Statutory Policy

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY 2026

(TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR POLICY)

Rationale

Safeguarding the wellbeing of our students is our first priority at Oak Green School. This Anti-Bullying policy forms an essential part of our safeguarding procedures and demonstrates our commitment to ensure that our learners feel safe in our school.

Oak Green School takes the issue of bullying seriously. We aim to provide each learner with a safe learning environment in which they can be successful learners and reach their potential academically, socially, physically and emotionally. We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school and we use the acronym **STOP** (**Several Times On Purpose**) to define bullying. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING school. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

This policy reflects our commitment to reduce bullying and enhance learners' opportunities.

Aims

At Oak Green School:

- We aim to create a caring atmosphere where pupils feel safe and happy.
- We are an inclusive, value based school in which we ensure all pupils, regardless of their age, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, beliefs or family make-up should feel safe and happy in our school environment.
- We are conscious of the effects of bullying on children's emotional, physical and psychological health as well as their learning.
- We want staff to be provided with a policy which will provide a procedure for dealing with bullying and bullies.
- To make the procedure for dealing with bullying explicit to pupils and parents.
- Each incidence of bullying will be followed up to ensure that the victim is given as much support as possible to prevent a recurrence of the behaviour towards them.
- Playground supervisors will be involved in the implementation of the anti-bullying programme.
- Bullying is a problem to be dealt with as well as avoided through teaching assertion, co-operation and boosting self-esteem.

The starting point for this policy is to ask ourselves:

“What skills do we need in life in order to get along with other people?”

- How do we treat others?
- How do we expect to be treated by others?
- What do we do if we don’t get along with someone?
- How do we stand up for ourselves?
- Where and when did we learn these skills?

We recognise that children need to learn how to get along with each other, and this is easier for some children than others. ‘Getting along’ involves a complex set of skills, and school is the best place to learn them.

This policy is in two sections:

1. What we do to help children learn how to get along
2. What we do if things go wrong (Anti-Bullying)

What we do

These are the things we do at Oak Green School to help children learn to get along with each other.

Buddies

It is particularly important that children who are new to the school are welcomed and have someone to look after them right from the start. We operate a buddy system to be sure this happens.

Assemblies

Getting along together is a recurring theme each term in school assemblies.

Curriculum input

The Personal, Social, Emotional and Health curriculum provides children with strategies for getting along together and what to do if things go wrong. Children learn the importance of self-esteem, of communicating their feelings clearly and assertively (with their words) and what to do if they feel they are being treated badly. E-safety is taught through the computing curriculum.

School council

School council provides a vital forum for discussion and sharing strategies to get along. School council is the communication link between children and the staff. Throughout the year they meet with a variety of school leaders (including Governors).

Classroom routines

The way learning is organised has a direct bearing on children's ability to get along.

- We often use 'talk partners' in class and expect all children to be able to pair up with either a regular talk partner, or any other child in the class.
- We use different seating plans, and expect all children to be able to collaborate with all other members of the class.

Encouraging friendships

There are many other ways we encourage children to be good friends. There is a friendship bench on the playground and this is a place to go if you are feeling lonely and want to have a talk. We also have peer mentors (pupils) on each playground to support friendship issues or concerns.

Specific strategies

We use teaching methods which create an inclusive environment. For example, in games lessons, we do not ask children to pick their own teams, as this can often lead to some children being the last to be chosen, and can create an atmosphere of ill feeling. Instead we use random numbers/birthdays or sorting games to divide children into teams.

Nurture

Supports children emotionally via the school's nurture, mental health and well-being lead.

What we do if things go wrong

- It is natural and an essential part of growing up for children to fall out with each other.
- It is natural and normal for children to test the boundaries of their 'power', and for there to be imbalances of power between children.
- When interacting freely, children will make mistakes.
- The important thing is that they learn, from the reaction they get from adults and other children, what is and what isn't acceptable.

What is bullying?

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

In other words, bullying at **Oak Green School** is considered“unacceptable behaviour which occurs ‘**Several Times On Purpose (STOP).’**

In order to be considered bullying, the behaviour is normally aggressive and can include:

- An imbalance of power: children who bully use their power – such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity – to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition: bullying behaviours happen repeatedly.
- Actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone verbally or physically, excluding someone from a group on purpose.
- Cyber bullying: through the internet via social media, mobile threats by text messaging and calls, or, misuse of technology i.e. camera, video facilities, ipad, tablets, game consoles. As this is more likely to take place out of school- and as this technology has age recommendations and restrictions- it is the responsibility of parents to ensure their children are accessing appropriate materials, apps and communications.

Types of bullying

Oak Green School recognises the following categories as types of bullying but understands that bullying can present itself in many forms.

