



# Policy

## Policy to counter bullying

This policy was originally formulated by the School Council in 1998, and has since been updated.

### Aims

- To help pupils, staff and parents understand what bullying is.
- To provide pupils with relevant information, skills and attitudes to help them to resist bullying. In doing so, it is hoped that the pupils will feel confident that they can confide in staff, parents or prefects on these issues.
- To work with parents to build an understanding of the School's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all pupils.
- To provide guidance for staff in managing bullying cases.

**Statement of principle on bullying:** Oakham School believes that bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. It affects those pupils who watch and less aggressive pupils who can be drawn in by group pressure. We do not accept that bullying is an inevitable part of school life, or a necessary part of growing up that sorts itself out given time. We realise that certain jokes, insults, intimidating and threatening behaviour, written abuse, electronic abuse and violence are to be found in society, but no one person or group should have to accept this kind of behaviour. We believe that only when all issues of bullying are addressed will a person be able to benefit fully from the opportunities available at Oakham.

**Definition of bullying.** The line between "having a joke" and bullying can be thin, but usually the distinction is clear. Bullying is repeatedly and deliberately causing somebody pain or hurt. It may be felt physically or emotionally, be done face-to-face or electronically, individually or in groups, in public or private. If an action sets out to hurt or harm and does so, it is bullying.

**Sexual Bullying.** Sexual bullying refers to any bullying behaviour, whether physical or non-physical, that is based on a person's sexuality or gender. It can be carried out to a person's face, behind their back or by the use of technology.

For example: Using sexual words to put someone down; gossiping and spreading rumours (including graffiti) about someone's sexuality and sex life; touching someone in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable and sexting - sending, requesting or making sexual images electronically.

**Respect for others.** Every member of the school should be aware that everyone is different and should also respect other people's views, wishes and habits. Bullying can arise from a lack of respect for others and can occur in a variety of ways. Whether it is physical, verbal –where it can be disguised as "banter" - emotional or a lack of respect for other people's property, bullying will not be tolerated within the school community.

### **Measures to prevent bullying.**

The School takes active measures to prevent bullying:

- i. Tutors draw their tutees' attention to this policy at the start of each academic year.
- ii. Issues relating to bullying are discussed in the PSHE programme at all levels, especially in Lower School and the Middle School. Friendship, peer group influences and self-esteem are discussed as a means to developing the right sort of personal confidence and therefore avoiding bullying.
- iii. Guidelines for staff on how to manage bullying are published in the Staff Handbook.
- iv. In their daily school lives pupils are encouraged to treat everyone with respect.
- v. A bullying questionnaire is conducted every year to assess bullying and identify patterns. Housemasters or Housemistresses use the responses to the questionnaire to keep bullying issues under review, and raise awareness with House tutors, prefects, and the pupils.
- vi. Reported cases of bullying are collated each year by the Senior Deputy Head, and reviewed by the Headmaster.

### **Policy to prevent cyberbullying.**

This policy was written in conjunction with the school council and PTC

**Cyberbullying** is the use of Information Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones, social websites, Photographs, email, text messaging and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else. It can be particularly unpleasant as it can take place at any time and can intrude into spaces that have previously been regarded as safe or personal.

The audience can be very large and reached rapidly. The difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages including sexting, means the scale and scope of cyberbullying can be greater than for other forms of bullying.

The school community has a duty to protect all its members and provide a safe, healthy environment. Any member of Oakham School who is involved in cyberbullying, be it in or out of school hours can expect to be subject to the school bullying sanctions.

### **Measures to prevent cyberbullying:**

- Pupils are encouraged to understand and talk about cyberbully including sexting in tutorials, assemblies and IT lessons.
- Pupils are asked, by their tutor, to read the cyberbullying policy and ask any questions to help them understand it.
- Pupils are advised to
  - Always respect others
  - Think before you send
  - Treat your password like your toothbrush –keep it to yourself.
  - Block the bully – learn how to block or report someone who is behaving badly.
  - Don't retaliate or reply!
  - Save the evidence
  - Make sure you tell someone: your parents, your tutor or Housemaster or Housemistress, a prefect or the Decem.

Parents are encouraged to know what their children are putting on face book

- Parents are asked to
- Report cyber-bullying to the Housemaster or Housemistress, even if it is taking place outside school.
- Ask your children to report cyberbullying to you.

*Guidelines for staff on how to handle cyber bullying issues are issued in the staff handbook.*

*Cyberbullying is another form of bullying and is therefore dealt with in the same way as other bullying incidents.*

### **Management of bullying incidents and sanctions.**

All staff are expected to take a very pro-active approach to behaviour in the school. Our expectations are clear and they are the same whether in House, in the classroom or engaged in extra-curricular activities. Kindness, mutual respect and tolerance must be at the heart of what we all do here at Oakham and the importance of these characteristics is reiterated in our Chapel services, in assemblies, in Houses and in tutorials and is modelled by the staff in their relationships with one another and with the students. Further guidelines and advice for staff handling bullying matters can be found on page 54 of the Staff Handbook.

The punishments for bullying must allow both sides to be aware that bullying is occurring and, if and when it continues, be severe. There are therefore three steps to be taken when a case of bullying is discovered and reported.

**Stage 1:** this offers a “no blame” approach to both parties. The victim(s) and the bully(ies) may have a discussion with a teacher, not necessarily associated with their house(s), to be chosen by the pupils involved. This discussion allows both parties to give their opinions and to try and work out a solution which is mutually agreeable. The aim is to allow bullies to realise that they are causing unhappiness and that their behaviour will not be tolerated. Everything in this discussion is likely to be recorded, in writing, kept by the teacher and filed by the Housemaster or Housemistress. Following this a letter may be sent to parents outlining what has occurred and the outcome of the discussion. This will be confidential although Housemasters or Housemistresses and tutors will be informed.

**Stage 2:** if, after this discussion, the bullying continues, it will be assumed that it is deliberate and a more severe approach will need to be taken. Sanctions will depend on the severity of the bullying.

**Stage 3:** if, after these two steps the bullying continues, it will be assumed that the pupil has no respect for those around him/her and this will not be tolerated within the school community. It is likely that the Headmaster will require the pupil to leave the school.

Housemasters or Housemistresses report bullying incidents to the Senior Deputy Head, who will determine the appropriate sanctions for bullying. Sanctions may be imposed and Stage 1 by-passed if bullying is found to be clear-cut. All cases of bullying will be investigated in the interests of all concerned and appropriate guidance / support will be offered as necessary.

Sanctions for bullying as with all other sanctions, are recorded on OSIS. A letter is sent home by the Senior Deputy Head explaining what has happened and the sanction that has been imposed. The details are then recorded both with the Housemaster or mistress and with the Senior Deputy Head.

JLMN September 2017

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