



PREVENTING BULLYING POLICY

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ANTI-BULLYING POLICY STATEMENT

Oxford International College acknowledges its responsibility to protect all students against bullying. The aim of the Oxford International College anti-bullying policy is to prevent bullying of any sort and to ensure that every member of the college community can operate in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied.

All members of the community, including members of the SLT, teaching and non-teaching staff, tutors, students and parents should understand what bullying is and be familiar with the school policy on bullying, therefore the aim of the policy is:

- To demonstrate that the college takes bullying seriously and that it will not be tolerated.
- To take measures to prevent all forms of bullying in the college, residences and on off-site activities.
- To support everyone in the actions to identify and protect those who might be bullied.
- To demonstrate to all that the safety and happiness of students is enhanced by dealing positively with bullying.
- To promote an environment where it is not an offence to tell someone about bullying.
- To promote positive attitudes in students.

This anti-bullying document is compliant with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (2015), Standard 12: Promoting Positive Behaviour and Relationships and the Equality Act 2010.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying is defined as any behaviour that is:

- Repeated.
- Intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally and
- Often aimed at certain groups, e.g. because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- Physical (including sexual) assault.
- Verbal abuse, by name calling, teasing or making offensive remarks.
- Cyber-bullying, which is defined as the use of ICT by an individual or group in a way that is intended to upset others. Examples include using social websites, mobile phones, text messaging, photographs, video and e-mail.
- Indirect emotional tormenting by excluding from social groups or spreading malicious rumours.

Students may be picked on for a variety of reasons. Bullying is often motivated by prejudice. Studies show a weight of evidence that those being bullied find it difficult to defend themselves (often due to age, position and/or capability physical, emotional or verbal), and often seemingly minor instances of harm can be hugely exacerbated by them being repeated over a period of time.

Bullying may also involve complicity that falls short of direct participation by, for instance, manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone, or by third parties ignoring it. It may be overt and intimidatory but is also often hidden and subtle.

Within the OIC community, which is drawn from many different parts of the world, there is a wide range of students and so bullying is rarely the result of simple gratification (whether violence or sexual) but can sometimes be linked to pre-existing inter-cultural animosities. This policy covers a number of aspects of a person's characteristics, including (but not restricted to) actions or comments that are:

- Racist,
- Religious,
- Cultural,
- Ethnic,
- Homophobic,
- Transphobic,
- Sexist,
- Sexual,
- Which focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape); or
- Make any reference to special educational needs.

BULLYING MUST BE DEALT WITH

The seriousness of bullying cannot be emphasized enough. Bullying is among the top concerns that parents have about their children's safety and wellbeing at college.

Bullying is also a major concern of young people themselves. Bullying makes the lives of its victims a misery: it undermines their confidence and self-esteem, destroys their sense of security, and can also be psychologically damaging. Bullying often severely impacts on its victims' attendance and attainment at school, marginalizes those groups who may be particular targets for bullies, and can have a lifelong negative impact on some young people's lives. At worst, bullying has been a factor in student suicide.

Bullying, therefore, is an anti-social behaviour, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated by the college. Everyone in the community has a responsibility to report any incident of bullying that comes to their attention and these reports will always be taken seriously.

PROMOTION OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

It is acknowledged that bullies may have complex reasons for their behaviour and may well need help. It should also be recognized that the consequences of them being allowed to 'get away with it' can be detrimental to them, as well as to their victim. All students at Oxford International College, therefore, deserve the opportunity to be helped to understand what acceptable behaviour is. Changing the attitude and behaviour is an important part of the college ethos.

Consequently, the college promotes a programme promoting positive behaviour for all members of the college. Staff should encourage students at all times to behave in an acceptable manner and include elements of this both within lesson plans and during the conduct of all activities on college property or whilst representing the college on any trip, visit or sports event.

ANTI-BULLYING MEASURES FOR STAFF

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school.

Members of staff and all members of the community must be alert to the signs of bullying at all times. Community members must act promptly and firmly against it, in accordance with the college policy. Surveys have shown that in the vast majority of bullying incidents, most people involved knew that what was going on was wrong. Sometimes people, either through lethargy, peer group pressure, or tacit support for what is going on, fail to take action. This is not acceptable and in the case of members of staff is likely to lead to disciplinary action, which could be deemed gross misconduct. All tutors and staff receive Level 2 child protection and safeguarding training.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Senior Leadership Team (SLT):

- The SLT will discuss, review and endorse agreed strategies on the prevention of bullying.
- The Senior Leadership Team has a legal duty under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to draw up procedures to prevent bullying among pupils.

The SLT will:

- Ensure that all staff have an opportunity of discussing strategies and reviewing them.
- Determine the strategies and procedures.
- Discuss development of the strategies with the leadership group.
- Ensure appropriate training is available.
- Ensure that the procedures are brought to the attention of all staff, tutors, parents and students

Deputy Head Marianne Thompson-Hill (Welfare):

- Be responsible for the day-to-day management of the policy and systems.
- Ensure that there are positive strategies and procedures in place to help both the bullied and bullies.
- Keep the SLT and Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer, Kim Terrar, informed of incidents.
- In conjunction with the Director of Studies arrange training.
- Determine how best to involve parents in the solution of individual problems.

