Orion Education
Anti-Bullying Policy

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☒ Trust Policy

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☐ School Policy

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☐ School

☐ LAB

☒ Board

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Orion Education

Our Four Critical Questions

Why do we exist?

To improve outcomes, transform lives and enable social mobility.

How do we behave?

Trust • Kindness • Endeavour

What do we do?

We create a strong network of schools which transform the lives of students by enabling them to achieve high educational and personal goals, regardless of their background.

How do we succeed?

Through a clear backbone, strong culture, academic rigour and smart systems.

Conents

	Section	Page
1	Introduction and Aim of Policy	5
2	Prevention	5
3	What is bullying?	5
4	Guidance for staff: the possible signs of bullying	6
5	Guidance for staff: always report it immediately	7
6	Best practise	7
7	Vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities	8
8	Complicating factors	8
9	Working with parents and pupils	9
10	Monitoring/Review	9
	Appendix I: Self-help and peer/prefect support strategies.	11

1. Introduction and aim of policy

The School is committed to providing a caring and safe environment for all students so that they can learn in a secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in our School. If bullying does occur, all students should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

This policy should be viewed in conjunction with other School policies, specifically:

- Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- The Equality Duty Statement
- HR policies including bullying and harassment, whistleblowing and grievance (for staff).

2. Prevention

The School will first and foremost aim to prevent any forms of bullying. This involves educating students about bullying so that they can make positive, informed choices about how they treat each other. The School will:

- Enable pupils to be assertive, empowering them to prevent or deal with issues relating to bullying through reporting structures, the Student Commission and the PSHE curriculum
- Utilise a range of teaching strategies that encourage co-operative work and the development of effective working situations
- Foster an atmosphere that reflects a positive and inclusive School ethos
- Encourage pupils' self-esteem and confidence, so that they confront and deal with issues positively, developing as active citizens of the School
- Create an environment where the communication of concerns can be done through various channels
- Ensure pupils can learn in an environment where they can feel safe and secure, free from the threat of bullying
- Ensure that parents feel confident that we listen to their fears, take their concerns seriously and deal with issues sensitively and firmly
- Involve parents as partners in supporting their child, keeping them fully informed and involved (parents of both victim and bully)
- Encourage the involvement of the wider community in the prevention of incidents of bullying (e.g. community police, children's services, YouThink, YOT)
- Be conscious of its public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010 and work towards eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advancing equality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics and fostering good relations between all members of the school community.

3. What is bullying?

Bullying is hurtful behaviour, sustained over a period of time, by an individual or group, which makes another person feel uncomfortable and intimidated.

Bullying is anti-social and will not be tolerated from any member of our School community. It is vital that we encourage good behaviour and respect for others, and to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. All School staff should be alert to signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly, demonstrating to pupils that this issue is taken seriously, and that the situation will not be allowed to continue.

Bullying encompasses a wide range of behaviours, such as, but not limited to:

Verbal:	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, comments about other's personal circumstances or characteristics such as but not limited to ethnicity, SEND, sexuality, religion, culture, gender, family circumstances etc
Emotional:	Being unfriendly, excluding, getting others to exclude, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
Physical:	Pushing, kicking, hitting, spitting, slapping, punching or any use of violence
Cyber	All areas of the internet, such as social network websites and apps, email and Internet chat room misuse; filming or photographing other students and posting on social media
Damage/theft:	Damage to uniform, equipment, deliberately stealing to cause upset and/or fear
Intimidation:	Threatening behaviour, ganging up against a student
Passive:	Where a student stands by observing another student being bullied and doing nothing to support the victim or report it

To be defined as bullying, the offending behaviour is usually repeated over a period of time. It can, however, be intermittent i.e., last for a while, stop, then resume.

'One off' incidents, which are not repeated, are not usually regarded as bullying but will be dealt with seriously and in accordance with the School behaviour policy.

4. Guidance for staff: the possible signs of bullying

All staff are asked to monitor and be aware of the signs that a pupil is being bullied. These could include, but are not limited to:

- A student may appear unusually withdrawn and uncommunicative.
- He or she may be unable to concentrate in class.
- His or her behaviour may change e.g. a student's participation in lessons, and/or other activities around the School may be lowered
- He or she may experience psychosomatic complaints.
- He or she may have unexplained cuts/bruises – or give unconvincing explanations.

