

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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Approval level	Executive Board

Approved by (Name, date, signature)

Executive Board, 15 February 2024
Executive Board Chair, David Kreyling
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Omnia Foundation website

POLICY FOR ANTI-BULLYING

Mission

We believe in investing in people. As professionals in the teaching and training professions, we strive to provide a better future for the children, young people and home settings we work with. Success for us means unleashing the potential of each individual so they can grow, develop and reach the potential of which they are capable. Our values are grounded in our determination to be the change we want to see in the world, through passion, commitment and integrity. We strive to plant a seed of kindness and compassion in a generation that will produce resilience and hope and enable them to aspire and achieve productive and fulfilled lives. Our success is measured in the lives we changed.

At the Omnia Foundation, we create a secure and safe environment that encourages communication, self-belief, mutual respect and success. We provide a rich and balanced curriculum that develops every child, allowing them to achieve their true potential.

THIS POLICY HAS BEEN WRITTEN BY THE OMNIA FOUNDATION STAFF TEAM FOLLOWING CROSS-FOUNDATION WORK WITH ALL STUDENTS

Aims of the policy:

This policy aims to

- Ensure that all students, staff, home settings and directors are aware of and fully understand
 - a) the foundation's definition of bullying
 - b) the foundation's procedures and protocols, including record keeping, regarding bullying and bullying actions
- Ensure that all stakeholders, especially students, feel safe and that all members of the foundation feel confident to voice their concerns and have them addressed
- Set out its expectations of students, staff, home settings and directors and their roles and responsibilities for promoting a culture of anti-bullying
- Set out the procedures and protocols put in place by the foundation to prevent and respond to incidents of bullying and bullying actions
- Reflect the core values of the Omnia Foundation and promote equality and inclusivity
- Promote positive, pro-social relationships with the intention of reducing incidents of bullying and bullying actions
- Broaden understanding of different types of bullying and raise awareness of the indicators when a person is being bullied

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Me, Myself & I Policy, Rights and Responsibilities Policy, Child Protection Policy and Digital Safety Policy.

Principles of the policy

The Omnia Foundation recognises that all its students have identified special educational needs as outlined in their Education, Health and Care Plans and that they will have experienced negativity in relationships within educational settings and beyond, due to their personal difficulties in managing their actions, reactions and responses in social interactions.

We understand that, at times, relationships present challenges and that this can be demotivating for students and can lead to disengagement and declining attendance.

In addition, our students' needs place them within a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. Therefore, we acknowledge that each incident of bullying or bullying actions must be addressed on a case-by-case basis and that outcomes may differ in each instance.

The policy has been written with the Anti-Bullying Alliance's Ten Key Principles to prevent and respond to bullying:

- We listen - to all stakeholders which influences strategies and approaches to prevent, report and respond to incidents
 - We are inclusive - everyone is valued
 - We respect each other - staff are role models in how they treat others
 - We challenge all forms of discrimination
 - We celebrate difference - across the foundation community
 - We understand what bullying is and isn't
 - We believe each other's concerns and take them seriously - all reports of bullying are acknowledged and addressed fully
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- We strongly encourage all members of the foundation to report incidents of bullying and bullying actions - all members of the foundation community know how to report incidents of bullying
- We implement actions that take account of the views of all involved
- These principles underpin all policies across the foundation

OMNIA Foundation core values

This policy reflects the following aspects of the Omnia Foundation values framework:

Open-minded

- We help to create an environment of trust

Motivated

- We continually strive to create the best environment for the foundation to operate at its most effective

Noble

- We lead by example on the importance and impact of building strong relationships across the foundation

Independent

- We understand and manage how others perceive us

Achievers

- We promote an open culture where people feel empowered to try new things and share new ideas

What Is Bullying?

The Omnia Foundation defines bullying as the repetitive hurtful or unkind actions deliberately targeting an individual or a group by another individual or group where the relationship involves an imbalance of power.

