

OXON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Oxon CE Primary School understands that bullying takes many forms all of which have certain features in common:

- Deliberate hurtful behaviour;
- Behaviour that is repeated often over a period of time;
- Behaviour which makes it difficult for the children being bullied to defend themselves;

Bullying can take many forms, but three main types are:

- physical - hitting, kicking, taking belongings;
- verbal - name-calling, insulting, racist remarks;
- indirect - spreading nasty stories about someone, excluding someone from social groups;

The most recent DfE guidance 'Preventing and tackling bullying' (July 2017) has the following definitions:

'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 (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case.'

'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. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.'

The most recent guidance from the Church of England 'Valuing All God's Children' has the following definition which we also find helpful:

'Bullying is hurtful, unkind or threatening behaviour which is deliberate and repeated. Bullying can be carried out by an individual or a group of people towards another individual or group, where the bully or bullies hold more power than those being bullied. If bullying is allowed it harms the perpetrator, the target and the whole school community and its secure and happy environment.'

The nature of bullying can be:

- Physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, pushing or inappropriate/unwanted physical contact)
- Verbal (e.g. name calling, ridicule, comments)
- Cyber (e.g. messaging, social media, email)
- Emotional/indirect/segregation (e.g. excluding someone, spreading rumours)
- Visual/written (e.g. graffiti, gestures, wearing racist insignia)
- Damage to personal property
- Threat with a weapon
- Theft or extortion
- Persistent Bullying

Bullying can be based on any of the following things:

- Race (racist bullying)
- Sexual orientation (homophobic or biphobic)
- Special educational needs (SEN) or disability
- Culture or class
- Gender identity (transphobic)
- Gender (sexist bullying)
- Appearance or health conditions
- Religion or belief
- Related to home or other personal circumstances'

SCHOOL STATEMENT ON BULLYING

We fully support the Church of England statement 'We believe that all people are made in the image of God and are unconditionally loved by God. Everyone is equal and we treat each other with dignity and respect. Our school is a place where everyone should be able to flourish in a loving and hospitable community.'

We believe that the school must take a pro-active approach towards preventing and dealing with bullying. This approach is best maintained by an attitude of openness from the headteacher, teachers, support staff, lunchtime supervisors pupils, parents and governors. Bullies and bullying behaviour are not acceptable in any form, or to any degree, and this message must be reinforced consistently by all involved with Oxon CE Primary School.

AIMS AND PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

- To ensure a secure and happy environment free from threat, harassment, discrimination or any type of bullying behaviour.
- To create an environment where all are treated with dignity and respect and where all members of the school community understand that bullying is not acceptable.
- To ensure a consistent approach to preventing, challenging and responding to incidents of bullying that occur.
- To inform pupils and parents of the school's expectations and to foster a productive partnership which helps to maintain a bullying-free environment.
- To outline our commitment to continuously improving our approach to tackling bullying by regularly monitoring and reviewing the impact of our preventative measures.

STRATEGIES THE SCHOOL USES TO PROMOTE THE ANTI BULLYING MESSAGE (PREVENTION)

- Our school vision is at the heart of everything we do. Central to that vision is the statement that we are striving to achieve 'The best for each child' through 'a spirit of mutual respect and inclusiveness'.
- We use a pupil-friendly anti-bullying definition to ensure that all pupils understand what bullying is and how to report it. (Please see the start of this policy.)
- The school is an inclusive and supportive environment. This includes:
 - pastoral support from teachers and teaching assistants;
 - structured 'in house' programmes of support for an individual or small group;
 - sessions with an external counsellor employed by the school;
 - support from external agencies, often brokered through the 'Early Help' process;
- Assemblies (collective worship) are used to make clear the school's expectations about behaviour and to reinforce the message that bullying is not acceptable at Oxon CE Primary School. They also explore the importance of inclusivity, dignity and respect as well as other themes that play a part in challenging bullying.
- Each year group undertakes teaching units relating to Anti-Bullying as part of PSHE lessons. The PSHE programme of study includes opportunities for pupils to understand about different types of bullying and

what they can do to prevent and respond to bullying. It also includes opportunities for pupils to learn to value themselves, value others and appreciate and respect difference. Details of these lessons are included in the PSHE scheme of work.

- Class based discussions and activities, including circle time, provide regular opportunities to discuss issues that may arise in class and for teachers to make specific interventions.
- Through a variety of planned activities across the curriculum pupils are given the opportunity to gain self-confidence and develop strategies to speak up for themselves and express their own thoughts and opinions.
- Our online safety work considers the issue of cyber-bullying.
- The school council meets regularly and is able to discuss any area of school life. The area of anti-bullying is a focus area for the council and the anti-bullying policy is discussed each year. The council has a particular role in helping to develop the playground. This relates to both the physical environment and to how play is organised.
- Lunchtime supervisors and support staff meet with the headteacher on a weekly basis, this helps to ensure that they are fully involved in promoting the Anti-Bullying message.
- Stereotypes are challenged by staff and pupils across the school.
- Older pupils take on a variety of 'prefect' type roles within school.

PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED:

ACTION FOR CHILDREN

If any child feels that they have been bullied, they should tell an adult. This may be the class teacher, the headteacher, a teaching assistant, a lunchtime supervisor or their parent/carer.

ACTION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

If a parent has concerns that their child may be being bullied, they should speak initially to their child's class teacher or to the headteacher.

