This policy is linked to and derived from the overarching curriculum policy. This policy has been reviewed by the SLT to ensure it does not undermine British Values of Democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

PARK SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

ACADEMIC YEAR 2023- 2024

1. Introduction

Park School is a special school for young people between the ages of 7-18 with Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans that identify SEMH as their primary need.

Our school supports the need of all of our pupils and promotes the protection of their rights in accordance with the UNCRC (1992) with a particular focus on:

Best interests of the child – the best interests of the child must be the top priority in all things that affect children (Article 3)

Right to education – every child has the right to an education (Article 28)

Respect for the views of the child – Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously (Article 12)

This policy has been drafted in consultation with pupils and staff at Park School as well as incorporating the latest recommendations from the DfE Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (2016), DfE Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017), DfE Supporting Children and Young People who are bullied: advice for schools (2014), The Independent Schools Standards (2015) and the Equality Act (2010).

Our aims are:

- To provide a secure environment in which pupils can report incidents confidently
- To show all pupils that targeting, harassment and bullying is taken seriously
- To enable staff to respond calmly and confidently to targeting, harassment and bullying incidents
- To reassure pupils that the school will protect and support all parties whilst the issues are resolved
- To provide long term and positive programs of personal development where it is required

In this policy, we are not concerned with those deeper personal, social, emotional or psychological issues that underlie and often precipitate bullying behaviour. What we are intent upon is a clear explanation of a set of attitudes and a related framework for intervention that will allow us to manage the problem of targeting, harassment and bullying in an efficient and effective manner. These guidelines are intended to help staff to develop a shared understanding of the problems involved in identifying, containing, reporting and intervening when we face children's targeting, harassment or bullying behaviour. We need a team approach and a common-sense purpose. We must have a generally understood framework for action and procedures that are clear and workable. Our hope is that the following will provide structures appropriate to these tasks.

This is an extremely important area. We work with children who exhibit emotional and behavioural difficulties. They have often been hurt themselves. They often seek to retaliate against people and things. Containing these complex and persistent aggressions within the peer group is one of our primary professional tasks. Any failure to do so will release sub-cultural peer group reactions, which may have serious consequences for a number of pupils. We need to be aware of these peer group dynamics. We have to monitor the peer group very carefully for signs of intimidation and bullying. We must then take considered and decisive action. We should always remember that bullying research carried out in recent years has clearly demonstrated that the vast majority of pupils attending Park School come to us usually with a history of bullying as either victims or bullies.

2. Our Obligation

In developing a whole school policy towards bullying, we start with the knowledge that this behaviour, in all its forms, will occur from time to time in the school. This is true of every school. It is an on-going feature of working with children and a particular feature of our working with SEMH pupils, who in the vast majority of cases, come to us with a history of either being bullied or bullying others. It will occur again. The frequency and intensity of this problem will depend largely upon the ethos of the school, the intervention strategies we employ and our capacity to contain and manage the interpersonal behaviour or our pupils.

This implies a vigilant and consistent approach by all staff who all carry a very heavy duty of care for every pupil placed with us. Many are particularly vulnerable given the nature of their previous experiences. Our policy on bullying is one important aspect of our professional obligation to create a caring and protective environment for our pupils.

3. What is bullying?

There are many definitions of bullying. At Park School, we see it as inappropriate behaviour from an individual pupil or group of pupils towards another pupil that is deliberate, may be repeated over time, and is hard for the individual to defend against. It is essentially an abuse of power by a stronger pupil(s) against a weaker one. The advantage in strength may be either physical or verbal; it might be real or imagined; and can be expressed individually or collectively with others.

