

Oakgrove Integrated College



Anti-Bullying Policy

Oakgrove Integrated College

A Whole School Anti-Bullying Policy

Definition

The Addressing Bullying in Schools (Northern Ireland) Act 2016 states that “bullying” includes (but is not limited to) the repeated use of

- a. any verbal, written or electronic communication*
- b. any other act, or*
- c. any combination of those*

by a pupil or a group of pupils against another pupil or group of pupils, with the intention of causing physical or emotional harm to that pupil or group of pupils.

Bullying behaviour usually has the following four features:

- *It is repetitive and persistent (but this is not always the case)*
- *It is **intentionally** harmful*
- *It involves an imbalance of power, leaving someone feeling helpless to prevent it or put a stop to it*
- *It causes distress*

Bullying may take the following forms:

1. Physical
2. Verbal
3. Emotional
4. Cyber
5. Gesture
6. Extortion
7. Exclusion or omission

During consultations, Oakgrove College students have defined bullying as “Setting out to hurt someone in a verbal, physical, cyber, emotional, racial or homophobic way” and “upsetting someone by name calling, punching and use of social media”.

Everyone involved in the life of the college must take responsibility for promoting a common anti-bullying approach. All members of the College community will aim to:

- be supportive of each other
- be positive role models
- convey a clear understanding that we disapprove of unacceptable behaviour
- be clear that we all follow the rules of Oakgrove Integrated College
- be fully involved in the development of the anti-bullying policy and support anti-bullying practice
- support each other in the implementation of this policy

1 Statement of Intent

In keeping with the vision of Oakgrove College as a caring community where the dignity of each individual is recognised and respected, we aim to provide an

atmosphere of acceptance and openness and an environment where all can feel safe to enjoy their work and learning.

Oakgrove Integrated College believes that:

- Bullying is undesirable and unacceptable
- Bullying is a problem for which solutions can be found
- Seeking help and openness are regarded as signs of strength not weakness
- All members of our community should be listened to and taken seriously
- Everyone has the right to enjoy and achieve in an atmosphere that is free from fear
- All of us have a responsibility to ensure that we do not abuse or bully others
- It is essential that children and young people are encouraged to talk to an adult if they are worried about bullying and have a right to expect that their concerns will be listened to and treated seriously
- Children and young people will be involved in decision-making about matters that concern them
- We all have a duty to work together to protect vulnerable individuals from bullying and other forms of abuse
- We tackle bullying best by encouraging an environment where individuality is celebrated and individuals can develop without fear.

2 Aims and Objectives

The aim of our anti-bullying policy

- To create an ethos in which attendance at Oakgrove Integrated College is a positive experience for all members of our community
- To make it clear that all forms of bullying, including cyber bullying, are unacceptable at Oakgrove Integrated College
- To enable young people to feel safe while at Oakgrove Integrated College. (This includes the College site, travelling on the school minibus, travelling on school transport to and from school, while on school trips or attending school organised events, attending any education provision arranged or facilitated by Oakgrove Integrated College.)

The objectives of our anti-bullying policy

Oakgrove Integrated College has agreed the following objectives:

- To maintain and develop effective listening systems for young people and staff with Oakgrove Integrated College
- To ensure all staff deal with incidents of bullying including cyber bullying, effectively and promptly

- To equip all staff with the skills and information necessary to deal with incidents of bullying
- To ensure that all incidents of bullying, including cyber bullying, are recorded and appropriate use is made of the information, where appropriate sharing it with relevant organisations
- To encourage young people to report incidents of bullying, including cyber bullying
- To deal with each incident of bullying, including cyber bullying, as effectively as possible, taking into consideration the needs of all parties and of our community, and, as a result, to reduce the incidents of bullying
- To support and protect victims of bullying and ensure they are listened to
- To help and support young people displaying bullying behaviour to change their attitudes and understand why it needs to change
- To liaise with parents and other appropriate members of our community
- To ensure all members of our community help to reduce bullying
- To promote positive emotional health and wellbeing across the whole college.

3 Practice and Procedures

Preventative Strategies

1. The anti-bullying ethos permeates the whole school community. It is highlighted and reinforced regularly through the Personal Development programme, external speakers, assemblies, Anti-Bullying week and wall displays. Each teacher is involved, and students are encouraged to take responsibility for what happens in their school.
2. The College promotes self-esteem in every student. Confident children are less likely to engage in bullying behaviour
3. Teachers/supervisors on duty will intervene quickly and decisively in bullying situations.
4. The College makes use of restorative approaches to bullying behaviour. These include Restorative Conversations, Unity Team, Anti-Bullying Ambassadors.

