

VALE OF YORK ACADEMY



Anti-Bullying SOP

Date of issue: September 2017

SOP review date: September 2019

SOP status: Non-statutory

Responsible member of SLT: Gavin Kumar

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Statement of intent

Vale of York Academy believes that all students are entitled to learn in a safe and supportive environment; this means being free from all forms of bullying behaviour. This SOP outlines how instances of bullying are dealt with, including the procedures to prevent occurrences of bullying.

These strategies, such as learning about tolerance and difference as part of the school's curriculum, aim to promote an inclusive, tolerant and supportive ethos at the school.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006, outlines a number of legal obligations regarding the school's response to bullying. Under section 89, schools must have measures in place to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst students. These measures are part of the school's Behavioural Policy, which is communicated to all students, school staff and parents/carers.

All staff, parents/carers and students work together to prevent and reduce any instances of bullying at the school. There is a zero tolerance policy for bullying at Vale of York Academy.

Signed by:

_____ Principal

Date: _____

1. Legal framework

- 1.1. This SOP has due regard to legislation, including, but not limited to the following:
 - Education and Inspections Act 2006
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Children Act 1989
 - Protection from Harassment Act 1997
 - Malicious Communications Act 1988
 - Public Order Act 1986
 - Communications Act 2003
 - Human Rights Act 1998
 - Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- 1.2. This SOP will be implemented in conjunction with the school's:
 - Positive Discipline Policy
 - E-safety SOP
 - LGBT SOP

2. Definition

- 2.1. For the purpose of this SOP, bullying is persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group.
- 2.2. Bullying is generally characterised by:
 - Repetition: Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over a period of time.
 - Intent: The perpetrator(s) means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
 - Targeting: Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
 - Power imbalance: Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

3. Types of bullying

- 3.1. Many different kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying and can be related to almost anything. Teasing another student because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual-orientation, home life, culture, disability, or special educational needs are some of the types of bullying that can occur.

- 3.2. Bullying can be acted out through the following mediums:
- Verbally
 - Physically
 - Emotionally
 - Online (Cyber)
- 3.3. **Racist bullying:** Bullying another person based on their ethnic background, religion or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.
- 3.4. **Homophobic bullying:** Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.
- 3.5. **Transphobic bullying:** Bullying based on another person's gender 'variance' or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.
- 3.6. **Sexist bullying:** Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.
- 3.7. **Sexual bullying:** Bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal or non-verbal sexual dimension/dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.

4. Statutory implications

- 4.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, the school understands that it has a responsibility to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- 4.2. Under the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, the school understands that it could have charges brought against it if it allows the rights of children and young people at the school to be breached by failing to take bullying seriously.
- 4.3. The National Association of Head Teachers has guidelines that Principals must 'satisfy themselves' that their school's Anti-Bullying SOP complies with the HRA; the Principal understands that they cannot do this without fully involving their teaching staff.
- 4.4. Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications may be considered criminal offences:
- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent

to cause distress or anxiety, or 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.

- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.
- Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to police include: violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation and hate crimes.

5. Prevention

- 5.1. The school clearly communicates a whole-school commitment to addressing bullying in the form of a written statement which is regularly promoted across the whole school.
- 5.2. All reported or witnessed instances of bullying in the school are challenged by a member of staff.
- 5.3. Staff encourage student co-operation and the development of interpersonal skills through the use of group work and pair work.
- 5.4. All types of bullying are discussed as part of the curriculum, and diversity, difference and respect for others is promoted and celebrated through various lessons.
- 5.5. Changing and organising seating arrangements in class helps to prevent instances of bullying.
- 5.6. Potential victims of bullying are drawn into working groups with children who do not abuse or take advantage of them.
- 5.7. Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills are provided through participation in special events, for example, drama productions, sporting activities and cultural groups.
- 5.8. All members of the school community are made aware of the school's Anti-Bullying SOP.
- 5.9. All staff members receive training on identifying and dealing with the different types of bullying.
- 5.10. A safe, supervised place is available for students to go to at lunch if they are involved in conflict with their peers, or wish to avoid a bully.

