



**Oak Tree
School**

Anti-Bullying Policy

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| Policy Number | V8 |
| Review Date | November 2024 |
| Owner | Edd Bissenden - Assistant Headteacher |

| Version | Comments/amendments | Name |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1.0 | 2014 Issue | Mike Deacy |
| 2.0 | 2015 issue | Mike Deacy |
| 3.0 | 2017 issue | Alex Delling |
| 3.0 | The policy is now based on the DfE Preventing and Tackling bullying 2017 rather than 2013. | Alex Delling |
| 3.0 | Added a reference to the schools behaviour policy which is also used to help prevent bullying. | Alex Delling |
| 3.0 | The policy now includes a section on bullying as a safeguarding concern or child protection issue. | Alex Delling |
| 3.0 | There is now a section which includes 'Bullying which occurs outside the school premises. | Alex Delling |
| 3.0 | The policy now states that low level disruption and the use of offensive language will be intervened early to help stop behaviour escalating. | Alex Delling |
| 3.0 | A section has been added on dealing with cyber bullying. | Alex Delling |
| 3.0 | More preventions have been added for Anti-bullying. | Alex Delling |
| 3.0 | Where categories of discrimination have been listed, 'gender reassignment' has been added. | Alex Delling |
| 4.0 | No further changes | Mike Deacy |
| 5.0 | Changes ACE to AEC. Changes made to section 2 Code of conduct. | Michelle Pascoe |
| 5.1 | Review and change of "three sessions" to anti bullying education(10) | Daniel Stockton |
| 5.2 | Review and update of 3 stages of the procedure – more focus on intervention, and responsibilities of who is running it. (July 2021) | Edd Bissenden |
| 6 | Update to the what is bullying section – to include specific types which include the 9 protected characteristics (September 2021) | Edd Bissenden |
| 6.1 | Update to stages of Bullying – caveats as to when exclusion is not an option or when school | Edd Bissenden |

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| | still need involvement with a student. (October 2021) | |
| 6.2 | Update to the stages of bullying and parties involved in delivering intervention. (March 2022) | Edd Bissenden |
| 6.3 | Policy checked and no updates needed at this stage. | Edd Bissenden |
| 7 | Update to the bullying stages – to include a pre stage intervention | Edd Bissenden |
| 8 | No changes made | Edd Bissenden |
| 9 | Changes to the stages of Bullying and how those stages are managed (Nov 2024) | Edd Bissenden |

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1. Introduction

This policy has been developed using the DfE Guidance documents Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017) and Behavior and Discipline in Schools (July 2013) and is mindful of the Equality Act 2010.

Oak Tree School believes that every young person has the right to live each day in school without fear. Bullying, threats, name-calling, racial or sexual harassment, interference with property and any other action designed to frighten, humiliate, or embarrass are totally unacceptable. Bullying takes place to some extent in every school; it is unfortunately a part of our culture and can be seen in families, friendships and in the workplace. To acknowledge this is not to accept it. It is a way of affirming our responsibility to work together as a community to create an environment in which everyone feels accepted, valued and able to get on with the job of learning and growing.

For this reason, we strive:

- To ensure that all members of the school community follow the agreed Code of Conduct
- To ensure that there is good order and that the school is well organised
- To ensure that adults who are responsible for supervising young people carry out their duties effectively
- To ensure that all members of our community treat one another with respect and value our Equality and Diversity Policy
- To promote learning about citizenship, rights and responsibility so that it is clear that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour which cannot and will not be tolerated
- To develop an effective School Council cycle so that young people are able to address issues affecting their welfare

Bullying causes pain. At the very least it causes distress and at worst it ruins lives. Its legacy lives on into adult life. Young people and staff must never ignore or accept bullying in any form. The credibility of this policy depends upon everyone in our community speaking out and then taking agreed action whenever bullying arises.

Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides that maintained schools must have measures to encourage good behavior and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures are also part of Oak Tree's school 'Promoting Good Behaviour Policy' is communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents.

2. Code of Conduct

All staff at Oak Tree school are committed to delivering "the best education for every child". The aim of our broad and balanced curriculum is to ensure children leave our school with tolerance and respect for others, emotional resilience, good social skills, and the best outcomes possible.