Pupil advice...

What to do if you, or a friend, are bullied

Oakgrove College students agreed that the following are effective measures when bullying behaviour takes place:

- Discreetly report the bullying to a member of staff (Form Teacher, Year Head, Subject Teacher, Teaching Assistant, Supervisor)
- Tell a friend, student counsellor, prefect, a member of the Unity Team, an Anti-Bullying Ambassador
- Tell your parents / guardians
- If you find it difficult to talk about, write it down in a note, letter or diary. Then show it to someone who can help.

Always report bullying behaviour. Do not be tempted to reply to instances of cyber-bullying. This will make the situation worse and it will encourage more bullying behaviour. Never be tempted to hit back at a bully or you could end up getting in to trouble.

Staff will:

- Provide children with a framework of behaviour including rules which support the whole school policy
- Emphasise and behave in a respectful and caring manner to young people and colleagues, to set a good tone and help create a positive atmosphere
- Raise awareness of bullying, including cyber bullying, through the curriculum including activities, assemblies, stories, role-play, discussion, peer support, students' council, etc.
- Through the Principal, Leadership Team and Pastoral Care team, keep the governors well informed regarding issues concerning behaviour management
- Provide a key staff member who is responsible for monitoring of the policy
- Endeavour to ensure that all the members of the College community report incidents of bullying.
- **All staff** have a vital role to play as they are at the forefront of behaviour management and supporting children's sense of well-being. They have the

closest knowledge of the children in their care, and should build up a relationship involving mutual support, trust and respect.

Governors have a duty to:

Ensure that there is a whole school anti-bullying approach and should communicate effectively with College staff in the creation and implementation of this policy.

This will include:

- Ensuring that Bullying is a standing item on the Board of Governors agenda
- Maintaining a record of how pupils, parents/carers, teachers and governors were consulted during the review of the policy
- Identifying trends and patterns in bullying behaviour and using this information to inform feedback to staff
- Written responses to relevant pupils or parents/ carers when appropriate

RESPONDING

Reacting to a specific incident

School Procedure

When bullying behaviour, or alleged bullying behaviour, is reported:

- A written account will be taken from the person who has been bullied, the person displaying bullying behaviour and any witnesses. These interviews are conducted separately
- Where deemed appropriate by school management and with the agreement of the pupils and their parents restorative practice will be used in the first instance to resolve the conflict between those involved
- Parents/guardians will be informed
- If sanctions are employed, the parent / carer of the pupil displaying bullying behaviour will be informed in writing
- Referral to external support agencies will be made as appropriate
- A written record of the incident(s) is kept in school files

Recording

When recording an incident it may be useful for staff to consider the following:

- What is the context within which the incident took place?

- Is there any history of bullying or alleged bullying towards or by any of those involved?
- Can you recognise a pattern to the incidents?
- Have you noticed any change in the child's behaviour?

(Although incidents may not be bullying they should always be followed up thoroughly in the College and dealt with appropriately in accordance with the College Behaviour Management Policy.)

All incidents of bullying or alleged bullying, as defined above, will be recorded by the college. A senior member of staff will take responsibility for ensuring that the incident is properly recorded and that the record is updated as necessary throughout an investigation.

Parents/carers of all young people involved will be informed of the progress of any investigation. All discussions and actions relating to the incident/investigation will be documented and added to the incident log.

4 Links with other policies

This policy is linked with the following policies:

Behaviour Management
Child Protection & Safeguarding
RSE

Appendix 1

Definitions

Methods of Bullying

These can include but are not limited to:

- Saying, writing or using online platforms to:
 - Say mean and hurtful things to others
 - Make fun of others
 - Call another pupil mean or hurtful names
 - Tell lies or spread false rumours about others
 - Try to make other pupils dislike another pupil
- Hitting
- Kicking
- Pushing
- Shoving around
- Locking a pupil inside a room etc
- Material harm such as taking/stealing money or possessions
- Leaving another pupil out, on purpose, of a group of friends, an activity, games

Intentionally harmful

When assessing if an act is “intentionally harmful” the College will take into account the pupil’s capacity to understand the impact of their actions e.g. due to development, age, disability. The College will also take into account whether the behaviour has previously been addressed with the pupil.

