The GALLERY TRUST
A community of special schools

Orion Academy

Anti-Bullying Policy

2026-2027

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'Bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals. It can be a barrier to their learning and have serious consequences for their mental health. Bullying which takes place at school does not only affect an individual during childhood but can have a lasting effect on their lives well into adulthood'. (DfES, 2017)

Introduction

Orion Academy is committed to fostering a nurturing, safe, and inclusive environment where all students can learn free from bullying. This policy sets out our commitment to prevent, address, and eliminate bullying in all forms.

Our policy aims to:

- Provide a safe and supportive learning environment.
- Promote kindness, respect, and understanding among all members of our school community.
- Ensure that students learn in a setting free from all forms of bullying.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or a group, repeatedly carried out over time, that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally.

Types of bullying include:

- Physical: such as hitting or physically intimidating someone, or using inappropriate or unwanted physical contact towards someone
- Attacking Property: such as damaging, stealing or hiding someone's possessions
- Verbal: such as name calling, spreading rumours about someone, using derogatory or offensive language or threatening someone
- Psychological: such as deliberately excluding or ignoring people
- Cyber: such as using text, email or other social media to write or say hurtful things about someone

Bullying behaviours are characterised by the following attributes:

- The behaviour is repeated
- The behaviour is intentional
- The person or group who are carrying out the bullying behaviours have more power than the victim or victims of bullying
- The behaviour causes physical or emotional harm for the individual or group who is targeted

Bullying can be based on any of the following things:

- Race (racist bullying)
- Religion of belief
- Culture
- Social class or socio-economic background
- Gender
- Sexual orientation (homophobic or biphobic bullying)
- Trans identity, including non-binary identity (transphobic bullying) •
- Special educational needs (SEN) additional learning needs (ALN) additional support needs (ASN) or disability.
- Appearance
- Related to home or another personal situation
- Related to another vulnerable group of people

Reporting Bullying Behaviour

- Positive Action Awareness of bullying is covered in our work with students through: Assemblies
- Working with the Anti-Bullying Alliance
- Anti-bullying week every November
- Anti – bullying questionnaire
- Curriculum opportunities where issues of diversity and healthy relationships are discussed Circle Time in the classroom
- One to one and group discussions
- Student displays
- Dealing with situations promptly.
- A restorative approach to dealing with problems and conflict with a focus on repairing any harm that may have been done through Restorative Meetings

In the classroom, consideration is given to:

- Room layout
- Availability of resources
- Guidelines for classroom behaviour, consistent with those set out in the school's Behaviour and Relationship Policy
- Consideration of pupil voice is crucial in agreeing and maintaining rules and routines
- Use of positive reinforcement and class reflection time after each lesson (Learning Reflection points)
- Use of circle time in the classroom enabling students to discuss problems and possible resolutions
- Developing our pupils' self-esteem so they feel confident to speak up for themselves.
- Monitoring and addressing inappropriate behaviour
- Flexible learning practices, taking account of different learning styles
- Co-operative rather than competitive practices
- Promotion of independent learning
- Opportunities for individualised interventions to support the understanding and impact of any form of bullying Opportunities for peer mentoring

Out of the classroom, consideration is given to:

- Positive promotion of restorative principles to encourage all to respect themselves as well as others
- Encouraging students to choose appropriate free association activities and providing break time activities daily
- Providing an alternative safe play option
- Careful supervision of all areas, particularly during taxi arrivals and departures, break times and lunch times ensuring opportunities to bully are minimised
- Adults providing positive role models • Use of restorative principles in school (See Behaviour and Relationship Policy)

Identifying bullying

Pupils often do not report bullying when it happens to them. It is, therefore, very important for all adults to be alert to some factors that might indicate that bullying has taken place or is occurring.

These include:

- Sudden changes to patterns of absence
- Unexplained changes in a pupil's personality e.g. a normally outgoing pupil becoming sullen, withdrawn or aggressive.
- Passive acceptance of inappropriate behaviour and/or language
- Possessions go missing or work is defaced.
- A decrease in pupil progress and levels of achievement, which are not easily explained.
- A pupil who stops participating in favourite activities
- A pupil who takes a long time eating his/her lunch and is unwilling to go out at lunch time or break / snack time.
- Pupils who stay close to members of staff during free association when this has not been the case previously.
- A pupil has possessions which are damaged or 'go missing'
- A pupil has unexplained bruising or cuts
- A pupil who is frightened to say what is wrong.

This list is not exhaustive, neither is it always complete evidence that bullying is taking place. Staff should use their professional judgement when deciding to take matters further.

We also recognise the concept of "counter-connecting" — where a student may be attempting to connect, regulate, or express themselves but ends up impacting another negatively without intent to harm

Links to Other Policies

- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Internet Safety Policy
- Equality Policy

This policy is available to all on the school website and is promoted through school communications to ensure everyone within the school community understands their rights and responsibilities concerning bullying.