Examples of bullying in our context would include:

- Hitting and punching
- Kicking
- Spitting
- Spoiling someone else's belongings
- Calling names
- Excluding or deliberately isolating a pupil
- Giving nasty looks
- Making racist, homophobic or sexist remarks
- Making comments
- About another pupil's family
- Picking on a weakness
- Spreading rumours
- Preventing someone from joining a game
- Not talking to someone or getting other people not to talk to another pupil
- Putting pressure on another pupil- for example, to run errands and do jobs, to give up
- possessions, to bring things from home
- Forcing a pupil to engage in sexualized activity or behaviour
- Unkind or threatening internet or mobile phone text messages or images (cyber bullying)
- The use of social media to negatively affect others

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4. Emotional and Physical symptoms linked to bullying

It is often hard to spot children who are experiencing targeting, harassment and bullying. By its nature it is an insidious activity that usually goes on out of sight of staff. The victim is often reluctant to come forward because they feel that 'telling' might only make matters worse for themselves and make the situation worse. The following symptoms might be an indication that a pupil is being bullied:

Emotional

- Lost confidence
- Loss of self-esteem
- Irritability
- Aggression
- Panic attacks
- Depression
- Suicidal thoughts

Physical

- Sleeplessness
- Nausea
- Shaking
- Heart racing
- Laziness
- Skin complaints
- Stomach aches
- Migraines and headaches

5. Who bullies?

This policy has used the following books, publication and websites as key points of reference:

- Bullying: A Practical Guide to Copying for Schools (Elliot M, 1991)
- Bullying: A Child's View (La Fontaine J, 1991)
- Fighting, Teasing and Bullying (Pearce J, 1989)
- Practical Approaches to Bullying (Smith P K and Thompson D, 1991)
- Bullying: don't suffer in silence (DfES Publication, 2002)
- Safe to Learn: embedding anti-bullying work in schools (DCSF, 2007)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (DfE, 2017)
- Supporting Children and Young Adults who are bullied: advice for schools (DfE, 2014)

It is clear from the literature that a significant number of our pupil's experience home circumstances which foster the development of bullying attitudes – for example:

- Poor parental role models

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- Aggressive male figures
- Poor relationship with mother
- Inconsistent punishment by parents
- Physically and verbally aggressive adults

"Bullies are associated with general anti-social rule breaking behaviour in school and in the community"

"They are often aggressive towards parents, teachers and siblings."

"Contrary to popular belief, bullying victim don't always differ much from other children"

<div align="right">Quotes from Tattum and Herbert, 1990)</div>

6. Who are the victims?
Any child can be targeted, harassed or bullied. There are, however, certain risk factors that will make the experience of bullying more likely. They include:
- Lacking close friends at school
- Being shy
- Coming from an overprotective family environment
- Being from a different ethnic group to the majority
- Having educational, social or medical needs
- Being a Looked After Child
- Being a carer
- Being a 'proactive victim' – a child who behaves inappropriately with others, barging in on games or being a nuisance

None of these characteristics can excuse allowing a child to be targeted, harassed or bullied.
It is safe to assume that we are always going to have to manage a proportion of children in our school who are potential (and actual) bullies and victims.

7. Our School Policy and Practice
The following guidelines provide a framework for containing and changing attitudes towards bullying. These have been compiled with reference to advice from the DfES anti-bullying guidance pack, Bullying: Don't suffer in silence (2002) and DCSF Safe to Learn (2007), Equality Act (2010), DfE Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017) and DfE Supporting Children and Young People who are bullied: advice for schools (2014). They are aimed at creating an ethos that will not tolerate the oppression of one person by another. These guidelines aim to establish a whole-school policy and contain both long and short-term strategies that involved the school organisation and curriculum.

- All pupils, parents and staff must recognise that any form of targeting, harassment and bullying is completely unacceptable in our school. This message will be made explicit when a child and his

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family/carers first come for interview; it will be stated very clearly in the pupil's handbook and will be reiterated regularly in school assemblies and tutor meetings.

- No member of staff or pupil must ever ignore a pupil being bullied or in distress as a result of being bullied. No tales of bullying must ever be discounted. They must be recorded in the bullying log book and thoroughly investigated. Seeing and doing nothing is professionally indefensible. It implies support for the aggressor and is the worst response an adult can offer. It offers no help to the victim and is an act of collusion with the bully.
- Every case of bullying must be followed up immediately (one study found 25% of teachers interviewed felt it was sometimes helpful to ignore bullying problems. This is not a view we subscribe to under any circumstances

1. The member of staff dealing with the incident must make an initial judgement as to its severity. More serious cases must be referred to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

2. Any adult witnessing, must write an incident report (use school recording system) stating:
a. When?
b. Where?
c. What happened?
d. Who was involved?
e. How was it dealt with?
f. What actions need to be taken?