- Maintain positive and healthy relationships
- Become emotionally resilient
- Become tolerant and respectful individuals
- Achieve the best possible outcomes

3. Equality and Diversity Statement

At Oak Tree School we are committed to providing services and an environment for learning and developing which reflect the breadth and diversity of society. Throughout our work and relationships with referring agencies, parents, and young people and between staff we aim at all times to ensure there is no discrimination relating to age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender reassignment or disability. All children and young people have a right to a broad and balanced range of experiences, both in terms of the school curriculum and the enhancement activities that reflect in a positive way the range of cultures and experiences of the whole community. Young people leaving Oak Tree School should do so with an understanding and respect for all members of their community.

4. Safeguarding children and young people.

Acorn Education and Care is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people. It recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect and prevent children from harm, abuse, and exploitation. When there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern under the Children Act 1989. Please refer to Oak Tree's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

However, external support can be given to pupils whether or not it is deemed a child protection concern. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, the school may draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

5. What is Bullying?

Bullying may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. Often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation it can take many forms, it can be:

Specific types of bullying include:

Prejudice Related Bullying under the Equalities Act 2010 it is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- Age
- Being or becoming a trans person
- Being married or in a civil partnership
- Being pregnant or having a child
- Disability
- Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, including Gypsy, Roma, Traveller heritage
- Religion, belief or lack of religion/belief
- Sex /gender
- Sexual orientation

These are called 'protected characteristics' Anti-Bullying Policy - Sept 2021 Page 6 of 20 As part of the requirement on schools to promote fundamental British values, schools must proactively challenge derogatory and discriminatory language and behaviour including that which is racist,

homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist in nature. We will record these types of bullying, even that which represents a one-off incident.

Other vulnerable groups include:

- Young carers
- Looked after children
- Bullying related to home circumstances
- Bullying related to appearance or health

Although the above do not currently receive protection under the Equality Act 2010, bullying for these reasons is just as serious. We have a designated lead for young carers and looked after children who will liaise with staff and children to ensure that they are supported and know where to go for help. There is no hierarchy of bullying - all forms should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately. Prejudice Related Language Racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist language includes terms of abuse used towards people because of their race/ethnicity/nationality; because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans, or are perceived to be, or have a parent/carer, sibling, or friend who is; because they have a learning or physical disability.

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. School staff will intervene early to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and isn't acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating.

<http://www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk/about-us.aspx>

6. Bullying which occurs outside school premises.

Staff members have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises. Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 say that a school's disciplinary powers can be used to address pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff, but only if it would be reasonable for the school to regulate pupils' behavior in those circumstances. Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted on in the same way as bullying in school. The Headteacher will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behavior coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil.

7. Our Approach

School staff, Headteachers and Governors are best placed to decide how best to respond to the particular issues that affect the pupils at Oak Tree School. There is no single solution to bullying which will suit all schools, however we will:

- Establish and maintain a caring ethos so that bullying is less likely to occur
- Encourage discussion about bullying so that it does not become a hidden activity
- Listen to students when they talk about or report bullying
- Provide good adult role models, i.e. never misusing authority as power to humiliate or dominate

8. Prevention

Successful schools create an environment that prevents bullying from being a serious problem in the first place. Our best prospect of reducing or even eliminating bullying is through constantly expecting all members of the community to treat each other with respect and understanding in line with our Code of Conduct. As a staff we can do this best by example rather than preaching.

The role of staff in preventing bullying is important in three ways:

1. Staff behaviour sets the tone of the organisation's day-to-day life. Bullying is more likely to occur where staff adopt authoritarian or dominating styles. This gives young people the message that staff authority comes from her or his power rather than from legitimacy
2. Young people's self-esteem should be supported. A strong sense of self-worth helps build strong relationships, which in turn both reduce the likelihood of bullying and, if it does occur, reduces its harmful impact
3. Spotting signs that a young person might be the victim of bullying is important. There are many indicators of possible bullying – loss of, or damage to, possessions, physical injury, change in disposition, isolation from usual friends, tearfulness, deterioration of work and others. Verbal bullying should never be ignored.

