



**Oak Tree  
School**

# Anti-Bullying Policy

<b>Policy Number</b>	ACE ED 02 (Version 4)
<b>Review Date</b>	April 2018
<b>Owner</b>	Headteacher



## Document History

<b>Version</b>	<b>Comments/amendments</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
1.0	2014 Issue	Mike Deacy	February 2014
2.0	2015 issue	Mike Deacy	January 2015
3.0	2016 issue	Mike Deacy	April 2016
4.0	2017 issue	Michelle Pascoe	May 2017

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## 1. Introduction

This policy has been developed using the DfE Guidance documents Preventing and Tackling Bullying (first published in August 2013 and updated in November 2014) and Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (first published in July 2013 and updated in January 2016) 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, homophobic, 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.

## 2. Code of Conduct

### Our vision:

*'To provide the best education for every child'.*

### Our values:

At Oak Tree School we all:

- Be thoughtful and follow instructions carefully.
- Everyone should be respectful and tolerant.
- Show good manners at all times.
- Try your best, always.

### 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 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. 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. It can take many forms, it can be:

- Physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft)
- Verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name-calling)
- Emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of their peer group)
- Racist (racial taunts, graffiti, gestures)
- Sexual (unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments)
- Cyber bullying (via e-mail, text or on-line)
- Bullying involves the use of power in a relationship – it can be seen in many interactions between students, parents and staff

### 5. Our Approach

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

### 6. Prevention

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 circle times on the nature of bullying and particular incidents
- The school curriculum includes examples of the misuse of power and status
- We highlight and value examples of kind behavior, both in school and in the wider world, e.g. in the news, media, entertainment, etc.
- Weekly assemblies that often refer to issues around pro-social and anti-social behaviours, including bullying
- Increased supervision takes place in parts of the school where bullying may be more likely

## 7. Dealing with Incidents

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)

## 8. 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 – 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 – 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.

- Consider setting up a victim/bully meeting. 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

## 9. 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
- Where a sanction is thought necessary and effective it will be set; the schools' Discipline Policy clearly sets out the sanctions available
- At a time where Bullying incidents have not decreased and we consider that the student is continuing to bully other children at this school we will be required to call the parent/carer in for a meeting after school. We will also require the student to attend some sessions after school where we can educate and explain the reasons why tolerance and respect are so important.

## 10. 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

## **11. 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

## 12. 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 (01872 254549) 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’

## 13. 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.