3. SLT must be informed of this, once the incident has been deemed as bullying then the incident must also be recorded in the bullying log.

4. Victims need to be given support. They will need re-assurance that the matter will be dealt with discreetly and sensitively and that they will suffer no further occurrences of repercussions from disclosure. They are entitled to positive action: stopping the targeting, harassment and bullying immediately without implying that they are the cause of what has been done to them. It must be a priority to ensure that children who are the victims of bullying are given structured support through education staff, therapy and parents/carers. This should be accomplished through the existing handover/daily home contact and referral systems already in place. As members of staff, we must ensure that this happens.

5. Adults dealing with an incident must not be physically or verbally aggressive towards the aggressor. We must never bully the bully. It gives creditability, if we react in this way, to the very behaviour we seek to eliminate. We do, however, act very firmly and purposefully in our interventions with children who are producing anti-social hostile behaviour towards others.

6. The member of staff must make the unacceptable nature of the behaviour and its consequences clear to the bullying child. The range of sanctions available for minor incidents are outlined in the school behaviour policy. Something must be done, even if it is only discussing the incident with the child and keyworker at the end of

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the school day. The pupil must see that any form of targeting, harassment or bullying are taken seriously. More severe incidents will be dealt with by the senior staff. The parents, the local education authority, and the social worker (if applicable), will be informed in writing by the Headteacher.

7. A fixed term exclusion will be considered when there are repeated incidences of bullying. The Headteacher will make this decision, but it will only be used under very special circumstances (see guidance on Exclusions)

8. The school will not hesitate to exclude pupils whom they believe jeopardise the safety of other children or continually threaten their right to safety. Again, this will be used very infrequently and only after very careful consideration by staff and full consideration with parents and referring agencies.

9. When a formal complaint of bullying is received either from a pupil or a parent subsequently dealt with through the school's anti-bullying procedures that is not the end of the matter. At the conclusion of the process the member of staff who has dealt with the complaint will use the school's standard satisfaction survey for parents to ensure that the parent is happy with the way the school's system for dealing with bullying have worked and been effective. In the case of a child making a complaint of bullying, the key worker will carry out individual work with that pupil to ensure that the pupil's complaints have been effectively dealt with and the child concerned has suffered no significant long-term harm.

8. Positive steps to prevent bullying
1. Always be aware of the school's physical environment. It is difficult to specify where bullying is likely to occur in buildings and grounds such as ours, but by visiting 'quiet' locations frequently and by knowing where all the children you are responsible for are playing/occupied, difficulties are less likely to occur. Staff should familiarise themselves with the area risk assessments that deal with location-based bullying and ensure that the control measures detailed for each area of the school estate are followed.

2. Good supervision is a key requirement for controlling targeting, harassment and bullying behaviour and ensuring the safety and security of pupils. All colleagues will follow school policies with regard to supervision both during activities and especially during unstructured 'free time'. The school's Area risk assessments provide further information.

3. All staff must be vigilant for the early signs of distress in pupils. For example, isolation, a desire to remain with adults all the time, or erratic attendance. Although these behaviours may be symptomatic of other problems, they may indicate that bullying is taking place.

4. Likewise, everybody must be observant for any other indications that a child is being targeted.

5. Children must not 'buy off' the bully with sweets or other presents and they must never give in to demands for money. They are strongly recommended to talk to a member of staff.

6. Children are not encouraged to hit back. We are a 'talking' school and never advocate aggression as a means of solving problems. It may well also be contrary to the child's nature. We seek to resolve conflict creatively and constructively.

7. Non-violent behaviour must be recognised and celebrated. The means of rewarding it are detailed in the school's behaviour and discipline policy.

8. The victims of bullies need their self-esteem raised through activities designed to improve their social skills. They need support from all the involved adults, both at school and at home, to counter feelings of inferiority and guilt. Suggestions for suitable activities and strategies are the responsibility of all staff and will be reflected in individual support work, individual education plans and tutorial work.

9. Any sexist or racist comments must be challenged. Once again, a failure to act implies concurrence. We have a very determined equal opportunities policy and the ethos we are trying to maintain is well documented.

