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Co-op Academy
Grange

Co-op Academy Grange Anti-Bullying Policy

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CO-OP ACADEMY GRANGE – ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Introduction

Schools have a duty of care for students and staff alike and, to this end, Grange Technology College strives to create a safe and happy environment, believing that all bullying is unacceptable. Whether at home, at school, at work, in the local community or when social networking. We believe that school should provide a safe, caring and happy place for young people to learn and for adults to work. If this is achieved, the school will be able to develop teaching and learning, whilst fostering an attitude of responsible behaviour at all times to promote safety, both on the premises and out of school hours.

The policy's primary objective is to ensure that members of the school community are clear about their roles and responsibilities, and how to manage a bullying incident if it occurs. However, bullying is not confined to school and this policy aims to make students aware of what action they can take both now and in their adult lives, whether as victims of bullying, or as bystanders.

Since the Education and Inspections Act 2008, the Equality Act 2010, Equality Duty 2011, the increased use of technology and the introduction of the new Ofsted framework in January 2012, the policy needed to be reviewed and amended.

This policy draws on Department for Education guidance on dealing with bullying, particularly 'Preventing and tackling bullying' – Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour policy and Safeguarding policy which is available on the school website or can be requested from the school office.

The Governing Body will regularly review the Behaviour Policy which the Headteacher must consider, in determining the measures to promote good behaviour and discipline.

The Governing Body may also bring to the Headteacher's attention such further measures as they consider necessary, and offer guidance, as they consider appropriate, to promote safeguarding and the welfare of students.

The Headteacher and senior support team have overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation. Cases will be managed according to the circumstances and will be recorded and analysed to see whether patterns emerge from the nature of the bullying or the identity of the perpetrators.

The Governing Body, Headteacher and Staff will ensure that the policy is implemented equally in all cases, without regard to ethnic origin, cultural differences, faith, gender, disability or sexuality issues. They will ensure that students are listened to and that their concerns are appropriately addressed.

All Staff (teachers, support staff and volunteers) share responsibility for ensuring that the policy and procedures are followed, and consistently and fairly applied. Mutual support amongst all staff is essential for creating a high quality and safe learning environment promoting good behaviour and implementing the agreed policy and procedures consistently.

Parents and Carers will be encouraged to work in partnership with the school in order that high standards of behaviour are maintained both in and out of school and that students respect both similarities and differences between themselves and other members of the school and the wider community.

Students will be expected to take responsibility for their own behaviour and will be made fully aware of the school's anti-bullying policy, the procedures arising from cases of bullying and the rationale behind them. All students have a collective responsibility to ensure that they are considerate towards one another and respectful to each other's differences.

A research review for the NSPCC produced a useful definition of the five essential components of bullying:

- There is an intention to harm e.g. a person teasing another with the intention of deliberately upsetting them.
- There is a harmful outcome: a person or persons are hurt emotionally or physically.
- The act can be direct or indirect e.g. it could involve direct aggression such as kicking someone or it could be an indirect act such as spreading rumours via Facebook.
- There is usually repetition from the perpetrator. However, for vulnerable students in the school community, who may experience bullying, the repetition may be the repeat of the act by several individuals or groups of people.
- There is unequal power. A person or several persons who are (perceived as) more powerful due to, for example, their age or physical strength or size will abuse their power by bullying.

Bullying behaviour can be direct or indirect, simple or complex:

Direct bullying includes physical threats, verbal insults or taunts and directly contacting a person with obscene or insulting messages by using, for example, a mobile phone.

Indirect bullying includes persistently ignoring a pupil so that they feel socially isolated, spreading malicious rumours, or insults, often via social network sites on the internet, or writing offensive graffiti.

Cyber bullying uses technology to harm a person, group of people or a relationship and can happen both inside and outside of school and at any time of the day or night.

Bullying differs from '**friendship fall out**', or other aggressive behaviour, or isolated incident of aggression.

How does bullying differ from teasing or friendship difficulties? Sometimes students can feel hurt or upset because they have been teased or have fallen out with a friend. This is not the same as bullying.

Bullying:

- Is deliberately intended to hurt or humiliate.
- Involves a power imbalance that makes it hard for the victim to defend themselves.
- Is usually persistent.
- Often involves no remorse or acknowledgement of the victim's feelings.

Preventing Bullying

We aim to prevent bullying by:

- Fostering a whole school ethos of good behaviour, mutual respect, and consideration for one another.
- We aim to create a safe, happy, and inclusive environment for learning, and encourage students to value diversity and difference, protect the vulnerable, and appreciate how their actions might affect others.
- Our staff and older students setting a good example of how to behave towards each other.
- Raising awareness about bullying through opportunities in the curriculum, the wellbeing programme, assemblies, and national events such as Anti Bullying Week, amongst others.
- Developing students' social skills, confidence, resilience and self-esteem; and defining the value of assertiveness in relationships as opposed to aggression, whether direct or indirect.
- Making it clear to all that there are effective procedures for reporting, investigating and tackling bullying.
- Making it clear to all that incidents of cyberbullying or bullying of any kind that occur off the school premises but have an impact on the classroom environment or relationships between students will be pursued with the same seriousness as bullying occurring within school.
- Making it as easy as possible for students who are being bullied to talk to someone they trust and get help confidentially.
- Having a strong pastoral team dedicated to pupil welfare and experienced in dealing with bullying issues. All our staff are trained in recognising and responding to bullying and staff awareness is raised through regular discussion of pupil issues in pastoral meetings. Action is taken to reduce the risk of bullying where and when it is known to be most likely to occur.
- Taking students' views into account through the school council, and developing the roles that students can play in anti bullying work, for example the REWIND ambassadors.
- Ensuring all students sign up to the school's Acceptable Use Agreements, which make it clear that cyberbullying is unacceptable. This message is regularly reinforced in lessons and pastoral sessions. (The school also makes more detailed information on how to deal with cyberbullying available to students and parents / runs parents' information sessions on e-safety etc.)

