with their classes to raise awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in Religion/Ethics and Sponsor lessons, assemblies and informal discussion, as appropriate, in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour.

Example Anti-Bullying Plan

Anti-bullying plan

Reason for plan:

Name of perpetrator:

Name victim/ victims:

Date plan started:

Time and date of further incidents	Action taken

MONITORING, AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE

This policy belongs to Norwich Steiner School, which is the operational name for the Charity the Norfolk Initiative Steiner School, registered charity number 1099377, company number 4815492

The Management Team will lead on the implementation of the policy and the school will review the policy regularly and assess its implementation and effectiveness.

Compliance is monitored through internal audits, policy review as part of self-evaluation, and annual reporting to Trustees on concessions awarded, value, and any compliance issues.