

Oak Hill First School Anti-Bullying Policy – Reviewed March 2015

Introduction

The staff and governors of Oak Hill First School believe that bullying is wrong and can damage individual children and therefore we do all we can to prevent it, by developing a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.

This policy embraces the statutory duty school has to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (Section 175 of the Education Act 2002) and the outcomes of Every Child Matters (Children Act 2004) – specifically ‘staying safe’ by ensuring all children and young people are “safe from bullying and discrimination”. It is also linked to being healthy (emotionally), enjoying (social experiences) and achievement, make a positive contribution (to relationships), achieve economic well-being (by taking positive relationships into the workplace).

This policy dovetails with the schools behaviour and self-esteem policy in which high standards of behaviour are promoted through emphasising the positive and guiding children towards making the ‘right’ choices and take responsibility for their actions. The anti-bullying policy strongly supports the school's vision and aims.

The aims of our Anti-Bullying Policy are:

1. To define ‘bullying’ and ensure it is clearly understood by children, staff, parents and governors.
2. To create a safe and secure environment where all children can grow in self-esteem and confidence and learn without anxiety caused by bullying incidents.
3. To enable our pupils to fulfil their intellectual potential and develop physically, socially and emotionally.
4. To produce a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that occur and make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the eradication of bullying in school.
5. To enable children to demonstrate self-respect and the skills of self-discipline, whilst at the same time showing respect, care and tolerance of others and accepting differences in abilities, life styles and cultures.

What is bullying?

Bullying is deliberate, systematic and persistent use of power by one or more children with the intention of hurting another child physically or emotionally.

It can be difficult for the victims of bullying to defend themselves because of the nature of the bullying (e.g. leaving a child out of a group). Sometimes victims may choose to use aggressive strategies for dealing with bullying – and the distinction between the bully and the victim becomes blurred.

It is not bullying when two children or young people of approximately the same age and strength have the occasional fright or quarrel.

The main types of bullying are:

- **Physical** – hitting, kicking, pushing, biting, theft

- **Verbal/written** – teasing, name-calling, jokes, racist, sexist, homophobic names, teasing relating to the 'it's not cool to be clever/well behaved' attitude.
- **Indirect/emotional** – spreading rumours, deliberately leaving a child out of group play/activities, not talking to children
- **Online/cyber**
- **Racist**
- **Sexist/homophobic**

Bullying is often hidden, but the emotional distress caused by any form of bullying can affect a child's learning, progress and attitude to school. Symptoms of distress can be a change in behaviour, being tearful and over sensitive, withdrawn, having tummy ache or feeling ill at the thought of going to school. Children often think that it is their fault that they are being bullied. Being bullied may lead to a child becoming anxious, depressed, lonely and if it is not dealt with a child may start to lack trust in adults.

Policies concerning anti-bullying are only effective if they are embraced by all members of the school community and a culture of respect and empathy for others is engendered. Whilst it is important that the vulnerability of any child is acknowledged, we also recognise that some groups of children are more prone to becoming the victims of bullying e.g. looked after children, children from poorer/more affluent socio-economic backgrounds, black and minority ethnic groups, children with SEN and disabilities, more able children.

Pupils

Pupils learn about bullying its affects and strategies for dealing with it through the school's PSHE and Citizenship curriculum, circle time programme and assemblies. The school takes care to ensure that pupils with SEN are included in curriculum work relating to bullying in a way that is appropriate to their individual needs. Good staff/pupil relationships limit the 'culture of silence' that can exist with regard to bullying.

If a child is being bullied or knows of someone else being bullied they are encouraged to tell a member of school staff or adult at home. A child-friendly version of this policy is produced, given to each child and discussed in class at the beginning of each school year.

Parents

Parents and carers play an important role in helping the school deal with bullying as research has shown that instances of bullying are reported more often at home than it is to schools.

If parents notice something is wrong or a bullying incident is reported at home they should contact their child's class teacher immediately and explain what happened and who was involved.

If parents suspect that their child is the perpetrator of bullying they should talk to their child explaining that their behaviour is making other children unhappy. It is helpful to discuss ways in which their child can join in with others without bullying, praise and encourage their child when they are co-operative or kind to other people. It is important that parents explain the difficulties their child is experiencing to their child's class teacher

Parents are encouraged to take an active involvement in the schools anti-bullying work through annual events in school i.e. Anti-bullying/friendship week.

Staff

If a member of school staff notices possible symptoms of bullying they sensitively and respectfully ask the child concerned. Staff are aware that it may take some time for children to reveal that bullying is taking place.

If children are reluctant to talk about what is happening they are encouraged to write it down i.e. in a diary or draw pictures depicting events; alternatively they are asked if there is another adult they would be prepared to talk to.

Staff training takes place on an annual basis to ensure everyone is alert to the signs of bullying and know what procedure to follow if they suspect bullying has or is taking place.