1. **Verbal bullying** is saying or writing mean things and includes teasing, name calling, inappropriate sexual comments, taunting, threatening to cause harm.
2. **Social bullying** involves hurting someone’s reputation or relationships. Social bullying includes leaving someone out on purpose, telling others not to be friends with a person, spreading rumours, embarrassing someone in public
3. **Physical bullying** involves hurting a person’s body or possessions and can include hitting, kicking, pinching, taking or breaking someone’s things, making mean or rude hand gestures.
4. **Emotional bullying** involves isolating, mocking, or teasing an individual. This type of bullying targets a person’s emotions, confidence and self-worth.
5. **Cyber-bullying** is when technology is used to commit acts of bullying, often linked to another type of bullying. This is commonly done through the use of social media or communication technology, but wider types of media, such as

online gaming, can also be used. This type of bullying can be relentless and offers the victim little to no escape from the bullying.

6. **Prejudice based bullying** is when the characteristics considered unique to an individual's identity. These can include their race, religion, sexual orientation, gender and physical appearance.
7. **Discriminatory bullying** is bullying targeting a protected characteristic. It can involve name calling, physical attacks, isolating or preventing opportunities based on a protected characteristic.

Why do children bully?

Children may bully because:

- They want to be 'in with the cool gang'
- It feels like fun – they don't realise how much it hurts
- They dislike or are jealous of someone
- It makes them feel powerful or respected
- They are bullied themselves and are taking their hurt and anger out on someone they think will not fight back
- They are having problems in their life that are making them feel bad

PEOPLE WHO ARE HAPPY WITH THEMSELVES DO NOT NEED TO BULLY OTHER PEOPLE

We recognise that bullying disappears most rapidly when the whole class adopts an anti-bullying stance. If the 'on-lookers' do not encourage bullying behaviour, then it is short lived. We aim to make bullying an issue that is not secret, but is talked about openly, and is understood to be everyone's concern.

Where and when bullying happens

Bullying can occur during or after school hours. While most reported bullying happens in the school grounds, it may happen on the way to or leaving school. An increasing percentage of bullying is now happening online via social media or messaging service. This is incredibly hard for a school to monitor and therefore the responsibility for this falls with parents. It is important to recognise that bullying can sometimes happen between pupils and adults within the classroom setting.

What isn't acceptable; tackling bullying behaviour?

Children need to learn that the following behaviour is unacceptable:

- Saying cruel or unpleasant things

- Hitting, kicking or hurting in anyway
- Threatening
- Sending nasty notes
- Sending nasty texts or messages on social media (*parents/carers are expected to monitor their children's use of electronic devices and ensure that all age restrictions for social media are followed to reduce the likelihood of this type of bullying behaviour*)
- Excluding others from games or friendship for no reason
- Deliberately moving, hiding or damaging someone else's property causing them distress or annoyance
- Anything else that deliberately makes someone's life unhappy

Bullying is not the occasional fight or quarrel – it is deliberate and repeated persecution. It is the job of everyone in the school community to tackle bullying. Research shows that bullying happens in all schools, but it is only a major problem in organisations which leave it unchallenged.

Tackling bullying in school matters because:

- It makes children unhappy
- Pupils who are being bullied are unlikely to concentrate fully on their work
- Some pupils avoid being bullied by not going to school
- Pupils who observe unchallenged bullying behaviour are likely to copy it
- Action against bullying is essential to the ethos of a caring, supportive school
- Preventing and tackling bullying has a high priority within this school, with a clear commitment from the headteachers, governors and staff.
- School values reject bullying behaviour and promote co-operation and consideration of others.

Signs and Symptoms for Parents/Carers/Guardians and Staff

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and what they should investigate if a child:

- Is frightened of walking to or from school
- Changes their usual routine
- Is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- Begins to truant
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries themselves to sleep or has constant nightmares

- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to make less effort in school work than previously
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged on a regular basis
- Asks for money or starts stealing money
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- Is afraid to use internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous or jumpy when a cyber message is received
- Lack of eye contact
- Becomes short tempered
- Change in attitude to people at home

These signs and behaviours could indicate other social, emotional and/or mental health problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Outcomes

All known/reported incidences of bullying will be investigated by the class teacher or a member of the ESLT.

The child displaying unacceptable behaviour, may be asked to apologise (as appropriate to the age and level of understanding) using the Restorative Justice system. Other consequences may take place, for example – a parent/carer/guardian being informed about their child's behaviour and a request that the parents/carers/guardians support the school with any consequences that it takes (**See Positive Behaviour Policy**). Wherever possible the pupils will be reconciled.

In some cases, outside agencies may be requested to support the school or family in dealing with a child continually demonstrating unacceptable behaviour towards others (eg Police, counsellor, Outreach/Inreach support – PRU). In serious cases where there is no change in behaviour of the perpetrator and an unwillingness to alter their behaviour choices reduced timetables or even fixed or permanent exclusion will be considered.

During and after the incident(s) have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be recorded on CPOMS and monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

The safeguarding Governor will be informed of any incidents recorded on CPOMS along with incidents, sanctions and reconciliation.

