ANTIBULLYING POLICY

Ready Respectful Safe

Anti-Bullying Policy 2021

Introduction

This policy has been written in light of the Government White Paper, "Every Child Matters", the Department for Education and Standard's (DfE) publications "Working Together to Safeguard Children" and "Don't Suffer in Silence" current guidance from Kidscape and the Anti-Bullying Alliance.

This document sets out the school's policy in relation to the issue of bullying. It reflects a belief that bullying is not acceptable under any circumstances and that it is best prevented through the development of a school ethos based on respecting others and equality. It also acknowledges that bullying behaviour is problematic for the victim and perpetrator alike and embodies support and management strategies that are pragmatic and non-oppressive.

Principles

All students have an absolute right to be educated in a safe and secure environment and to be protected from others who may wish to harm, degrade, or abuse them.

There is no justification whatsoever for bullying behaviour and it should not be tolerated in any form. Differences including race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and ability are absolutely repudiated as reasons for bullying.

Bullying behaviour is a problem from both the victim and the bully and should be addressed in positive and constructive ways which provide opportunities for growth and development for the individuals involved.

Effective management of bullying is a shared responsibility and strategies should involve school staff and students, parents/carers and other professionals.

It is important to invest time and resources in the prevention and management of bullying.

Staff and students require advice, training and support to manage it with confidence.

Aims and Objectives

To achieve the school's ethos in which each student is safe and able to realise their full potential within an environment in which bullying is seen as inappropriate and unacceptable. To demonstrate to parents/carers that the school takes their children's welfare seriously, by having zero tolerance towards bullying behaviour.

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To have clear and consistent procedures for responding to incidents of bullying.

Strategies

- In order to meet our aims we intend to:
- Be pro-active in the prevention of bullying.
- Raise awareness among staff, parents/carers and students about the issue of bullying and the school's attitude towards it.
- Accurately record all incidents of bullying and to monitor the effectiveness of strategies for bringing it under control.
- Make students, parents/carers and staff aware of what steps to take when an incident of bullying has occurred.
- Reassure victims that actions will be taken to keep them safe.
- Demonstrate to bullies that their behaviour is unacceptable and address their problematic behaviour in a fair and firm manner and provide them with support and enable them to change.

Definition

Bullying is any interaction between an individual or group of people with a more powerful individual or group which is perceived or intended to cause hurt, pain, suffering, humiliation or degradation over a period of time.

Bullying behaviour may be direct or indirect. Direct forms include physical violence and threats; verbal assaults and taunts; the destruction of property; extortion; unwanted sexual interest or contact. Examples of indirect forms of bullying include ignoring and the withdrawal of friendship; excluding; malicious gossip and spreading rumour; abusive or oppressive graffiti or electronic messages/websites.

Cyber-bullying is a discrete area of focus for the school involving the Community Police Officers where appropriate.

Digitech Studio School takes all forms of bullying seriously and is particularly concerned to take action in relation to any incidents which involve racist, sexist or homophobic elements.

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Digitech's Anti Bullying Charter

As a school we have created the following charter:

Ready - we are all clear about what is classed as bullying and know how to respond/react
Respectful - we respect each other's differences and celebrate these
Safe - we keep each other safe by not being bystanders, challenging others appropriately, and reporting any concerns we have

Scope

This policy applies only to incidents of bullying which take place on the school premises or travelling to or from school. The school is not legally responsible for bullying which takes place elsewhere. However, the school is always interested in the welfare and conducts of its students and will respond positively to any information it receives about bullying outside school if it impacts on student well-being.

If there are concerns about a student's safety outside the school then parents/carers would be advised to contact the local police. If concerns arise in relation to school transport (on trips) then the school will raise the issue with the appropriate transport company and its help will be sought in dealing with the problem.

If students are being bullied by students of another school the Head and pastoral leads of that school will be informed and we will work together to resolve the matter.

Prevention

All staff involved in the education and/or supervision of students will be made aware of the issue of bullying and the need to apply the school's policy of zero-tolerance consistently when episodes of bullying are witnessed or reported. Staff will constantly reinforce the message to students that bullying is unacceptable and will take positive action to prevent and control it.