It can be defined using the STOP acronym:

Several Times On Purpose

Bullying can

- be verbal, physical or psychological
 - be based on any of the following: race, religion or belief, culture or class, gender, sexual orientation (homophobic or biphobic bullying), gender identity (transphobic bullying), special educational needs or disability, appearance or health conditions, related to home or other personal situation, related to another group of vulnerable people
 - happen face-to-face or online.
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It can include but is not limited to the following actions:

Physical - pushing; poking; kicking; biting; hitting; slapping; spitting; vandalism

Verbal - name calling; sarcasm; spreading rumours; threats; teasing; belittling

Emotional - isolating others, tormenting; threatening gestures; ridicule; humiliation; Intimidation; manipulation or coercion

Sexual - unwanted physical contact; inappropriate touching; abusive comments; homophobic, biphobic, transphobic comments; sexting; exposure to inappropriate content

Online/Cyber bullying - posting on social media; sharing photos without permission; sending abusive messages; exclusion from group chats

The Omnia Foundation recognises that for students with special educational needs, the understanding of relationships and the dynamics within them can be problematic to navigate. It is of the utmost importance that all members of the foundation are fully aware of how we define bullying, as some students may lack the capacity to grasp the nature of certain actions.

The foundation considers the following to be central when dealing with reports of bullying:

- **Context:** certain actions can be deemed acceptable or unacceptable depending on the relationships. For example, play fighting may be a regular and fun occurrence in some households but such "rough and tumble" may be regarded as inappropriate in others
- **Perception:** some individuals may not be aware of the impact of their actions on others and similarly some individuals may not be aware of others' intentions when acting in a certain way. For example, a student with autism may not be aware that another student's sarcasm towards them is intended to be hurtful.

Bullying is not:

- A one-off fight or argument
- A friend or peer being nasty
- An on-going argument with a friend
- Disliking someone

Whilst these actions are not deemed to be bullying, they can nonetheless cause hurt to another person and will therefore be dealt with in line with other policies, e.g. Rights & Responsibilities.

Why is it important to respond to bullying?

The Omnia Foundation believes that bullying can affect a child's development, have lasting impact into adulthood and on their role in society. This can in turn have an adverse effect on

- Life opportunities
- Mental health
- Healthy relationships
- Capacity to learn

In order to minimise the impact of bullying on a targeted individual, it is important to take reports of bullying seriously and to create an environment where all stakeholders feel confident that their concerns will be addressed.

At the Omnia Foundation, we do this in line with the Anti-Bullying Alliance 10 Key Principles and our Core Values, as outlined above. We respond to all reports of bullying in order to challenge any underlying attitudes or biases, values and beliefs which conflict with our own inclusive ethos. We understand that all our students are subject to different influences in their lives and that part of our role is to prepare them for life beyond the foundation and to help them become good citizens.

Our aim is to prevent bullying actions from reoccurring in order to protect all members of the foundation from harm.

The Omnia Foundation also recognises that individuals who are happy do not need to bully. Therefore, individuals who use bullying actions for whatever reason will also need support in order to be able to build and maintain positive pro-social relationships both within the foundation and beyond.

Indicators to suggest that an individual may be being targeted

Indicators of bullying are varied and often difficult to identify as they could suggest other issues related to the individual's welfare.

There may be changes in presentation and behaviours which may include reluctance to attend educational setting, heightened reactions and responses, becoming withdrawn, avoidance of activities/people/places or self-isolation, increased risk-taking or lack of engagement with or progress in learning.

Physical signs may include unexplained cuts, bruises, marks (including self-harming), wearing many layers, covering up, nail-biting and missing or damaged personal items or clothing.

With regards to cyber bullying, it may be that conversations are overheard among students that an individual has been removed from a group chat or members of the foundation may receive screenshots of conversations within group chats or from feeds from social media profiles.

