

Great Oaks College Bullying Policy: February 2023

Person Responsible:	Rich Murr – Deputy Principal
Date of Policy:	February 2023
Next review date:	February 2026

Rationale

All Staff members at Great Oaks College are committed to providing a safe and secure college environment for all our students and staff.

The Staff believe that effective teaching and learning occurs when students and staff feel safe and happy and free from anxiety and stress that arises from violent, aggressive or bullying behaviour.

All the students at Great Oaks College have additional needs including PMLD, ASD, SLD physical and medical need Our approach to anti-bullying therefore needs to take into consideration on the one hand, the impact of inappropriate behaviours peers, while on the other, the influence of specific types of additional needs on the behaviour of some students. While the college recognises this dilemma it is also dedicated to combating both the rare cases of ‘true bullying’ that may occur and the possible, while unintentional, incidents that may make students feel threatened, unsafe or afraid. The college will act promptly and firmly to combat bullying and aspects of behaviours that may impact upon the emotional and well-being of all, whenever and wherever it occurs.

Where appropriate, students will be made aware of how they can draw their concerns about bullying to the attention of staff in the confidence that these will be carefully investigated and, if substantiated, taken seriously and acted upon. All staff will be made aware of their responsibilities for ensuring the safety of more vulnerable students who, because of the impact of their additional needs, are unable to communicate any issues that arise.

Aims

Documenting guidelines relating to incidents and concerns relating to the wider concepts of ‘bullying’ at Great Oaks College;
Identifying the importance of providing a safe and secure environment for all students and staff to inform all board members, teaching, non-teaching staff, volunteers, parents and students
Create an understanding of the concept of bullying and its broader definition within

Objectives

What is Bullying:

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”

Bullying has been defined in Government policy and accepted in law as:
Deliberate, hurtful behaviour repeated over a period of time and in circumstances where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

Bullying behaviour may present itself through:-

- Violent physical attacks, i.e. kicking, biting, scratching, punching, hair pulling etc.
- Threats, teasing,
- Interfering with belongings,
- Prejudice due to sexual orientation and/or gender re-assignment,
- Racially offensive conduct,

- Cyber bullying,
- Ridicule,
- The invasion of privacy,
- Prejudice due to religion and/or belief,
- Vandalism and intimidation,
- Deliberate name calling,
- Excluding others from games and activities.

“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.

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.

College procedures for the Management of Bullying

All staff are responsible for implementing this policy and reporting any incidents of bullying immediately to the Senior Leadership Team.

The following procedures must be implemented by all members of staff:-

- Identify and consistently apply college rules, responsibilities and respond to bullying or inappropriate behaviour, to ensure a safe college environment for all.
- View bullying from the perception of the victim and not the bystander.
- All incidents of bullying will be challenged by staff and immediate action taken to secure the safety of the victim
- Racist incidents should be recorded on separate racist incident forms.
- For students with specific communication difficulties that make it difficult to raise their concerns or fears, staff must be vigilant to ensure their safety and observe and explore any changes in their behaviour that may result from being bullied.
- In the event of a complaint of bullying, the college will carry out an investigation into the allegation.
- Obtain witness information
- Interview victims and bullies separately
- Ensure that action is taken to prevent further incidents
- Inform parents of action taken
- The college safeguarding policy and reporting system is used to track an incident of bullying

Link Policies

Safeguarding Policy

Positive Handling Policy

Exclusion and Termination policy

PSHEC Policy