6. Signs of bullying

- 6.1. Some of the signs that a student may be victim of bullying include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Being frightened to travel to or from school
 - Asking to be driven to school
 - Unwillingness to attend school
 - Truancy
 - Becoming anxious or lacking confidence
 - Saying that they feel ill in the morning
 - Decreased involvement in school work
 - Returning home with torn clothes or damaged possessions
 - Missing possessions
 - Missing dinner money
 - Asking for extra money or stealing
 - Cuts or bruises
 - Lack of appetite
 - Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices
 - Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages
 - Lack of eye contact
 - Becoming short tempered
 - Change in behaviour and attitude at home
- 6.2. Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental issues, so are still worth investigating.
- 6.3. Students who display a significant number of these signs are engaged with, in order to determine the underlying issues, whether they are due to bullying or other issues.

7. Staff principles

- 7.1. Prevention is at the forefront of the school's Anti-Bullying SOP.
- 7.2. Staff treat reports of bullying very seriously.
- 7.3. Staff do not ignore signs of suspected bullying.
- 7.4. Unpleasantness from one student towards another is always challenged and never ignored.
- 7.5. Staff take action immediately; this applies to all staff, not solely teaching staff.
- 7.6. Staff always respect students' privacy, and information about specific instances of bullying are not discussed with others, unless it is in a setting that the victim has given consent to.
- 7.7. Follow-up support is given to both the victim and bully in the months following any incidents, to ensure all bullying has stopped.

8. Roles and responsibilities

- 8.1. The SLT evaluates and reviews this SOP to ensure that it is non-discriminatory.
- 8.2. It is the responsibility of all staff to be alert to possible bullying of students and to deal with incidents as the highest priority.
- 8.3. The Assistant Vice Principal: Student Welfare reviews and amends this SOP, taking account of new legislation and government guidance, and using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in the previous year to improve procedures.
- 8.4. The Assistant Vice Principal: Student Welfare keeps a record of all reported incidents including which type of bullying has occurred to allow for proper analyses of the data collected.
- 8.5. The Assistant Vice Principal: Student Welfare analyses data on bullying incidences at termly intervals in order to identify any trends in the types of bullying occurring and implement the appropriate measures to tackle it.
- 8.6. The Assistant Vice Principal: Student Welfare arranges appropriate training for staff members.
- 8.7. Each Progress Leaders correspond and meet with parents/carers where necessary. They also provide a point of contact when more serious bullying incidents occur.
- 8.8. Form teachers are alert to social dynamics in their class and are available for students who wish to report bullying. They also provide follow-up support after bullying incidents.
- 8.9. Teachers ensure that they are alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and that they inform the student's form tutor of such observations.
- 8.10. All staff will avoid gender stereotyping when dealing with bullying.
- 8.11. Throughout the year, the composition of student groups shows sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying.
- 8.12. The school nurses, often the first people to receive reports of bullying, offer emotional support to victims, and alert the relevant Progress Leader and form tutor.
- 8.13. Parents/carers are advised to inform their child's form tutor if they are concerned that their child may be bullied or be involved in bullying.
- 8.14. Students are advised to inform a member of staff if they witness bullying, or are a victim of bullying.
- 8.15. Students are taught not to make counter-threats if they are victims of bullying.

- 8.16. Students are taught to walk away from any dangerous situations and avoid involving other students in incidents.
- 8.17. Students are advised to retain all evidence of cyber bullying.

9. Procedures

- 9.1. Minor incidents are reported to the student's form tutor, who investigates the incident, sets appropriate sanctions for the perpetrator, and informs the Progress Leader in writing of the incident and outcome.
- 9.2. When investigating a bullying incident, the following procedures are adopted:
- The victim, alleged bully and witnesses are all interviewed separately
 - Members of staff ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the students interviewed, including electronic communication
 - If a student is injured, members of staff take the student immediately to the school nurse for a medical opinion on the extent of their injuries
 - A room is used that allows for privacy during interviews
 - A witness is used for serious incidents
 - If appropriate, all parties (bully, victim, witnesses) are asked to write down details of the incident; this may need prompting with questions from the member of staff to obtain the full picture
 - Premature assumptions are not made, as it is important not to be judgemental at this stage
 - Members of staff listen carefully to all accounts, being non-confrontational and not attaching blame until the investigation is complete
 - All concerned students are informed that they must not discuss the interview with other students
- 9.3. Due to the potential for sexist, transphobic and sexual bullying to be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviour, staff members involved in dealing with the incident are required to consider whether there is a need for safeguarding processes to be implemented.

