

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY – 2016

Bullying is generally regarded as a ‘conscious act of aggression or manipulation by one or more people against another person or group of people’. However, as a special needs school it is important to understand that not all acts perceived as ‘bullying’ may be conscious or indeed intentional. It is therefore imperative that all reported/witnessed acts of bullying, intimidation or aggression are dealt with swiftly, appropriately and with the objective of preventing further incidents.

Bullying can be directed at anyone within the School, child or adult. It is a fundamental right for everyone at Centre Academy London to be able to work in an environment which is safe from intimidation and in which all types of bullying are regarded as unacceptable and requiring action of one type or another. Therefore, the School aims to promote a secure and happy environment that is free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behaviour. It is committed to taking positive action to prevent bullying from occurring by adhering to clear policies governing behaviour and an understanding by staff and pupils that bullying will lead to decisive action. In this regard, it is essential that our students understand that Centre Academy London practices *zero-tolerance* of bullying.

Teachers and other staff members should be aware that at least some of the following elements are involved in bullying:

- harm is intended;
- harm may be *unintentionally* delivered;
- there is an imbalance of power;
- it may repetitive, occurring over a period of time, or it is a random but serial activity carried out by someone who is feared for his/her behaviour;
- The hurt experienced by the victim can be external (physical) and/or internal (psychological);
- the exclusion of a child/children by others can, in some cases also constitute bullying.

**The School’s Responsibilities:** Centre Academy London assumes responsibility for explaining what a student should do if he/she is being bullied, and the venues for these explanations embrace the homeroom and mentoring periods, PSHE and assemblies. Students are instructed along the following lines:

- do not blame yourself for what has happened;
- tell a teacher, the School counsellor, or another member of staff; explain what happened, how often, who did it, where, and whether anyone else saw the incident;
- if you are afraid to tell an adult on your own, ask a friend to accompany you;
- do not fight back or try to deal with the situation without the help and/or advice of a teacher or member of staff.

- if you have a remark to make about yourself, or about the behaviour of another, you are encouraged to post a note in the ‘Bully-box’ situated in the downstairs lobby at the bottom of the stairs. This may be anonymous, or signed by you

**School Procedures:** when bullying is detected, the student will be assured that he/she has acted correctly in reporting the incident and that it will be investigated fully. All parties involved in the incident will have an objective hearing, all will be directed to the *Parent-Student Guide*, which addresses the issue of bullying in great detail, and the incident itself will be recorded and documented.

- Although the School would hope to use the least intrusive intervention possible, the consequence of a serious bullying incident might include detention, suspension, community service or another course of action that in extreme situations could include permanent exclusion;
- Parents and teachers should understand that, in certain circumstances, a report of bullying may be referred to the Child Protection officer who, in turn, may need to activate external services if necessary
- To ensure that bullying does not recur, discussion/counselling or other initiatives may be considered for the student engaged in bullying; one objective of such a course of action would be to have the child imagine how he/she would feel if the tables were turned;
- If onlookers were involved, they should be reminded that passive bullying—by watching, laughing or in other indirect ways that support a bully—is equally unacceptable;
- If a child has been suspended because of bullying, the parents must accompany the child to the School to meet with the Head of School and/or designated other, including the Heads of Year and School counsellor; in most instances, the child will be present at the meeting;
- Before being allowed to re-enter Centre Academy London, the child, supported by the parents, must provide an undertaking that a similar situation will not recur; this may occur by having a clearly set-out list of points in writing. In some instances, this may include a ‘contract’ which sets out behavioural expectations
- Both the child and the parents are informed of the consequences, including permanent exclusion, of any additional bullying behaviour on the part of the offending child;
- The meeting between the above parties will be documented in a letter written by the Head of School and sent to the parents; if the offending child has a statement of SEN, his/her LEA will receive a copy of all correspondence dealing with the bullying incident and its resolution.

**School initiatives in dealing with incidents of bullying:** if a child has engaged in bullying, or has been the subject of bullying, the School’s major objective is to ensure that this does not happen again. In this, the Mentor is likely to play a major role both in supporting the child and also in liaising with colleagues. The bullying situation should be discussed at the morning and other staff meetings to ensure that all teachers are fully aware of progress or lack of same.

In instances of bullying, the School will take the following actions:

- provide counselling if this is deemed appropriate; this would involve the School's resident counselling professional.
- ensure that all teaching and other staff are aware of the situation and the transgression;
- ensure that all staff members who teach the child monitor carefully the situation in their classes with regard to bullying;
- ensure that pre-emptive action is taken by the teacher at any hint that another bullying situation is about to start;
- after a period of time, the child should meet again with the Head of School and/or designated other to review the progress that has been made

If a child has been victimised by bullying, the School will follow similar monitoring initiatives and procedures as outlined above. This will include counselling and communication with the victim's family.

### **Cyberbullying**

The school does not allow the use of Facebook and other social networking sites by its pupils during school time, unless with the express permission and supervision of the teacher. All ICT courses include instruction in safe internet use. All students are provided with training which helps them recognise dangers posed by cyberbullying. This includes text/SMS messaging and emails

### **School initiatives which aim to promote a sense of wellbeing and protection include the following:**

- The theme of cyberbullying is covered in detail every year, during *Anti-Bullying Week*, which takes place in November.
- Students are encouraged to report any concerns regarding bullying, in the 'Bully-box' situated in lobby at the base of the stairs
- The counsellor operates an 'open door' policy for all students at the school. Students are aware that they may request to see the counsellor, either directly, or through their mentor or teacher
- PSHE courses for KS2/3/4 students contain sections dedicated to the understanding of, and courses of action pertaining to bullying
- Mentor periods, particularly for KS4 and 5 students provide a forum in which to generate discussion regarding social issues
- The school advises parental supervision of internet use at home.
- Students are required to hand in their phones at the beginning of the school day in order to minimise the risk of cyberbullying through text messaging, and unlawful use of the internet during the school day
- All KS2 and 3 students attend a period of social skills training with the speech therapist which aims to promote healthy social relationships