- There may be unaccountable and repeatable damage or loss to bags, books, equipment and money
- There may be intermittent and long-term absences from School
- A student may truant from the School.

5. Guidance for staff: always report it immediately

If you think a student is being bullied, encourage the student to talk about their experiences. It may help just to be aware that someone else knows.

All cases of suspected bullying will be investigated thoroughly and given all due care and attention. Complete accounts and statements will be sought from all relevant parties to ascertain the level of seriousness of the bullying. The relevant pastoral staff will then make an informed decision on the next steps to take.

Although any appropriate sanctions in line with the School Behaviour Policy will be applied, the School will ensure full support for the victim(s) and/or perpetrator(s) is arranged where necessary.

Any bullying incidents will be appropriately recorded on Arbor.

In the event of bullying taking place online staff will record the instance and take screen-shots of inappropriate language or comments where necessary or appropriate (NB where the bullying involves or is suspected to involve the sharing of nude or semi-nude images staff should never view, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery, or ask a child to share or download the imagery as this is illegal). In cases where there is limited evidence as to the nature or person behind the bullying the School will inform all families that are implicated so as to initiate discussions and reminders as to the appropriate use of technology.

Where there are also safeguarding concerns about the children involved, the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education and the School's Safeguarding Policy should be followed which will include notifying the Designated Safeguarding Lead and in some cases, making a referral to children's services or an external support service.

6. Best practice

- School staff will be vigilant at all times, not only lessons but during break, lunch and any extra-curricular activities
- School staff will ensure that all appropriate strategies to prevent and tackle bullying are deployed.
- Always take any allegations seriously, report and initiate action immediately.
- Never tell a student to ignore a situation or treat an allegation as not serious. It takes great courage to come forward and students should be supported in doing so and seeing the teacher act.
- In all cases schools have a responsibility to support children who are bullied and make appropriate provision for a child's needs. The nature and level of support will depend on the individual circumstances and the level of need.

- The approach set out in the School's Behaviour Policy will apply to sanctions imposed as a result of bullying. A clear and consistent disciplinary approach is an important part of tackling and preventing bullying.
- In the event of bullying taking place online staff will record the instance appropriately including recording any inappropriate language or comments. In cases where there is limited evidence as to the nature or person behind the bullying the School will inform all families that are implicated so as to initiate discussions and reminders as to the appropriate use of technology.
- Instances of bullying made off-site and outside of the School day, including online, will be followed up wherever possible by the School and may be reported to the police depending on the severity. The School will apply its Behaviour Policy to off-site incidents if it deems the incident to have a significant effect on a student's wellbeing or brings the School into disrepute.
- Never assume that someone else is already dealing with a suspicion of bullying, even if the student advises this. Staff are duty bound to ensure this is the case and if not to initiate action themselves.
- The School will always promote a positive climate where students treat each other with respect. This is an essential part of preventing and tackling bullying. Students will always be encouraged not to accept any form of mistreatment of others and always supported to report it.

7. Vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)

We will be especially vigilant about bullying in respect of our more vulnerable students. They are a diverse population and can include students with complex health needs, students with SEND, students with sensory impairments, students with safeguarding concerns and students with behavioural needs.

The common difficulties which some groups of student encounter may include:

- Negative attitudes to disability
- Negative perceptions of difference
- Difficulty in resisting bullies because of disability/learning needs
- Being more isolated owing to disability/learning needs
- Failure to understand that what is happening is bullying
- Difficulties in telling people about bullying.

These students can also experience bullying in adult life. This makes developing a positive culture and one in which bullying is pro-actively prevented even more important.

Opportunities will be made available for vulnerable pupils to have protected times and spaces to assist them in gaining confidence. Where possible, appropriate support and help will be sought to give pupils the space to communicate their feelings and take responsibility for their own actions in coping with the issue.

When students with a specific or general educational need at the School are involved in bullying the School, whilst not condoning in any way the incident itself, will seek to make reasonable adjustments to the way it deals with the incident. As part of the process the School will seek to

identify why the events took place and the best way of supporting all students in moving forwards.

Schools also have duties under Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 to ensure that pupils with special educational needs engage in the activities of the school together with children who do not have special educational needs and should consider particular vulnerabilities to bullying when doing so.

