



## York Steiner School Bullying-Prevention Policy Keeping our children happy and safe

***Bullying of any nature is not acceptable at York Steiner School.***

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## Our Approach

In choosing Waldorf Education, a parent at York Steiner School is subscribing to a way of educating children that is markedly different from the prevailing orthodoxy.

York Steiner School has a zero tolerance to bullying. We intend to:

- Provide a school environment in which children feel safe and able to express themselves without fear or intimidation.
- To maintain a co-operative ethos in which the school, the children, and the parents work together to prevent bullying.
- Help children to gain the personal qualities and self-esteem to minimise the risk of bullying. Identify children at risk and respond positively to their needs.
- Identify children at risk and respond firmly to incidents of bullying.
- Encourage a 'telling' culture, through daily class life

In the course of normal child development we may sometimes observe characteristics which, if not properly addressed, would develop into entrenched negative behaviour. Bullying would be an example of this. We see the curriculum as supporting and enabling the children to progress through their childhood in a balanced way.

Sometimes a teacher may need to give a particular child or situation increased focus. This might include the use of pedagogical stories, talking to the group or child involved, consulting with the whole teaching body in a child study, and meeting with parents.

We aim to maintain open channels of communication with parents who in many cases are also able to pick up subtle signs that bullying is taking place. We therefore value open and clear communication.

We aim to encourage and promote good behaviour. We give positive reinforcement for effort and good behaviour within the classroom.

## What is bullying?

It is an abuse of power. It is a repeated, deliberate act of aggression which causes embarrassment, pain or discomfort to another. It takes many forms and may include physical attacks, verbal insults, extortion and theft, threatening and obscene gestures, spreading malicious rumours and deliberately excluding people from a group or activity.

### ***Bullying behaviour is normally characterised by:***

- Deliberate aggression, where someone wilfully seeks to harm another.
- A perceived imbalance of power where those being harmed feel powerless.
- Aggression that leads to pain and distress.
- Pain that can be physical and/or emotional.
- Action that takes place over a period of time – a single, isolated incident of aggression would not normally be described as bullying.

### ***Examples of bullying behaviour can include:***

- Writing offensive things about someone using graffiti, notes, letters.
- Verbally abusing someone by name calling, making threats, using sarcasm, social media etc.
- Physically hurting someone by pushing, shoving, tripping up etc.
- Damaging personal property by tearing clothes, ripping books etc.
- Excluding someone by making sure they are isolated from their friends and peers.
- Inciting others to bully.
- Using technology such as text messages, email and social media.
- Humiliating someone because they are seen to be 'different' (e.g. they wear different clothes, come from a different culture, have a different value system, follow a different religion etc.
- Homophobic- bullying someone due to their sexual orientation.
- Transphobic (incidents are those perceived to be insulting to someone's gender identity or to transgendered people)
- Sexual (incidents include intrusive language, damage to sexual reputation, inappropriate touching and other behaviour perceived to involve unwanted sexual attention)

## Encouraging a 'telling' culture

We recognise how difficult it can be for pupils and parents to take action on bullying. Also how bullying thrives on fear and secrecy.

The key messages for pupils are:

- If you are being bullied, tell someone. Don't suffer in silence.
- If you see someone being bullied, tell an adult immediately.
- Don't think that it's OK to be a 'by-stander', this can give the impression that you think that bullying is acceptable when it never is.
- Children are encouraged to report the incident to any adult in the school setting. They may write a note.
- Tell their teacher, mention it to a member of staff or have a quiet chat with a Teaching Assistant or any other adult staff member.

### ***Procedures for all Staff***

- Staff should be watchful and observe relationships. Where appropriate, observations should be brought to the weekly meetings.
- If staff have any doubt or concerns then speak immediately to a member of the safeguarding team
- There should be appropriate supervision of pupils during unstructured time.
- Children should always be made aware and regularly reminded that they should always report incidents or situations that make them uneasy to an adult member of staff. This should be reported to Class Teacher and Safeguarding Team.
- Staff to record any incidents on a bullying report form immediately
- Discuss the matter within the weekly Pedagogical meetings
- Report any serious incidents to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

## Procedures

We will consider each alleged case of bullying individually, noting that the school includes children from early years to adolescence. We remain sensitive to the fact that younger children who are learning to manage their behaviour may misinterpret one off incidents as bullying and are aware that relationships are fluid at this age. Indeed, Children can be the best of friends one day and at loggerheads the next. Parents and staff therefore need to be aware that temporary breakdowns in relationships do not necessarily constitute bullying.