Further prevention strategies employed by the organisation are as follows:

- Our code of conduct is published and regularly discussed
- we ensure young people's consultation and participation is formalised through School Council meetings
- Discussions take place informally and during appropriate lessons on the nature of bullying and particular incidents
- The school curriculum includes examples of the misuse of power and status, difference and equality
- We highlight and value examples of kind behaviour, both in school and in the wider world, e.g. in the news, media, entertainment, etc.
- We create an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect, this is done through the credit system based on our school values which includes respect
- Increased supervision takes place in parts of the school where bullying may be more likely
- Implement disciplinary sanctions. The consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable
- We openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality, gender reassignment or appearance related difference. Also children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities.
- We provide effective staff training on Anti-bullying laws, procedures and prevention.
- We make it easy for pupils to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on. This is done through thought boxes in class, good relationships through staff and students, student kindness mentors, parents/carers ringing into the school.

9. Dealing with Incidents

The nature and level of support will depend on the individual circumstances and the level of need. School staff will decide which intervention would be best for each student. Where prevention has

failed, and bullying has taken place we will deal with it carefully. We will not give way to anger however we may feel about what has happened and its effect on the victim.

Our two aims are:

- To protect the victim's self-esteem and self-confidence and to keep her or him safe
- To modify the attitude and behaviour of the perpetrator(s)

10. Procedures

Every case is different. Professional judgment and experience help staff react in the best way. This means the actions below might be amended in the interests of individual students, but in essence what follows are our standard actions in response to bullying.

We:

- Talk with the victim (solution focused approach) – he or she must be given time and encouragement to talk, not just about the details of what happened, but also about feelings. He or she should feel supported, and an agreement made about meeting again. The discussion will be logged using SLEUTH and will be highlighted as a bullying issue, the matter will be forwarded to SLT so they can follow up.
- Talk with the perpetrator (solution focused approach) – although details will be needed, it is important not to get bogged down in detail when it is feelings which are at the heart of the issue. The student needs to be encouraged to consider and understand how the victim feels. It might be appropriate to talk about her or his personal relationships with others in general. In any case the perpetrator will be required to come to an agreement about how to behave in the future towards the victim and others. This will be logged as a follow up on the same original incident logged on SLEUTH, thus creating a trail of evidence and notes.
- Anti-bullying education. This can involve lessons that are specific to each individual such as building empathy, building self-esteem, looking into why some people bullying etc.
- Consider setting up a victim/bully meeting (Restorative justice). This is only useful in some cases. It can help the victim recover from the incident and give the bully a better insight into the hurt he or she has caused. It can also help create a new relationship. It is wrong, however, to have a meeting if the victim is not ready for it. Pressure should not be put on the victim if he or he is nervous or worried about meeting with the bully face-to-face. Sometimes some restorative justice is appropriate at this stage.
- Inform parents/carers and record comments on a further follow up on SLEUTH.
- Follow-up meetings with both the victim and the bully will be arranged to confirm that the problem has been solved. Where it has not, further work will be done. These follow up meetings will again be logged on SLEUTH.
- Involve other agencies where on-going support is needed either by the bully or the victim or when continued work is called for over a period of time, e.g. the young person's Social Worker, the organization's Independent Visitor, the Health and Therapy team

- Ensure documentation is thorough. In all cases, a SLEUTH incident is recorded and forwarded to SLT. It should make clear who the perpetrator is. This will then be actioned. A log is maintained of all reported bullying incidents and an Annual Bullying Survey is conducted so that whole school evaluation is possible.

11. Consequences

- As our aims are the resolution of the situation, support for the victim and the prevention of recurrence, the option of punishment must be carefully weighed
- Bullying is a hurtful anti-social behaviour undertaken by those who get excitement, status, or material gain from it. In that sense it is done by those who have a sense of inadequacy, even if only temporarily. They probably have no socially acceptable way of gaining those things. Punishing a bully is likely to increase her or his alienation and anxiety and may not help them adopt more acceptable forms of behaviour. The perpetrator needs the opportunity to acknowledge what they have done, to understand the distress caused and to feel that their ability to change has been recognised
- Where the bully is genuinely remorseful and shows signs of having gained in-sight an apology to the victim, together with a promise about future behavior, will suffice
- We may apply a disciplinary measure to some pupils who bully in order to show clearly that their behavior is wrong. Where a sanction is thought necessary and effective it will be set; the schools' Discipline Policy clearly sets out the sanctions available.
- The consequences of bullying are clearly stated below in the different stages the school has. Each individual will be looked at and consideration must be taken into account if the student is CP/CIN or CIC. It must be the school's responsibility to protect those students who are vulnerable in the community if they are not at school. This is why exclusion will not always be appropriate.

