EQUINE LEARNING
COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY

Equine Learning CIC (ELCIC) Anti- Bullying Policy

General introduction

It is very important to be clear about what is, and is not, bullying. There are many definitions and perceptions of bullying, but all recognise that bullying is sustained and takes place where there is an imbalance of power. Two useful and comprehensive definitions are:

- A bully is an individual who tends to torment others either through verbal harassment or physical assaults, or through more subtle methods of coercion.
- Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (e.g. cyber bullying via text messages or internet) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, e.g. on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities.

Cyber bullying is bullying through the use of communication technology like mobile phone text messages, e-mails or websites. It can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience. This can take many forms, for example:
- Sending threatening or abusive text messages or e-mails, personally or anonymously
- Making insulting comments about someone on a website, social networking site (eg: Facebook) or online (blog or YouTube)
- Making or sharing derogatory or embarrassing videos of someone via mobile phone or e-mail (such as 'Happy Slapping' videos)

'Sexting' is the sending and receiving of sexually inappropriate images or messages, using a mobile phone or the internet. It is illegal for children under the age of 16 to do this and will be referred to both the police and social care. An investigation will be undertaken and appropriate action taken.
It is illegal for a student to retain a sexually inappropriate image of another student and show it to other students. Again, this will result in a referral to the police and social care. It is likely that any student doing this will be excluded for a fixed period.

With only small numbers of students we can establish a healthy, stress-free environment with zero tolerance of inappropriate behaviour.
The aims and objectives of Equine Learning in relation to bullying are to:
- Provide effective staff training
- Create an inclusive environment
- Ensure all students, teachers and parents know that bullying will not be tolerated.
- Ensure clarity and agreement about what is and is not bullying.
- Ensure awareness of the rights and responsibilities of all students with regard to bullying.
- Teach that using any prejudice based language is unacceptable

- Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality, children with different family situations
- Involve all members of ELCIC, staff and students in helping to prevent bullying and to confront it when it occurs.
- Encourage students to report instances of bullying and make it easy for them to do, so they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted upon.
- Ensure that all students, parents and staff know what preventative steps ELCIC takes and how these are implemented. Ensure all students, staff and parents know the procedure to follow when bullying occurs.
- Work with the wider community, such as police and children's services, where bullying is particularly serious or persistent

In dealing with bullying we aim to:
- Eliminate the bullying itself.
- Support the victim by resolving the problem and by building up his/her self esteem and, where appropriate, developing strategies to avoid bullying.
- Bring the perpetrator to realise the unacceptability of his/her behaviour and the consequences should it continue.
- Investigate the cause of the bullying behaviour and where appropriate work with him/her to modify his/her behaviour.
- Reconcile the perpetrator and the victim.

ELCIC's response to bullying is achieved in various ways:
- Clarifying and defining what is and is not bullying, raising awareness of the difference between disputes, endings of friendships and bullying behaviour.
- Cyber bullying as part of safety.
- Encouraging zero tolerance of bullying behaviour, encouraging a sense of social responsibility and the courage to speak out when necessary, and ensuring students know what they can do if they or someone else is being bullied.
- Individual learning time can be used to discuss further what is and is not bullying, and what students feel could or should be done. Work and ideas emanating from these lessons will be fed into the system to inform and add to the strategies already being used.
- Key staff will always mediate between the bully and the victim, where appropriate. The victim will be encouraged to tell the bully how the bully's actions made them feel.
- The bully will be given an opportunity to apologise.

Bullying outside school premises
Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted upon. ELCIC will consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, the teacher can only discipline the pupil on ELCIC premises or elsewhere when the student is under the lawful control of the staff member.

Record Keeping
All incidents of bullying are recorded and reported to the Director and any relevant support workers. Serious concerns about bullying will result in the parents of the student being invited into ELCIC to meet with an appropriate member of staff. Students who feel they are being bullied will be asked to keep a detailed record of incidents.

Sanctions

The varying nature and varying degrees of bullying require a range of responses and a range of sanctions. Anyone who bullies someone will be seen and spoken to about this by the Education Programme Supervisor. Incidents of a more serious nature may be dealt with by the Director. In appropriate cases (and particularly, though not exclusively, where the perpetrators do not attend ELCIC and the bullying occurs elsewhere), the police liaison officer is involved to advise the victim on what steps can be taken. Where the perpetrator is part of ELCIC, he/she would stress the seriousness of the matter and the possible consequences if it were to continue. In the cases of a first and minor incident, an informal warning from staff may be sufficient. Where a student is found to persist in acts of bullying, despite warning, it may be necessary for other sanctions to be put in place. In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to recommend a fixed term exclusion. A fixed period exclusion might also be given even if there have not been previously recorded warnings, if the seriousness of the bullying warrants it.

As a last resort, or in extremely serious cases, permanent exclusion would be considered.

In accordance with the Education Act 2011, to tackle incidences of cyber bullying it may be necessary for a staff member to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices (including mobile phones)

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