ACTION FOR SUPPORT STAFF AND LUNCHTIME SUPERVISORS

1. All staff should be vigilant and respond promptly to any behaviour which they suspect may involve bullying.
2. Support staff should listen carefully to concerns raised by children and make initial enquiries. They should inform the class teacher or the headteacher of any concerns that have been raised.

ACTION FOR ALL TEACHING STAFF

1. All staff should be vigilant and respond promptly to any behaviour which they suspect may involve bullying.
2. Staff should listen to concerns raised by children and parents carefully.
3. The class teacher should inform the headteacher that they are dealing with a concern. The headteacher may become involved at an early stage if that is deemed appropriate.
4. Teachers should then investigate the concerns that have been raised. They should talk with the children involved, listening to each child's account. They should also speak to other adults who work in school as appropriate.
5. The class teacher has the initial responsibility for deciding how best to respond to a concern.

FOLLOW UP ARRANGEMENTS AND SANCTIONS

1. The relationship between teachers and children is of the greatest importance in supporting children and resolving any difficulties that have occurred. Teachers should make use of the strong relationships that exist to resolve any difficulties that may have occurred. Teachers may choose to adopt a wide variety of intervention strategies. This may include working with the whole

class, introducing systems of peer support and the involvement of parents. Support staff can also be used to provide support for individual children.

2. At this time the teacher may decide to involve parents or it may be felt that the matter can be resolved within school.
3. The normal range of sanctions is available to class teachers and these will be used as appropriate. This could include the involvement of the headteacher or member of the senior management team and may involve missing playtimes.
4. A careful watch should be kept by all staff to determine whether or not the matter has been fully resolved.
5. The headteacher or deputy headteacher may put in place additional pastoral support for the child who has experienced inappropriate behaviour.
6. Throughout this process staff will also seek to mentor the child who is behaving inappropriately. This will include considering and addressing any factors that may be contributing to the inappropriate behaviour. Outside agencies may be involved to address issues that may arise as part of this process.
7. Further action should be taken in response to the monitoring that has taken place. Parents will be involved as appropriate.
8. The headteacher or deputy headteacher may take the lead role in steps 1 – 7 if this is deemed to be appropriate.
9. The ultimate sanction would be a fixed term or permanent exclusion from school.

VULNERABLE PUPILS

The 2017 DfE guidance states the following 'Some pupils are more likely to be the target of bullying because of the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. For example those with special educational needs or disabilities, those who are adopted, those who are suffering from a health problem or those with caring responsibilities may be more likely to experience bullying because of difference. Children in care that are frequently on the move may also be vulnerable because they are always the newcomer.'

These young people are often the same young people who might need greater support to deal with the impact of bullying, for example those who are going through a personal or family crisis. In addition children with special educational needs or disabilities can often lack the social or communication skills to report such incidents so it is important that staff are alert to the potential bullying this group faces and that their mechanisms for reporting are accessible to all. There will also be a range of other local or individual factors that result in some children being more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others.'

The school is very aware of vulnerable children and provides support in this area. Our SENDCo plays a key role in providing systems of 'in house' support and commissions external agencies to provide support as appropriate for children identified as vulnerable. This work is often co-ordinated through the 'Early Help' process.

PREJUDICE BASED INCIDENTS

A prejudice based incident is a one-off incident of unkind or hurtful behaviour that is motivated by a prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views towards a protected characteristic or minority group. It can be targeted towards an individual or group of people and have a significant impact on those targeted. Any prejudice based incidents are taken extremely seriously and recorded and monitored in school.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the headteacher and senior management team.

The governing body will review this area on an on-going cycle. This will include:

- Review of the policy document;

- Evaluation of parental view from the biennial survey of parental views;
- On-going reviews and discussions arising from reports and agenda items;

POLICY DATE – OCTOBER 2023

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The most recent DfE guidance 'Preventing and tackling bullying' (July 2017) provides the following information:

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides that maintained schools must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures should be part of the school's behaviour policy which must be communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents.

The Equality Act 2010

A key provision in The Equality Act 2010 is the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which came into force on 5 April 2011 and covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Maintained schools and Academies are required to comply with the PSED. In addition Part 6 of the Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to admissions, the way it provides education for pupils, provision of pupil access to any benefit, facility or service, or by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment. In England and Wales Part 6 of the Act applies to maintained schools and Academies and to other independent schools.

In addition to the duties in relation to pupils with disabilities under the Equality Act, 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.

Safeguarding children and young people

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. Where this is the case, the school staff should discuss with the school's designated safeguarding lead and report their concerns to their local authority children's social care and work with them to take appropriate action. Full details can be found in Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

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, schools may need to 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. Full details can be found in Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education and Chapter 1 of Working Together to Safeguard Children.

Criminal law

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, any person who sends an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender, is guilty of an offence if their purpose in sending it was to cause distress or anxiety to the recipient.

Bullying which occurs outside school premises

School 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' behaviour in those circumstances. This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The headteacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

While school staff members have the power to discipline pupils for bullying that occurs outside school, they can only impose the disciplinary sanction and implement that sanction on the school premises or when the pupil is under the lawful control of school staff, for instance on a school trip.

More detailed advice on teachers' powers to discipline, including their power to discipline pupils for misbehaviour that occurs outside school, is included in 'Behaviour and discipline in schools – advice for headteachers and school staff'.