GETTING ON TOGETHER – OAK GREEN SCHOOL COMMUNITY RESPOSIBILITIES

Anti-bullying code

At Oak Green School we actively promote the following Anti-Bullying Code:

- Every pupil has the right to enjoy his/her learning and leisure free from intimidation, in school, in the surrounding community and at home.
- Bullying is defined by **STOP** (**Several Times On Purpose**)
- Persistent unkind actions or comments (including online or in any context) will be called bullying.
- Pupils should support each other by reporting any instance of bullying.
- All bullying will be dealt with seriously.
- Tell. Bullying is too important not to report.
- Just be nice!

If bullying happens

Procedure for dealing with bullying incidents

- Any member of staff dealing with the incident should record it on CPOMS and the appropriate member of staff will carry out the appropriate actions
- Communicate – ensure class teacher, Assistant Headteachers, Deputy Headteacher and/or Co-Headteachers, are aware of any bullying incidents. All staff need to be aware of persistent offenders.
- Find out the facts. Talk to bully and victim individually.
- All involved will be encouraged to explore their feelings about the behaviour and to identify the underlying causes.
- If relevant, talk to all children involved together using the Restorative Justice system.
- Bully and victim should record event in writing (teacher scribe if necessary).
- Parents/Carers/Guardians of both parties involved will be contacted. It is expected that the perpetrator's parents/carers/guardians will support the school with any sanctions that it takes (see Behaviour Policy).
- Governors will be informed of incidents through reports regarding behaviour during governors meetings.

Oak Green school has a zero tolerance of bullying and is dealt with very seriously. We aim to develop positive relationships between staff and pupils precisely so that pupils feel confident and safe to report bullying that is happening to them or others. Likewise parents/carers/guardians feel they can raise any concerns with members of staff and that they will be addressed quickly. Evidence for this is from questionnaires received each year. By recording even small concerns on the behaviour logs, trends and repeated fall-outs are picked up early and intervention and support is put in place.

WHAT CHILDREN SHOULD DO

- Report it to a friend or adult in school or parent at home.
- Try ignoring it
- Not to blame themselves. Try to make friends with those who don't bully. Try to feel good about themselves through remembering positive comments and actions that other have said/done about them.
- Keep a diary of bullying events.
- As a bystander, don't ignore bullying or be over friendly with bullies. Don't cheer or encourage. Get adult help.
- Ask for a discussion with teacher and class.

WHAT STAFF SHOULD DO

- Staff must act – and be seen to act – firmly against bullying wherever and whenever it appears
- When children troubled by bullying draw their concerns to the attention of staff, they must have the confidence that these will be carefully investigated and, if substantiated, taken seriously and acted upon.
- Watch for signs of distress and other signs of bullying
- Be vigilant – it is not always obvious what is going on
- Look at persistent friendship issues and recognise where underlying bullying may be happening.
- Keep records – record any concerns about bullying, persistent friendship issues or any contact from pupils or parents/carers/guardians about bullying on CPOMS so that they can be monitored closely by members of the senior leadership team and pastoral team and intervention can happen quickly and positively.
- Get the children involved together and talk about the problem.
- Use assemblies and circle time to discuss themes of friendship, conflict, power, respect, trust

WHAT PARENTS/CARERS/GUARDIANS SHOULD DO

- Be a good role model for your children
- Don't jump to conclusions
- Listen to all sides
- Try to solve problems rather than exacerbate them by only listening to your own child's point of view.
- Don't label children – especially don't label other people's children as 'bullies' before you know all the facts.
- Advise your children to tell an adult in school if they have any problems. If they are not brave enough to do this, contact the school and be confident that the school will sort it out.
- Don't approach other parents to try to resolve playground disputes – this often makes the problem worse.
- Never tell your child to 'hit back'. This is not a good way to de-escalate disputes. Tell them to be assertive, to stand up for themselves and to expect to be treated with respect.
- Don't expect the school to exclude a child for bullying. If schools excluded every child who had been involved in some bullying behaviour, they would have very few children left! The school's job is to challenge and change bullying behaviour, not just to pass it on to another school.
- Be alert, responsible, knowledgeable and proactive with how your child accesses social media and online content to prevent them being victims or perpetrators of cyberbullying.

Summary

Making and losing friends is a natural part of growing up. We cannot eliminate it, and we would be doing the children a disservice if we did. Children need to learn how to 'move on', how to deal with the ups and downs of friendship and keep their self-esteem intact.

Our aim is to help children develop the confidence and self-reliance to make a positive contribution to society, to be able to speak up for themselves and to take life's knocks without completely crumbling.

It is also to let them know that bullying behaviour is always unacceptable, to know how to recognise it and what to do about it. Children need to learn that behaviour is complex, and that often bullying behaviour is caused by real unhappiness. Children should not be fearful of bullying behaviour, but know that they can face it, analyse it and change it.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Positive Behaviour policy
- E-safety policy

- Equality policy
- Child Protection policy
- Whistle blowing procedures

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Board yearly, or as necessary, taking into account feedback from all stakeholders.

Useful online support

Bullying Online www.bullying.co.uk

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