Whilst not all children who are bullied will have SEN, where the bullying leads to persistent, long-lasting difficulties that cause the child to have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those the same age, schools should consider whether the child would benefit from being assessed for SEN support.

8. Complicating factors

Bullying is part of a complex process of social interaction that is rarely straightforward. Although it is important to be clear about what bullying is, who is doing what in a particular situation and that the School does recognises that bullying is unacceptable in all circumstances, some issues that may need to be considered are:

- Victims can also be or become bullies themselves. They can also unintentionally contribute to the problem by their own behaviour.
- Some pupils through their own social interaction, habits or mannerisms seem more prone to the attention of bullies.
- Bullying may be unintentional (particularly amongst young children). It may be that the victim is successfully 'covering up' his/her distress and that the behaviour displayed would not affect the bullies in the same way if it were directed at them; they would not perceive it as bullying. They therefore continue, unaware of the effect they are having.
- There may be a separate parental agenda that is driving the issue e.g. there may be poor relationships between families and this is being played out in school.
- The level of development/maturity of those involved may affect the success or otherwise of any attempts to solve the problem.

9. Working with parents and pupils

Parents can be a powerful force in tackling bullying, equally they can unintentionally exacerbate bullying through their relationship with their children or with other families. Therefore, parents need to be involved in all aspects of our School's aim to prevent bullying.

At the earliest intervention by a member of staff, parents should be contacted and, if appropriate, invited in to discuss the issue with the pupil and member of staff. Clear information needs to be given from the School explaining how this matter will be dealt with and the procedures that will take place. The child needs to be reassured that the matter is being taken seriously and that their safety and well-being is a priority. Guidance also needs to be given to the pupil to ensure that they feel comfortable to handle any situation where they may see the person by whom they have been affected. They need to know who to contact should the need arise and know that they are being listened to.

It is important that parents hear this information as well, so they are able to reinforce this message at home and feel confident that the matter is being taken seriously. Parents are also encouraged to contact the school at any time to let us know if the matter has been successfully resolved or if further incidents have taken place. It is vital that the adult in school dealing with the incident keeps the family informed as to the outcomes of teacher intervention and follows up any contact quickly.

Parents are advised to:
• Always contact the School with any concerns
• Be aware of any changes in behaviour that could be linked to bullying.
• Be reassured that the School will take action to deal with the bullying.
• Be assured that we will deal with all incidents firmly but sensitively.
• If a child is thought to be bullying another child, we will, if appropriate, invite the parents into the School to discuss the matter. Our aim is to achieve reconciliation and offer support.

10. Monitoring/Review

The School will maintain a bullying log that records all incidents of bullying (as defined by this policy). Bullying will be regularly reviewed, and actions taken in line with school improvement and curriculum planning. The reviews will also particularly focus on monitoring and addressing any emerging trends or patterns relating to both perpetrators and victims. This will include vulnerable students and those with SEN or disabilities.

Patterns will be identified to ensure that the most effective intervention, support and training is in place. This includes feeding into our equality and diversity planning as required. Incidents of bullying will also be reported formally in the governors' report.

The student body and parents will also be involved in reviewing the effectiveness of the prevention of bullying, for example in surveys and student leadership activities.

Schools should be able to demonstrate the impact of anti-bullying policies and will be held to account on how they address and prevent bullying by Ofsted.

Appendix 1: Self-help and peer/prefect support strategies

The following strategies were written by students from our School for students and should be reviewed by students each year.

What to do if you are being bullied:

- Find a member of staff that you can talk to. This member of staff will probably be able to help but remember that if you want the matter to remain confidential then the teacher may not be able to help.
- Tell a parent.
- Tell a friend whom you can trust.
- Tell anyone that you feel you can trust.

Steps to identify and tackle bullies:

- Give as complete an account as you can of what has happened to you.
- Are there friends, classmates or witnesses who can back up your story?
- You may have to give a written account of what has happened to you. Try to get a written statement from witnesses.

What you do if you see a student being bullied:

- Find a member of staff, and tell them exactly what has happened.
- Challenge the students responsible if you feel that you are able.
- Record the names and tutor groups of the bullies.

Possible signs that a person is being bullied:

- A student may appear to be unusually withdrawn or quiet.
- He or she may be unable to concentrate in class.
- His or her behaviour may change.
- He or she may have unexplained cuts and bruises or give unconvincing explanations for these.
- He or she may be bunking School.