Physical Harm

Deliberately hurting a pupil to causing injuries such as bruises, burns, cuts

Emotional Harm

Distress or anxiety caused by scaring, humiliating or affecting a pupil’s self-esteem

Travelling on school transport to and from school

The journey “to and from school” is defined as beginning and ending at the designated bus stop. If a pupil takes an alternative route to school or to home, they will not be considered to be in the care of the College.

Restorative Conversations

These are conversations between pupils, facilitated by staff, aimed at resolving differences between the pupils in a positive manner

Unity Team, Anti-Bullying Ambassadors

These are teams of pupils who have been trained in helping pupils to deal with negative behaviour.

Appendix 2

Dealing with an Incident

Whenever a bullying, or alleged bullying incident, is discovered, the school will go through a number of steps. The exact nature of each step will be adapted to suit the nature and severity of the incident, and the response of those involved.

It may be useful for staff/parents/carers to consider the following:-

- What is the context within which the incident took place? For example, is it a disagreement or the result of play which has got out of hand, a falling out of friends, does the alleged victim have any responsibility for what happened?
- Can you recognise a pattern to the incidents?
- Is there any history of bullying or alleged bullying towards or by any of those involved?
- Have you noticed any change in the child's behaviour?

(Although incidents may turn out not be bullying they should always be followed up thoroughly in the school and dealt with in accordance with the Behaviour Management Policy.)

The appropriate members of the College community need to be made aware that when a bullying, or alleged bullying, incident has come to the attention of adults in the college, it has been taken seriously and action has resulted.

Oakgrove Integrated College expects to support all involved by:

- Talking the incident through with all parties involved
- Supporting the person who has been bullied to express their feelings
- Supporting the person displaying the bullying behaviour to express their feelings
- Explore the use of Restorative Approaches
- Discussing which rules have been broken
- Discussing strategies for making amends
- Applying any sanctions that may be appropriate in line with the College Behaviour Management policy.

If a complaint of bullying is upheld, the pupil(s) who demonstrated the bullying behaviour will be encouraged to take responsibility for their actions. In line with College Behaviour Management policy, sanctions may be employed after discussions with all parties.

The pupil who has been bullied should feel secure that no further incidents will take place. If the parents/guardians of the pupil who has been bullied are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation or the action taken, they have the right to invoke the Parental Complaints Procedure.

The parents/guardians of the students involved will be informed of the outcome of the investigation.

A copy of all written records of the incident will be retained in school files.

Following serious incidents, staff will discreetly observe the students involved, and Form Teachers will regularly check how things are going, thus monitoring the situation and lessening the chance of a repeat incident.

Safeguarding procedures will be followed when child protection concerns arise.

Appendix 3

Information for Staff to whom a Bullying Incident has been reported

Procedures for Dealing with Reported Incidents

- 1) Any incident of bullying, or alleged bullying, is reported to a Form Teacher of one of the parties involved, or an appropriate member of staff.
- 2) The member of staff will interview and obtain a written account of the incident from the victim, the bully and any witnesses. These interviews will be conducted separately. **A Bullying Incident Report Form will be available from the office, or to download from RM staff. A completed copy of the Bullying Incident Report Form must be returned to the office, where it will be copied and filed for both the pupil who has been bullied and the pupil displaying bullying behaviour and distributed to the corresponding Year Head and Form Teacher.**
- 3) Resolution of the conflict is sought by using strategies considered appropriate to the situation e.g. counselling. No matter what the outcome, all parties must be made clear as to the seriousness of bullying. Parents/carers will be informed by the member of staff dealing with the incident and their involvement requested.
- 4) If a complaint is upheld, the pupil(s) displaying bullying behaviour will be encouraged to take responsibility for their actions. In accordance with the College Behaviour Management Policy, sanctions may be employed after discussions with all parties.
- 5) The parents/guardians of the students involved will be informed of the outcome of the investigation. A record of this communication will be kept by the College.
- 6) A copy of all written records of the incident will be retained in school files. It will be possible to track patterns of behaviour.
- 7) The pupil who has been bullied should feel secure that no further incidents will take place. If the parents/carers of the pupil who has been bullied are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation or the action taken, they have the right to invoke the Parental Complaints Procedure.
- 8) Following incidents, staff will discreetly observe the students involved and Form Teachers will regularly check how things are going, thus monitoring the situation and lessening the chance of a repeat incident.