### ***School procedure for dealing with incidents of bullying Managing and Recording Incidents***

Reports of alleged bullying incidents can come from a number of sources including pupils, parents/carers, staff and members of the community.

All bullying incidents will be recorded on a bullying report form

Staff treat all reports of bullying very seriously. Information should be recorded and also passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead

### ***If a staff member observes an incident***

Remember a swift response is essential in order to act effectively and pedagogically.

- Stop the incident
- Confirm that the child is not physically injured. If the child is physically injured, fetch the nearest first aider.
- Show concern and support for the child who has been bullied (in presence of the other children involved if appropriate).
- Wait for the situation to calm before trying to find out what happened and then take time to listen carefully and establish the facts and factors involved. Bystanders may provide important background information.
- Tell both parties that the matter will be dealt with and that other teachers and the parents of those involved will be informed.
- Talk over the incident, the problems behind it, and possible solutions with all concerned as soon as possible
- Ensure a written account is made and provided to class teacher and DSL
- The Class Teacher should be informed.

### ***When reviewing an incident we will try to establish:***

- Which pupils were involved.
- The nature and the extent of the bullying and where it was taking place.
- The effects on the person(s) being bullied
- The nature of the relationship between the perpetrator(s) of the bullying and those experiencing it.
- If there were any triggers to the behaviour
- The support and disciplinary measures required to try to resolve the difficulty.

Our priority is to restore a sense of safety and wellbeing in the person who has experienced the bullying and to encourage better behaviour from those who have perpetrated it. Some incidents are resolved quickly and with limited intervention, other incidents can be very complex and demand a great deal of skill and expertise. Some incidents of bullying may require support from outside agencies, such as social workers, G.Ps etc.

### ***Sanctions***

When responding to a particular incident we will consider (in-line with our Behaviour Policy)

- The age of the individuals involved.
- The nature of the incident.
- Whether there are any behavioural/learning needs which could affect an individual's behaviour towards others.
- Whether the individuals have been involved in any previous incidents.
- The duty of care to all pupils and staff

In the first instance, when bullying has been confirmed, the bully is counselled and a sanction is enforced which reflects the seriousness of the particular incident eg reprimand, withdrawal of privileges, written apology.

In exceptional circumstances, bullying may result in exclusion from school

### ***Involving Parents/Carers***

We will inform parents/carers of any incidents of bullying we are investigating. After an incident of bullying has been confirmed we will ensure that all parents/carers know:

- The steps that will be taken to resolve the incident.
- The progress towards a satisfactory conclusion

## **Consequences**

In most cases we will seek to assist children who have not been getting along well together to resolve their differences. How this is managed will depend on the ages of the children and will be different in every case.

The perpetrator of bullying is also a victim of his or her own actions and will be offered support.

However, in more serious cases, where we have been unable to promote positive behaviour changes, we will consider the following sanctions:

- Temporary removal of a child from a group
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Detention
- Withholding treats such as lunchtime activities, participation in trips.
- Temporary exclusion from school
- Permanent exclusion from school
- For rare and serious violent behaviour it might be necessary to involve the police and/or other agencies

## **Staff Awareness**

We take seriously the need for staff to be actively aware of the vigilance and understanding required to ensure the safety of our children from all aspects of bullying, and of the steps necessary for prevention and resolution.

To this end we take seriously the regular training of staff and their understanding and implementation of our Anti-bullying Policy.

***This policy should be read in conjunction with all other safeguarding policies as they all work together to safeguard the child, staff and school. These policies collectively support Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018***

## **Approval & Review**

This policy was approved by the Board of Trustees on: December 2018

Policy review date: December 2019