In addition the issue of bullying will be raised with students at a number of levels including:

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- At whole school level – through assemblies when children will be informed of the school's zero-tolerance policy and the actions that will be taken to prevent bullying taking place.
- At classroom level – during tutor time and Digitech Plus lessons. Outside agencies/groups may be used to reinforce the message.
- At individual level – students who are felt to be at risk of bullying (or who have suffered from bullying in the past) will be offered additional support and guidance. Students who have bullied others will be given advice and support and taught strategies to enable them to bring their unacceptable behaviour under control and to prevent further incidents.
- The school recognises that there are particular times when and places where students may be more vulnerable to bullying – lunch and break times and the beginning and end of the academy day. Arrangements ensure that there is adequate supervision available to reduce the risk of bullying incidents.
- Students will be encouraged to talk to staff about incidents of bullying which they experience or of which they may be aware. In these circumstances staff will respond positively, take the expression of concern seriously and ensure that the matter is fully investigated.
- Parents who believe their children are the victim of bullying should share their concerns with the school at the earliest opportunity and be prepared to work with the school to keep their children safe in future. All expressions of concern will be taken seriously and investigated. Similarly if parents believe their child is bullying others, this information should be shared with the school so that the problem can be addressed and a plan agreed to prevent further incidents and the bullying child helped to change behaviour.

Parent Involvement

Digitech Studio School is firmly committed to working in partnership with parents/carers and believe that the best outcomes emerge when professionals and parents / careers are able to work together when bullying occurs. We recognise the important influence which parents/carers have on their children and would wish to enlist their support when their child is involved in bullying – either as a victim or perpetrator.

Implementation

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The school is committed to creating a bully-free environment and will ensure that its zero tolerance policy is applied. All staff involved in the teaching and/or supervision of students will take responsibility for addressing incidents and will ensure that the victim receives the required support. The bully will be informed of the unacceptability of his/her behaviour and a record will be made of the incident.

All students are made aware that staff need to be informed of any incidents or concerns and that action will be take when bullying is reported.

Post incident responses for the victim

- When a member of staff receives information, either directly or indirectly, that a child may have been the victim of a bullying incident, this report will be taken seriously and investigated.
- The school will offer a sympathetic and supportive response to students who are the victims of bullying. The nature of the response will be determined by the situation and the student's individual needs. Responses may include:
- Positive reinforcement that reporting the incident is the correct thing to do
- Reassurance that the victim is not responsible for the behaviour of the bully Reassurance that the victim will be involved in the resolution
- Action to stop the incident and secure the student's safety
- Informing / involving parents/carers
- Adult mediation between the perpetrator and the victim (provided this does not increase the victim's vulnerability)
- Support from an outside agency such as a Connexions Personal Advisor, who may be able to provide assertiveness training
- Befriending/peer monitoring/mentoring
- Creation of a support group/triad of support
- Extra supervision/monitoring
- Arrangements to review progress

For the Bully

- Digitech Studio School takes bullying behaviour very seriously and will adopt a supportive, pragmatic, problem-solving approach to enable bullies to behave in a more acceptable way. We will respond to incidents of bullying behaviour in a proportionate way – the more serious the concern, the more serious the response. When sanctions are felt to be necessary they will be applied consistently and fairly. We accept that

punishment is not always helpful in managing this problem but it may be necessary in situations where other responses have failed. Responses may include:

- Discussion with the bully to reinforce the message that their behaviour is a breach of school rules and unacceptable.
- Adult mediation between the perpetrator and the victim (provided this is safe for the victim)
- Support in alternative ways of behaving
- Rewards/positive reinforcement for students in order to promote change and bring unacceptable behaviour under control
- Loss of lunch/break-time privileges
- A fixed period exclusion
- Removal from class/group
- Withholding participation in a trip, sports or other out of school activity
- Permanent exclusion (in extreme cases)

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Each incident of bullying will be recorded by the school on CPOMS. Any incidents with a racist, sexist or homophobic element will be identified and also recorded on this platform.
- A termly and annual report will be made to the Academy Council indicating trends which may emerge.
- Senior Staff and Councillors will evaluate the effectiveness of the policy and agree adjustments that may be necessary to address any current concerns. These will be shared with staff, parents/carers and students.

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