Bullying as subject will be addressed in the following ways:
- Through assemblies and tutorials. The school curriculum addresses the issue of bulling in various ways. Citizenship addresses the issue directly and attempts to make students aware of the issue and its implication for all concerned. It also attempts to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to deal with the various forms of bullying, which may occur. In religious education the emphasis is on care and respect for one another and an acceptance and acknowledgement of the different qualities each student brings to the school. In English, opportunities which arise from the study of literature are used to examine bullying and its consequences. Science, art, music and physical education directly encourage teamwork and sharing, as do most other subjects on the curriculum. Cyber bullying is addressed in Computing lessons and stand-alone lessons around the issues relating to bullying take place during the year particularly during Anti-Bullying Week every November.
- Park School works closely with Thames Valley PCSO Team to gain support with issues of bullying and Non-criminal bad behaviour that occurs on or off site
- Anti-bullying information leaflets are made available to parents, carers and pupils
- Ancillary/domestic staff must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying that they see. This coincides with their role in the school's policy on behaviour and discipline. It is discussed regularly in their meetings with supervisory staff.

9. Bullying outside school premises
Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises 'to such an extent as is reasonable'. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre. This behaviour may also be deemed as being non-criminal bad behaviour.
Where bullying/non-criminal bad behaviour outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The Headteacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or ant-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against the pupil. If the misbehaviour could

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be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying the teacher can only discipline the pupil on school premises or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the staff member.

Online bullying
What is Cyberbullying (Online bullying)?
Online bullying is often referred to as cyberbullying, meaning bullying via electronic means. This could be via a smart phone, computer, laptop, tablet, or online gaming platforms. It can take place on a range of online or mobile services, such as text, email, social networking sites, video-hosting sites, messenger, photo sharing services, chat, webcams, visual learning environments and online games. The next section looks at important information that every parent should know to prevent and respond appropriately to online bullying incidents.
(Anti Bullying Association)

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click. The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff who has been formally authorised by the Headteacher, that staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone. If an electronic device that is prohibited by the school rules has been seized and the member of staff has reasonable ground to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must give the device to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable. Material on the device that is suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, or that is a pornographic image of a child or an extreme pornographic image, should not be deleted prior to giving the device to the police.1 If a staff member finds material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, they can decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of school discipline.

10. Monitoring
The monitoring of bullying (using school incident forms and bullying logbook) should have regard to information about incidents of bullying and how they were resolved, both immediately and over the longer term. Monitoring procedures can be used for two purposes:
- To enable schools to follow up and record progress - Individual incidents which, on the surface may seem to be isolated occurrence, may be part of a much larger pattern of bullying behaviour. Monitoring can be helpful in identifying such patterns.
- To establish whether our anti-bullying practises are really being effective - Records of incidents can show whether bullying is becoming less frequent or changing in nature. The results can provide insights into ways in which practice needs changing or adapting. The monitoring of incidents will be carried out by the Pastoral Team to highlight any patterns and information passed to SLT.

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11. Evaluation

This policy will be deemed to be a success if:

- Staff are more vigilant and responsive to bullying
- Fewer pupils report being bullied or that they are bullying
- More pupils say that they would not join in buying someone else
- More pupils would tell a member of staff if they were being bullied

In conclusion, the following points are worth re-iterating:

- Targeting, harassment and bullying does not stop of its own accord. It must be stopped by all staff acting with a common purpose, through a commonly understood set of procedures. There is no perfect system for eradicating this problem. It is every present and needs to be dealt with firmly and constructively as part of the therapeutic ethos of the school.
- Small children who are bullied end to become larger children who seek to bully others. We need to break this pattern. We need healthy traditions which can only emerge from children feeling safe within our environment. How children treat others depends very much on how they themselves are treated. We must at all times protect them from the bully.
- A successful anti-bullying policy has the spin-ff effects of a reduction in general anti-social behaviour in the school. This enhances the personal and social environment of the school. It gives the personal safety and protection to each child which is his right and which we must constantly be vigilant to maintain.
- All actions taken in response to any incident involving bullying must be clearly recorded with appropriate follow up and feedback to all parties involved.

Further advice and information for all staff and pupils can be found at:
www.bullying.co.uk
www.standuptobullying.co.uk
www.childline.org.uk
www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk