Anti-Bullying Policy

Behaviour and welfare

SMS Changing Lives School

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ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

SMS Changing Lives School

Approved by:	Hecabe DuFraisse	**Date:**	August 2020
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This policy is disseminated to staff at relevant meetings and through line management and staff appraisal. The policy is referred to regularly in line with SEND training and is listed on the school website.

CONTENTS

1. **Policy Statement 3**
2. **What is Bullying? 3**
3. **Procedures for Preventing Bullying 7**
4. **Tackling Bullying..... 8**
5. **Complaints..... 9**

1. POLICY STATEMENT

All students at SMS Changing Lives School should feel free from fear and safe from harm.They all deserve to feel that they are cared for and secure in their placement.

All young people need a safe space in which to develop physically, emotionally and psychologically. At SMS Changing Lives we aim to create a family-based atmosphere and environment that does not accept or tolerate the oppression of one person by another and where victims and bullies are supported and enabled to overcome their difficulties.

All young people, parent/carers and staff are made aware of our approach in regard to bullying when they initially visit for interview and are kept updated and made aware of any issues throughout a student's placement.

At SMS, we recognize that the effects of bullying on the victims and those who are vulnerable in the placement can be profoundly harmful and long-lasting. We believe that the underlying issues at the root cause of any bullying must be addressed - bullies thrive on silence and secrecy. In all incidents of bullying at SMS, both the victim and perpetrator will receive support in line with our behaviour policy.

All members of staff will confront all forms of bullying (including cyber-bullying) in an open and honest manner and receive training on how to do so effectively. All forms of bullying or oppression, including that related to protected characteristics such as race, religion, disability, social, or physical difference, gender, age, or sexual orientation, must be addressed by all.

Everyone in the SMS community has a responsibility to address and challenge any form of bullying whenever and wherever it arises. It is the duty of all members of staff to promote positive attitudes and behaviour in such issues – a positive role model is a powerful educator.

1.1 WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is the abuse of power in a relationship. It is the wilful, conscious desire to distress, threaten, hurt, intimidate or frighten another, and may take many forms:

- Verbal – name calling/unpleasant or nasty comments.
- Physical – assault, pushing, nipping, any form of violence (this may be hidden as 'play fighting' or rough and tumble.
- Emotional/psychological – tormenting, humiliation, ridicule, pressure to conform.
- Social – being left out, people not talking to you.
- Material – possessions stolen or broken, extortion.

- Racist – racial taunts, gestures, graffiti.
- Homophobic – homophobic slurs, taunts, gestures, graffiti etc.
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact, abusive comments.
- Cyber-bullying is the use of electronic communication to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature.

It is important to be aware that bullying may take place between young people, between young people and adults and between adults.

Verbal and social forms of bulling are particularly common. Some forms of bullying can be construed as 'leadership'; 'bossiness' or a 'competitive nature', all of which leave the victim feeling unsupported. Some bullies act as individuals; others work in groups.

Onlookers who ignore bullying will be seen as condoning the actions.

The seriousness of bullying depends on a number of factors, but even in the short term, bullying of a 'minor' nature can have a longer-lasting effect.

Factors that may need to be considered include:

- How personal it was
- The ability of the bullying child to understand the impact of their actions
- Whether it was provoked or unprovoked
- Whether it was planned
- Whether the person was trapped
- The perceived status of the bully
- The reaction of onlookers

Bullies tend to rationalise their own behaviour to justify their treatment of the victim. A victim may in turn end up believing that they deserve to be bullied. The student's background and life history will very much influence whether they have a predisposition to either dominate or seek victim status.

Staff have a duty to be aware of a student's history to establish any causal influences on their behaviour. It is also important to be aware that a victim may in turn seek to bully others.

WHY DO SOME PEOPLE BULLY?

- They may lack confidence

- Unhappiness
- Jealousy
- Being a victim of someone else – including from the past
- They experience fear

The bully may want to:

- Feel superior
- Be popular
- Stop feeling weak
- Gain attention or material things
- Get rid of their own fears
- Get rid of frustration and anger that they are feeling
- Make up for lack of self-esteem
- Make up for lack of success

2.1 WHY DO SOME PEOPLE BECOME VICTIMS?

There sometimes is no apparent reason why a person becomes a victim. Some may be seen as a victim or target if they are seen as:

- Vulnerable – they may look as if they cannot stand up for themselves or they may present as fearful, quiet, sensitive, or shy.

- Different – this may be to do with gender, colour, religion, height, weight, appearance, race or sexual orientation.

- On their own – a person may be bullied if they appear to be a loner.

