

Great Oaks College Bullying Policy: January 2021

Adopted: January 2021

Review Date: January 2024

Person responsible: Head of College / Assistant Heads

This policy is in accordance with the College aims and all other policies at Great Oaks College and Oaklands School (who we share a site with). With additional reference to policies on equal opportunities, Personal social and health education and citizenship and the policy on the use of restraint.

Definition

Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt threaten or frighten someone. The key element of bullying is that there is an element of “intent” in the behaviour, which is what distinguishes it from behaviours, usually referred to as “challenging”

“Kidscape” suggests a range of behaviours that constitute bullying

- **Physical** - any form of violence or threat of violence
- **Verbal** - Teasing, name calling, sarcasm, etc
- **Emotional** - Tormenting, threatening ridicule, humiliation, exclusion from groups or activities.
- **Racist** - Racist taunts, graffiti or gestures.
- **Sexual** - unwanted physical contact, abusive comments.

Bullying and harassment can happen:

- face-to-face
- by letter
- by phone
- over the internet/electronic device – Cyber bullying

Staff and students will have to use their judgement to distinguish between what constitutes bullying and what is viewed as challenging behaviour. These judgements need to be continually reviewed and challenged in order that staff are clear about when these behaviours occur and that they respond appropriately.

Where bullying occurs, college will

- ◆ Investigate incidents thoroughly
- ◆ Take all bullying problems seriously
- ◆ Keep a record of the incident, investigation and outcomes. Racist incidents should be recorded on separate racist incident forms.
- ◆ Inform staff about the incident where a pupil is involved
- ◆ Obtain witness information

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- ◆ Interview victims and bullies separately
- ◆ Ensure that action is taken to prevent further incidents
- ◆ Inform parents of action taken

Identifying the problem

Students being bullied at college may not always be prepared to tell those in authority. Disclosures of bullying should always be taken seriously. While others may not feel that certain actions or words constitute bullying if the recipient feels they are being bullied that is sufficient evidence. In the case of students with learning difficulties, other students or staff may be the person who identifies that an individual is being bullied.

Signs that a person (staff or student) is being bullied could include.

- ◆ Unwillingness to come to college
- ◆ Withdrawn or isolated behaviour
- ◆ Complaining about missing possessions
- ◆ Refusal to talk about the problem
- ◆ Becoming easily distressed

Where these factors are associated with a student with special needs, a student from a minority racial or cultural background or where there are indications of sexual harassment these signs could confirm that bullying is occurring. Investigation should be undertaken checking with colleagues and maintaining rigorous vigilance. Staff will be able to use their knowledge to identify changes in behaviour, which might indicate bullying.

Creating a supportive climate

Victims of bullying may end up believing that they deserve to be bullied. They may feel vulnerable and powerless. Self esteem and self-confidence may be damaged. It is important that the college community take all bullying incidents seriously and state that bullying will not be tolerated. Parental concerns will also be taken seriously, and parents kept informed.

Efforts will be made to identify why the bully exhibits this type of behaviour. Bullies will be helped to recognise their unsociable behaviour and will be offered support to modify that behaviour.

It is the responsibility of the whole college community to eradicate bullying, by developing a caring and supportive ethos.

This policy should be read in conjunction with all policies at Great Oaks College with particular reference to policies on Safeguarding, Equal opportunities, Behaviour discipline and restraint and Personal, Social, Health Education and Citizenship.