12. Bullying Stages

Pre-stage Intervention:

- For first instance bullying the school will intervene with a targeted intervention lead by the PSHE lead and SG team. This will be the first step in the process. This is based on evidence of bullying reports that are stand alone and incidents that the SG team deem as heading towards a bullying incident.

Types of Intervention

- 1:1 with PSHE lead
- Small group with PSHE lead
- Whole class with PSHE lead
- Restorative justice work lead by the Student Welfare team

STAGE 1

1 – 2 Days education away from group (change of environment)

Letter initiated to go home outlining behaviours, plan to move forward and consequences if behaviour continues (overseen by SLT link)

Intervention work (if appropriate) overseen by SWI and SLI link

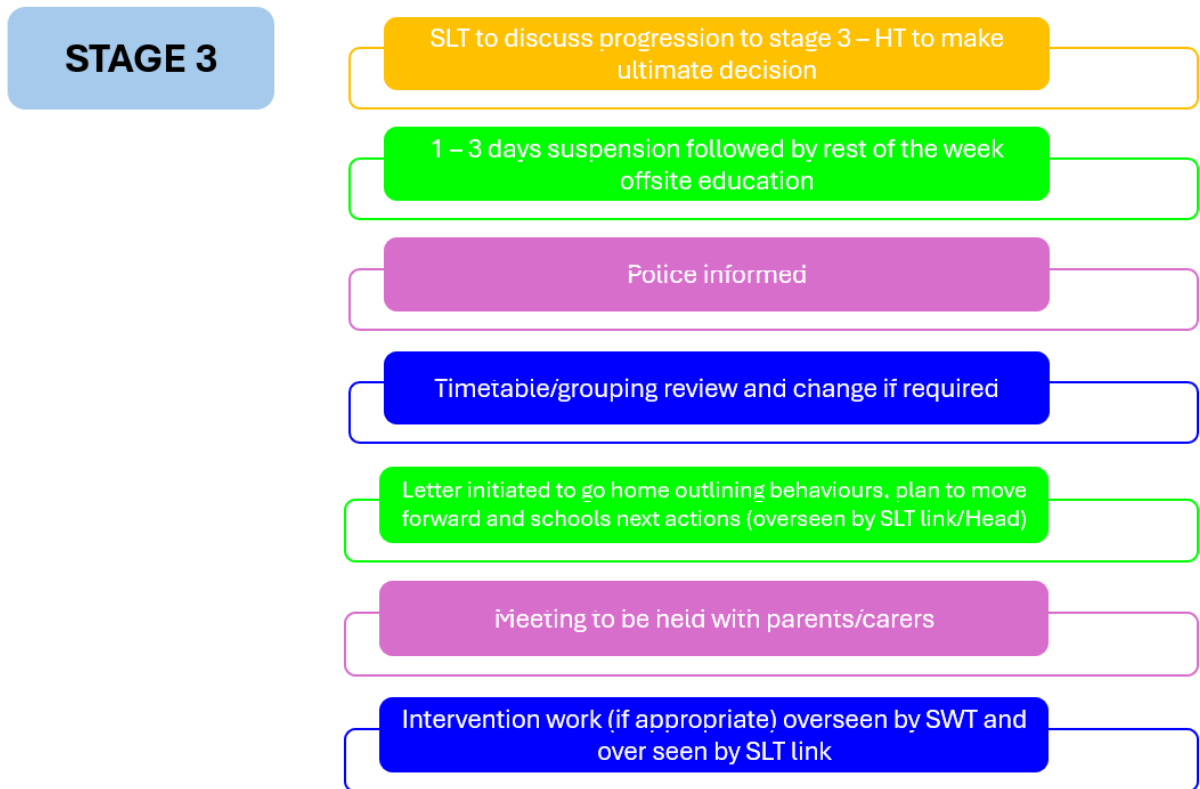
STAGE 2

1 – 2 Days education away from group (change of environment)