All staff will:

- Know the policy and procedures.
- Be observant and ask pupils what is happening to them.
- Deal with incidents according to the policy.
- Never let any incidence of bullying pass by unreported, whether on-site or during an off-site activity.
- Participate in the PSHE and citizenship and Promoting British Values course.

Types of conduct to look for

1. Actual physical violence.
2. Threat of physical violence verbally or by gesture and stance ('body language').
3. Verbal comments or taunting, generally and specifically of a racial, cultural or sexual nature.
4. Sexual harassment including peer to peer: undesired physical contact or sexually explicit comment.
5. The spreading of malicious comment and rumours.
6. Deliberate social exclusion.

Significant pointers worthy of investigation (**without** undue pressure) are:

1. Bruising injuries to arms or face.
2. Students who have 'lost' money.
3. Students who seem to run a lot of 'errands' for others.
4. Students who seem to be isolated from a former grouping.
5. Students giving improbable reasons for any of the above.

WHAT TO DO

Should you become aware of any instance of bullying, staff members must follow the procedure below. (Procedure is also set out in the safeguarding and child protection procedures that occur at induction)

Discuss with the student(s):

Students who feel themselves to be the victims of bullying can and must be assured:

1. That immediate steps will be taken to ensure that the bullying situation ceases, and that no recriminations follow from them reporting the circumstances. That they will not be viewed or portrayed as weak or inadequate for complaining.
2. That they will not be unduly pressurised to reveal details they do not wish to divulge.

3. That, where appropriate, it is college policy to bring together the complainant and the bully for discussion and resolution, but that no pressure will be applied if they do not wish this.
 - i. Strategies available to staff include:
 - Supporting the victim by offering your support and making it clear that in your opinion what is happening to them is wrong.
 - Encouraging them to speak out on their own behalf by confronting the bully with you present, or with their permission, confront the bully yourself.
 - Accompanying the victim to a trusted adult or suggesting that you see their tutor on their behalf.
 - ii. As in any student interview situation:
 - Do not press insistently for details the student feels unwilling to give at this stage.
 - Explain to the student that you do **not** keep confidences – like any other professional you reserve the right to pass on information to other professionals, who will keep it in confidence **between themselves on a ‘need-to-know’ basis**.
 - i. However, in the specific case of bullying, it is legitimate to protect the anonymity of a student who reports bullying of a third party, but **not** to withhold the information from the Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer.

Deal with the bully (see 'What Will Happen'):

Once you have established the nature of the incident and discussed it with the victim, staff must broach the subject immediately in a manner suitable to both the seriousness of the allegation and the wishes of the victim.

Report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer must then be informed about the incident and what actions you have already taken. In most instances this will require a detailed written report.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer will then conduct an investigation in person or delegate the investigation to an appropriate senior member of staff.

DEALING WITH THOSE ACCUSED OF BULLYING

All attempts will be made to counsel those who bully others:

1. They may not realise the effect their conduct has on others.
2. They may not see their actions as 'bullying' within their own cultural setting.
3. Positive behavioural modification rather than condemnation is our overall aim.

Discuss the effects their behaviour is having on others with them and monitor the situation to ensure progress is being made. Be aware that there are occasions when the bullying continues but in a different, less overt manner. Regular checks should therefore be made to ensure the problem has been alleviated.

However, at all times the welfare of the bullied person(s) will be the prime consideration. Bullying is a specific breach of school rules, a breach of UK law and is subject to the standard school disciplinary procedures.

PROCEDURE IF A STUDENT SHOULD WITNESS BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

1. Support the victim by offering your friendship and make it clear that in your opinion what they have witnessed is wrong;
2. Encourage them to speak out on their own behalf by confronting the bully with you (or their tutor or any other suitable staff member) present or, with their permission, confront the bully yourself and;

3. Ensure that they are assured that the bully is being dealt with and that there will be no further repercussions. This is particularly important if the witness was the person who reported the incident to you in the first and so could be viewed as having 'told tales' by the bully.

COUNSELLING SERVICES AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS

Oxford International College recognises that delivering counselling services regarding any bullying incident to both bully and victim is a vital part of the conciliation process. To this end the school has invested in counselling training in the House Parent. Once an incident has been reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer (see 5.4.3) the victim and bully will both be referred to the Senior Leadership Team, who will meet with both parties separately and devise an appropriate counselling programme. Failure to keep appointments for such counselling will subject the students concerned to the usual school discipline and sanction procedures.

Additionally, any student may request an appointment with a member of the Senior Leadership Team or Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer or a counsellor at any time should they feel they need to discuss any aspect of their life and work at the college. The college recognises that discussing any relatively minor issues when they occur may stop a more major incident occurring.