2.2 DIFFICULTIES IN REPORTING BULLYING

People and students may be reluctant to report bullying because:

- They are frightened of reprisal from the bully

- Not wanting to tell tales or 'grass'

- Shame at not being able to deal with the problem

- Not wanting to worry parents or carers
- Fear of losing friends or being isolated

2.3 SYMPTOMS OF BULLYING

This is not a definitive list or exhaustive guide to the symptoms of bullying. The signs themselves are not an indicator of bullying, but sudden or even subtle changes of behaviour can be indicators of the stress of being bullied.

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- Withdrawal
- Over sensitivity
- Aggression
- Loss of concentration and motivation
- Missing possessions
- Stealing
- Injuries
- Low self-esteem
- Disturbed sleep
- Enuresis
- The victim becomes a bully
- Regression
- Depression

3 THE HARM DONE BY BULLYING

Bullying in its severest forms can have a devastating effect upon those who suffer it. It can make their lives a misery by making them feel vulnerable and lacking in confidence. As a result, it is likely that every aspect of their life will suffer. They may even become depressed and ill and in extreme circumstances some victims have taken their own lives.

Bullying may be the trigger to other problems e.g. truancy, eating disorders etc. The behaviour of bullies invariably ultimately makes them unpopular. They can however exert such pressures that onlookers or witnesses themselves may change their behaviour to avoid becoming a victim. Bullying has a detrimental effect in itself and can contaminate whole groups of people and communities.

4 PROCEDURES FOR PREVENTING BULLYING

- **Setting the right ethos** – give explicit and consistent messages that bullying is unacceptable. Seek agreement between staff and students as to what constitutes bullying (this can be done in PSHE lessons/form meetings). Regularly review the routines of the placement to identify factors that might allow or encourage bullying. Ensure positive role modelling is used by all staff/students. All types of bullying must be reported by staff.

- **Encouraging young people to report bullying by** – providing a complaints procedure for all. Inform all students of the necessity to report bullying they have witnessed. Provide opportunities for students to communicate their concerns through a range of mediums and staff support.

- **Raising awareness** –
  - Keep anti-bullying issues a high priority.
  - Display anti-bullying posters and help line telephone numbers.
  - Hold e-Safety briefings with staff, students and parents.
  - Discussing the outcomes of bullying with both victims and bullies.
  - Inform parents and other carers of issues of bullying.
  - Inform students of bullying policies at interview/admission.

- **Supporting those that are bullied by –**
  - reassuring them that they are not to blame.
  - creating systems for the early identification of vulnerable children.
  - encouraging others in the placement to support and 'befriend' victims of bullying.
  - developing strategies for avoiding further bullying.

- **Involving bystanders** –
  - develop a group ethos that disapproves of bullying.
  - ensure that all know that to ignore bullying is to condone or even encourage the problem.

- **Dealing with problem times and places** –
  - identify those times and places.
  - Raise staff awareness of these.
  - ensure high levels of supervision.

- **Change bullying behaviour by** –
  - making bullies accountable for their actions and aware of the consequences of their behaviour.
  - Improve communication strategies in dealing with student conflict.
  - Improve student understanding of strategies they can employ to manage their behaviour.
  - Develop student self-awareness and self-esteem.

- Ensure that students are purposefully occupied to prevent 'boredom' becoming an excuse for bullying behaviour.

- **Regularly review policies** –
  - e.g. Code of Conduct, Professional Relations,ICT Acceptable Use, Rewards and Consequences policy for staff; Digital Media.

- **Reviewing and developing procedures** –
  - Monitor systems that check and analyse level of bullying incidents.
  - Have clear follow-up procedures to inform and monitor.
  - Ensure that there is a support system in place for those who are bullied and victimised.

5. TACKLING BULLYING

5.1 Key principals

- Search for solutions not problems.
- Allocate responsibility, not blame.
- Look forward not backward.
- Focus upon changing behaviours.
- Examine relationship processes not incidents.
- Resolve the problem, not establish guilt.

5.2 ACTION TO BE TAKEN

- Any incidence or allegation of bullying is to be treated seriously and promptly.
- Incidents to be recorded on Sleuth by a senior member of staff. The investigation that follows and the outcome should also be recorded on Sleuth.
- Incidents of bullying should be reported to management via other senior members of staff.
- All staff should be aware of any students being bullied and who the perpetrators are.
- The victims should be supported in strategies to manage the situation.
- The bully should also receive support and guidance in strategies to manage their behaviour.
- In cases of cyber-bullying, the evidence should be saved by taking screen shots etc. Ask the perpetrator to take down offensive material (refer to provider policies). Failing that, report the material to the service provider directly.

6. COMPLAINTS

There may be times when it is felt that the provider has not handled the situation to your satisfaction. In the first instance, please contact the Head Teacher.

If you are still not satisfied you may contact Jonny Davies (Proprietor) on 0161 686 6462 and request that he will return your call. See Complaints policy for further information.

7. External Contacts

- NSPCC - National Helpline: Tel: 0808 800 5000
- Childline: Tel: 0800 11 11