Prevention

In order to prevent bullying, the Omnia Foundation has a cross-foundation approach through education and inclusivity:

- students undertake an induction process that helps them to safely develop peer relationships in a supported way
- Staff undertake an induction process that involves safeguarding training and reading of policies which directly affect their work with the student body, of which this policy forms part
- The Me, Myself & I Policy outlines the PSHE curriculum which addresses bullying from a learning and teaching perspective but also outlines "teachable moments" where learning is adapted to suit the current needs of all the students, for example, when there has been an incident of bullying

We have clear expectations for all stakeholders, whilst encouraging a safe environment where curiosity and questioning is welcomed.

Foundation staff model positive, pro-social relationships and inclusivity and challenge inappropriate language whenever they witness it.

Staff know how to recognise the indicators of bullying so that they can respond in a timely manner.

In line with the Rights & Responsibilities Policy, staff and students recognise and promote a culture of positive reactions and responses through nominations for values postcards, certificates and the Jack Petchey Award.

Student Voice is sought regularly through the student council and questionnaires and is used to inform policy, create and renew expectations, plan the curriculum and formulate new strategies and approaches to anti-social reactions and responses.

Procedures

If bullying is witnessed by a member of staff or student, then this will potentially need to be addressed under the procedures outlined in the Critical Incident Policy.

Follow-up work to the incident will include:

- Determining if the incident witnessed is bullying: staff will review the definition to determine if this is a bullying incident or something else
- Exploring the history between the students involved: has this happened before? Is/Are the student(s) worried it will happen again? Are any of the students involved in rival gangs?

If bullying is reported –

- Staff will gather as much information as they can: who reported it? How do they know?
 - The report will be added to CPOMS and records checked for any other concerns that could be related
 - A Team Around the Child (TAC) meeting may be convened: is this bullying? What strategies/interventions can we use? What risk assessments are needed?
 - Home settings will be informed of our findings and the steps/strategies that will be put in place
 - Information gathered will be shared with all staff in briefing so that the situation can be monitored
 - Update CPOMS with actions and add bullying category to original report if it is deemed to be so
 - Identified staff will meet with students to share findings and plans
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If it is found to be bullying...

The response we adopt at the Omnia Foundation is based on strategies promoted by the Anti-Bullying Alliance

Every effort is made to stop the bullying reoccurring. Through the steps outlined above, we:

- identify those involved and what roles they played
- educate the students on the various roles that there are within a bullying dynamic
- use SMART thinking around bullying scenarios
- use a restorative approach to set clear expectations and create agreements between those involved
- create a risk assessment identifying times of day or areas on-site where a target could be vulnerable
- update CPOMS
- arrange regular check-ins over time with all those involved to see if things have improved, that the target feels safe and that the bully is achieving control of their feelings

Outcomes

The purpose of the outcomes will always be to make students and staff feel safe and valued at the Omnia Foundation though this will look different for each student as they are all unique individuals and learn differently.

If, following our procedures, a student is judged to have bullied, the Rights & Responsibilities Policy would be applied to their situation.

If, following our procedures, a student is judged to be the target of bullying, therapeutic support will be put in place to ensure their emotional wellbeing.

Throughout this, all efforts will be made by staff to reconcile and repair relationships.

All those involved will continue to be monitored to ensure that the bullying is not repeated. There will also be a weekly meeting with an Emotional Wellbeing Co-ordinator to check-in and identify any on-going issues that remain potentially unresolved

HELP ORGANISATIONS:

Childline (for under 18s) 0800 1111

Samaritans (for 18+) 116 123

Family Lives (for home settings) 0808 800 2222

Visit the Kidscape website www.kidscape.org.uk for further support, links and advice

For complaints :

Coram Children's Legal Centre, Wellington House

4th Floor, 90-92 Butt Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3DA

E-mail: info@coramclc.org.uk

OR

Child Law Advice

For family or child law call 0300 330 5480

For education law call 0300 330 5485

Monitoring & Review

This policy will be monitored regularly by the Head of Foundation and the Senior Leadership Team and will be reviewed by all staff and students with the Chief Operating Officer every year.