Being aware – Possible signs of Bullying

Changes in behaviour that may indicate a pupil is being bullied include:

- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, work that appears to have been copied, or interfered with or spoilt by others.
- Belongings suddenly going missing or being damaged.
- Change to established habits (i.e. giving up music lessons, sitting in the library instead of going out at playtime).
- Diminished levels of self confidence.
- Inability to concentrate.
- Anxiety, depression, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet.
- Repressed body language and poor eye contact.
- Reluctance to leave the classroom at the end of lessons or school day.
- Choosing the company of adults.
- Frequent visits to the office with symptoms such as stomach pains or headaches, especially at specific times or during particular lessons.
- Unexplained cuts and bruises.
- Talking of suicide or running away.
- Self harm

Although there may be other causes for these symptoms teachers, parents and fellow students should be alert for these possible signs of bullying and contact a member of the pastoral team if they are concerned.

Dealing with Bullying:

If you are being bullied:

Stay calm and try to appear confident. Tell the bully to stop and get away from the situation as quickly as you can.

All bullying issues, whatever the nature, will be treated with equal importance and the response will be based upon the guidelines in the policy.

Reporting Bullying

Students are encouraged to report all forms of bullying, whether carried out by another pupil or by an adult. The hope is that by reporting the problem in the first instance, this will become the first step in empowering the victim to overcome the bullying through the defined stages that will then be put into action. Whenever a pupil experiences bullying, it should be reported, whether by the victim, friends of the victim, bystanders or via parents, who would contact the school. Information can be reported to a member of staff, a tutor, a pastoral manager, house director or any member of Senior Management. All staff should first immediately secure the safety of the young person before following the school's procedures.

Do not suffer in silence: talk to a member of staff. This could be your class teacher, tutor or head of year, the school wellbeing officer, or any other member of staff you trust. If you are unhappy about talking to a member of staff directly, you could talk to someone in your family, a friend, or use the student referral on the school's website. Telling does not make you a 'grass' or a 'snake': not telling means that the bullying is likely to continue. Remember you may not be the only victim.

Be assured that we take every report of bullying seriously and will act upon it, even if it occurred outside the school. We will keep records of what has happened, and consult you and support you in whatever action we take. Remember being bullied is not your fault – nobody ever deserves to be bullied.

If you know that someone else is being bullied

Talk to a member of staff, so that the school can take steps to help the victim. Stand up for them – studies show that one of the most effective ways of stopping bullying is for fellow students to show their support for the victim. Be sceptical about rumours concerning other students. Don't add to them. Put yourself in the position of the person being targeted.

Don't be drawn into simply standing by. Many perpetrators will not persist in bullying unless they have an audience to play to, and by not taking action it could be argued you are condoning what is happening.

What the School will do

The exact course of action will vary with each situation but the main objectives should be that bullying incidents are brought into the open and strategies agreed to help resolve the problem.

All reports of bullying will be taken seriously and investigated immediately.

Everything that happens will be carefully recorded.

The most important thing is to stop the bullying and ensure the victim is safe.

We aim for a peaceful resolution. Revenge is not helpful for the victim or appropriate.

The victim will be supported throughout the process.

Guidance and help will be available for the perpetrator to help change his/her behaviour.

Staff will monitor the situation to ensure that the bullying does not continue. If bullying recurs, further action will be taken.

In any serious case of bullying the Headteacher will be informed and the school will work with the parents of both the victim and the perpetrator. The school will remain in regular contact with the parents until the situation is resolved.

A bullying incident will be regarded as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm (Children Act 1989). Where this is the case, after the Headteacher has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Social Services and in certain cases the police.

The school will keep a log of all bullying incidents which is monitored in order to identify trends and inform preventative work in the school and future development of policies and procedures.

The restorative approach

This approach encourages the reporting of incidents by reducing the victims' anxieties about repercussions and educates the perpetrators, by increasing their understanding of the difficulties caused by bullying, and encouraging perpetrators to take responsibility for their actions.

It may be appropriate to monitor the situation in the first instance, and work closely with parents and the victim to discuss if any action should be taken. It may be appropriate to hold a Restorative Meeting with all those involved. This might mean asking students, staff and parents to share their views within a meeting with a facilitator who would ensure that all participants were able to say how they had been affected by the bullying behaviour and what needed to change. As a way forward, if thought appropriate and agreed upon, a contract would be written between the students.

There would then be a series of meetings to ensure that the contract was working and that problems had not re-emerged.

If those involved in bullying do not respond to the Restorative Approach

If those involved do not keep to the agreements made at Restorative Meetings, or repeat bullying behaviour towards other individuals, the matter will be treated as defiance. The school would then use a range of sanctions, including loss of break/lunchtime, after school detentions, internal exclusion or in extreme cases, fixed term or permanent exclusion.

Based upon legislation in the Children Act (1989), in serious cases, it may also be appropriate to consider the bullying as a child protection concern if 'there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, the school must report their concerns to the Local Authority's safeguarding services and may draw on external professionals to support the victim or to tackle issues which have contributed to a child becoming a perpetrator of bullying.

As a last resort, the school may report a bullying issue to the police; particularly if staff feel that the nature of the bullying contravenes the law and other measures have been unsuccessful in preventing its recurrence.