10. Sanctions

- 10.1. If the Assistant Vice Principal: Student Welfare is satisfied that bullying did take place, the student will be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and warned that there must be no further incidents.
- 10.2. The Assistant Vice Principal: Student Welfare informs the student of the type of sanction to be used in this instance (detentions, service-based activities, etc.) and future sanctions if the bullying continues.
- 10.3. If possible, the Assistant Vice Principal: Student Welfare will attempt reconciliation and will obtain a genuine apology from the bully. This will either be in writing to the victim (and/or witnesses if appropriate), or face-to-face, but

only with the victim's full consent. Discretion is used here; victims will never feel pressured into a face-to-face meeting with the bully.

- 10.4. The bullying student is made to realise that some students do not appreciate the distress they are causing, and that they should change their behaviour.
- 10.5. Parents/carers are informed of bullying incidents and what action is being taken.
- 10.6. The Progress Leader informally monitors the students involved over the next half-term.

11. Support

- 11.1. If the student visits the school nurse, the school nurse informally checks whether the bullying has stopped.
- 11.2. The form tutor informally checks whether the bullying has stopped on a weekly basis for a month after the initial complaint of bullying.
- 11.3. The Progress Leader formally checks whether the bullying has stopped the week after the bullying, and again during the same half term.
- 11.4. If necessary, group dynamics are broken up by members of staff by assigning places in classes.
- 11.5. The victim is encouraged to tell a trusted adult in school if bullying is repeated.
- 11.6. The victim is encouraged to broaden their friendship groups by joining lunchtime or after-school club or activity.

12. Follow up support

- 12.1. The progress of both the bully and the victim are monitored by their form tutor. One-on-one sessions to discuss how they are progressing may be appropriate.
- 12.2. If appropriate, follow-up correspondence is arranged with parents/carers one month after the incident.
- 12.3. Students who have been bullied are supported in the following ways:
 - Being listened to
 - Having an immediate opportunity to meet with their Progress Leader or a member of staff of their choice
 - Being reassured
 - Being offered continued support
 - Being offered counselling, where appropriate
- 12.4. Students who have bullied others are supported in the following ways:
 - Receiving a consequence for their actions

- Being able to discuss what happened
- Reflecting on why they became involved
- Understanding what they did wrong and why they need to change their behaviour
- Appropriate assistance from parents/carers

13. Bullying outside of school

- 13.1. Teachers have the power to discipline students for misbehaving outside of the school premises. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.
- 13.2. Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it is investigated and acted on. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, the teacher can only discipline the student on school premises, or elsewhere when the student is under the lawful control of the member of staff.
- 13.3. The Principal has a specific statutory power to discipline students for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives the Principal the power to regulate students' conduct when they are not on school premises, and therefore not under the lawful charge of a school staff member.
- 13.4. The Principal is responsible for determining whether it is appropriate to notify the police or PCSO of the action taken against a student.
- 13.5. If the misbehaviour could be of a criminal nature, or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police are always informed.

14. SOP review

- 14.1. This SOP is reviewed every two years by the Assistant Vice Principal: Student Welfare and the deputy DSL.
- 14.2. The scheduled review date for this SOP is September 2019.

Bullying Report Form

This form will be sent to the Assistant Vice Principal: Student Welfare upon completion:

Personal details

Name of person reporting incident:	
Name of student(s) being bullied:	
Sex:	
Year group:	
Form:	
How may we contact you (please circle)?	
At school	At home
Home address:	
Email:	
Telephone:	

Incident details

What happened?

Where did the incident take place?

When did the incident occur?

Who has been suspected of bullying?

Did anyone else see the incident?

According to the victim, how often does the bullying take place?

According to the victim, how long has the bullying been going on?

Impact of the bullying

What emotional impact has the bullying had on the student?

Was anyone physically hurt?

Did anyone need medical attention?

Has anyone else been informed of the bullying?

If so, when were they informed?

If not, why has the incident not been reported?

Help and support

What type of help and support are available to the victim?

Do you have any concerns about reporting the bullying?

What more do you think could be done to help prevent instances like this in future?