All counselling sessions shall be recorded by the Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer and entries will be made on the students' records. Details should only be passed on to staff members who need to know the details in order to assist them to deliver the college's duty of care to its students.

Kidscape gives advice on child safety policy, runs a helpline for parents and children and organises free one day sessions for bullied children. Tel: 020 7823 5430.

ANTI-BULLYING MEASURES FOR STUDENTS

Any students who feel themselves to be the victim of bullying can bring their concerns to ANY member of staff or tutor, who will then report full details to the Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer.

If you are the victim:

1. If you feel able to, confront the bully by verbally making them aware that you think that what they are doing is wrong;
2. Share your feelings with someone else;
3. If possible, talk to a member of staff, tutor, warden or House Parent about the incident.

Students may have a particular teacher they feel most comfortable talking to. If you would rather not go straight to a member of staff, talk to your friends, a mentor or one of the prefects, the designated person, or any trusted adult. They may well be able to advise on an appropriate course of action or will be able to involve other people who can. There are also people outside the school who would be willing to help.

College has available a Listener that students may contact:

Ianto Doyle: 07799 472170

WHAT WILL HAPPEN?

All reported instances of bullying will be taken seriously.

The victim will be interviewed and asked to write an immediate account of events. The process for dealing with bullying will be explained clearly to them. The victim is also given the opportunity to discuss his/her own reactions and behaviour towards the bully. The victim is given support and advice, and counselling is suggested if deemed appropriate.

If it is clear that a bullying offence has been committed, the bully and any others involved will be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events. The process for dealing with bullying will be explained clearly to them.

Sanctions may be applied in accordance with the college's Disciplinary and Behavioural policy.

Parents, as well as all staff, tutors and pupils, should know that the college will not tolerate bullying, and takes a positive approach to educating pupils to combat it.

Parents will be informed of the policy and procedures and the possibility of permanent exclusion following gross acts of bullying.

In very serious cases it may be necessary to make a report to the police or social services. However, it is the policy of the college to attempt to resolve such issues internally using our own disciplinary sanctions, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely.

Reported incidents of bullying will be followed up by tutors in order to monitor that the problem has been resolved. The record of bullying offences will be reviewed by the SLT and Designated Person. The pastoral/welfare teams meet weekly to check that the policy is effective.

REPORTING AND RECORDING OF BULLYING INCIDENTS

All instances of bullying must be reported by the staff member or tutor who receives the complaint to the Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer. The report will then be entered into the anti-bullying log, held by the Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer and also on each student's record.

The log will be reviewed periodically by the senior management team in order to ensure the effective implementation of this policy and spot any repetitive instances of seemingly low-level bullying which when taken as a whole amount to a sustained campaign of bullying. Appropriate action will then be taken.

There are criminal laws that apply to harassment, assault and threatening behaviour. If staff or tutors feel that any offence may have been committed, then it is their duty to seek assistance and inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer and SLT.

Tutors and key staff will be informed about the reported instances on a need-to-know basis in order to effectively monitor that the sanctions and procedures put into place following the incident are having the desired effect. This may well mean them discussing any on-going aspects of the incident with both the victim and bully. These discussions should be appended to the incident report, until such time as the pastoral team or senior management team deem the incident to be closed with no further action being necessary. A central register exists on the MIS.

INVESTIGATION AND MONITORING PROCEDURES

INVESTIGATION

Often the level of incident is such that it can be considered minor, recorded as such, and a watch be placed on the parties concerned to ensure there is no recurrence. In these instances, disciplinary action may still be taken against the bully, while support should always be given to the victim(s).

At times, however, it may be deemed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer that the incident reported is of such seriousness that they need to investigate it further. The Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer will then conduct an investigation in person or delegate the investigation to an appropriate senior member of staff.

The findings of this investigation will be considered by the senior management team, which may call on witnesses and the staff concerned. Measures will then be taken as deemed appropriate but should be proportionately greater than those handed out for more minor incidents.

If the incident took place in the hall of residence, the senior management team will particularly want to meet with the wardens and House Parent.

SENIOR LEADERSHIP REPORT

The SLT will receive an annual report detailing:

- The number of bullying incidents that term.
- The age and position within the school profiles of both the bullies and the victims.

The SLT will then consider the implications of the information provided including, but not restricted to, its:

- Fullness
- Detail
- Outcomes of investigations
- Recurrences of bullying
- Victims of bullying
- Places in which bullying occurred
- Times of day at which bullying occurred
- and the SLT will decide if any amendments are required to monitoring and investigation procedures to deal with any recurring instances of bullying which come to light, including any amendments to this policy deemed necessary.

TRAINING

The college will raise awareness of the staff through training and take action to reduce the risk of bullying at the times and places where it is most likely to occur. An anti-bullying statement will be included in both staff and student handbooks.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about preventing bullying at OIC please speak with Marianne Thomason-Hill.

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