Letter initiated to go home outlining behaviours, plan to move forward and consequences if behaviour continues (overseen by SLT link)

Meeting to be held with parents/carers

Intervention work (if appropriate) overseen by SWI and SLI link



Bullying Identification

1. Report sent to Safeguarding team through sleuth or direct from staff member
 2. Safeguarding team to discuss and determine if it's a bullying event
 3. If yes then passed to SLT class link
 4. SLT class link to do initial chat with student, organise stage letter (letter sent to Jo Goldring to send home and to include any other appropriate actions such as cancel taxi, get work packs ready)
 5. HOF of PSHE and Student welfare team to lead intervention/restorative work
- Stage 1 intervention – delivered by tutor team/SLT/SWT/HOF PSHE
 - Stage 2 intervention – delivered by tutor team/ SLT /SWT/HOF PSHE
 - Stage 3 intervention – delivered by police/SLT/SWT/HOF PSHE

13. Cyber- bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff who has been formally authorised by the headteacher, that staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

If an electronic device that is prohibited by the school rules has been seized and the member of staff has reasonable ground to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must give the device to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable. Material on the device that is suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, or that is a pornographic image of a child or an

extreme pornographic image, should not be deleted prior to giving the device to the police. Where there is no criminal offence cyber-bullying will be dealt with by using the strategies set out above.

14. Key Messages

10.1 What can you do if you are Being Bullied?

- Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon
- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied and that it is wrong
- Be proud of who you are
- Be assertive. Say "no", walk confidently away. Fighting back will make things worse
- Tell an adult you trust straight away. You will get immediate support
- If you need to you can talk to a member of the School Council who will help you to understand the problem and bring it to an appropriate adult
- Keep any digital images or comments posted via social media or email saved on your computer as evidence.
- All staff will take you seriously and will aim to deal with bullies in a way which will address the bullying and will not make things worse for you

10.2 If you know someone is Being Bullied

- Take action.
- Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own. Encourage the victim to tell an adult
- If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult IMMEDIATELY
- Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully

10.3 Help and Support Will Be Given as is Appropriate to Both the Victim and the Bully

We support the victim:

- By offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience with a trusted adult
- By informing their parents/carers
- By offering continuing support when they feel they need it
- By taking appropriate steps to prevent further bullying

We offer the bully support and challenge in the following ways:

- By talking about what happened to discover why they became involved
- By informing the bullies' parents/carers
- By continuing to work with the bullies to change their behaviour patterns and to challenge prejudiced attitudes as far as possible
- By using restorative justice techniques to resolve the conflict where possible

10.4 Performance Standards

- All staff and pupils will have an understanding of what bullying is

- All staff and pupils will know what the bullying policy states and should follow procedures when incidents are reported
- All allegations of bullying will be taken seriously and investigated and monitored
- Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in our school
- If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to TELL and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively
- Staff will receive appropriate training to ensure this policy is adhered to

10.5 Bullying by Staff

- If a member of staff commits “deliberately hurtful behaviour to pupils repeated over a time”, i.e. bullying, this will be treated as an allegation of professional abuse and will be reported to the LA LADO and investigated using the Child Protection/Allegation of Professional Abuse Procedures
- All staff are encouraged to report such behaviour to the Designated Safeguarding Officer
- Oak Tree School has a separate ‘Whistleblowing Policy’.

10.6 E Safety

- Whilst regulation and technical solutions are very important, their use must be balanced by educating students to take a responsible approach. The education of students in e-safety is therefore an essential part of the Oak Tree School’s e-safety provision. Children and young people need the help and support of the school to recognise and avoid e-safety risks and build their resilience.
- E-safety is a focus in all areas of the curriculum and staff reinforce e-safety messages across the curriculum. Students are taught in all lessons to be critically aware of the materials / content they access on-line and be guided to validate the accuracy of information and also to acknowledge the source of information used and to respect copyright when using material accessed on the internet.
- As a school, we actively promote high levels of digital literacy. Digital literacy seeks to include knowledge and understanding of the applications and implications of digital technologies, in contrast to the skills focus of computer literacy. Digital literacy is considered a key aspect of contemporary citizenship to enable individuals to fully participate in the digital economy and the democratic process, and knowledgeably engage with debates relating to the networked society, such as those relating to personal privacy.