If a child or parent reports an instance of bullying to a member of staff the following procedure is followed:

- 1) Some instances of bullying may turn out to be false or exaggerated, however **all claims are treated seriously and further enquiries are always made promptly.**

The class teacher of the 'victim' talks to the child **and** the perpetrator of bullying type behaviour to establish the full facts of the case i.e. what things have happened, who did it, when things have happened, who else saw events etc. The accounts of all the people involved are listened to carefully as several pupils saying the same thing does not necessarily mean they are telling the truth.

If the perpetrator of bullying type behaviour and the 'victim' are in different classes the teachers of the perpetrator of bullying type behaviour and the 'victim' need to discuss the incident before any further action is taken – as the class teacher may be aware of further information relating to the incident.

It is important that a child is not labelled as a 'bully' so is described as the 'perpetrator/doer of bullying type behaviour'. Similarly care is taken to avoid a child becoming labelled as a 'victim'.

The incident(s) are recorded fully on 'Bullying Incident Report' – a statutory document that is returned to the Local Authority within 1 week (see appendix 1). A copy of the completed Bullying Incident Report is retained by the class teacher and a copy is given to the Deputy. The Deputy will ensure copies of the completed form are filed with the child's records.

- 2) If bullying has taken place the class teacher of the perpetrator of bullying type behaviour records this in the class incident book. The perpetrator of bullying type behaviour has an opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and will apologise to the 'victim' either verbally or in writing.
- 3) The matter is immediately shared with the AHT – who logs this within their AHT file.

- 4) The class teacher speaks to the parents/carers of the perpetrator of bullying type behaviour to discuss their child's behaviour and the action that has been taken.
- 5) If necessary, the class teacher contacts the parents/carers of the 'victim' to explain what has happened, the action that has been taken and the action that will follow.
- 6) The class teacher checks with the 'victim' on a daily basis initially that bullying has stopped (In discussion with the DH/ HT an agreement to utilise a yellow record card/sheet may be used for this purpose). After three weeks this becomes a weekly check. To ensure bullying does not resume checks will continue on a half-termly basis.

Where the distinction between the 'victim' and the perpetrator of bullying type behaviour becomes blurred:

A 'Bullying Incident Report' is completed in order to gather the necessary background information. The class teacher(s) contact the parents/carers of all the children concerned. The purpose of this contact is to establish a problem solving approach to resolve the situation e.g. 'it seems your son/daughter and ... have not been getting on very well lately'.

Together with the child and parents/carers agree strategies for preventing further incidents e.g. moving a child to a different table, peer mediation, re-arranging groups in class/doing activities in mixed ability groups when appropriate, jobs or alternative activities at play and lunchtimes, playing/not playing together outside school etc

The children are expected to apologise to one another, and the incident(s) are recorded in the class incident book as detailed in behaviour policy. The class teacher(s) checks with the children involved on a daily/weekly/half-termly basis that the problem(s) have been resolved.

The persistent perpetrator of bullying type behaviour

The class teacher and AHT or other designated senior member of staff shall convene a meeting with the parents of an instigator of bullying type behaviour should there be an occurrence of 2 incidents within a half term. A record card must be implemented at this stage.

If bullying continues the deputy head or headteacher, parent/carer and pupil will meet to agree other strategies to resolve the problems e.g. withdrawal of break and lunchtime privileges, missing a school trip or event (not essential to the curriculum) or internal exclusion.

Where a pupil does not respond to these strategies the head teacher together with parents/carers considers referral to outside agencies or a fixed period of exclusion. Where serious and persistent violence is involved, permanent exclusion may be justified.

Classification of perpetrators of bullying type behaviour and victims

The perpetrator of bullying type of behaviour tends to have the following characteristics:

- Confident
- Assertive
- Physically strong
- Reasonably popular

The perpetrator of bullying type behaviour does not necessarily bully all the time. Their behaviour towards others may be a reflection of other factors e.g. a difficult episode at home.

Anxious perpetrators of bullying type behaviour are less common and greatly lacking in self confidence. These children are less popular with peers and are reported to have problems at home. Teachers report that these children have less likeable qualities, they tend to be lower attaining children and have poor concentration.

The Frequent Victim (Passive and provocative victims)

Whilst it is no justification, the behaviour of certain pupils can contribute to bullying e.g. easily roused to anger, hyperactivity, and fight back when slightly provoked. Other pupils may be actively disliked by a large number of their peer group. Frequent victims may bully other pupils.

This pupil may need additional support to improve their levels of inclusion and awareness of their own and others feelings and behaviour in order prevent them being a frequent victim e.g. circle times, social skills training, circle of friends, peer mediation, training in assertiveness, protective behaviours or anger management. Sometimes this support may be provided 'in-house' whilst more specialised support may be provided by outside agencies such as Educational Psychologist or Learning and Behaviour Support Service. Provision of this support be external agencies will be in agreement with parents/carers.

Bystanders

Observers who feel powerless to do anything, for fear of being bullied themselves, may be perceived as colluding with the bullying or ignoring it. We encourage an active stance and provide clear guidelines for children who witness such behaviour through PSHE curriculum/anti bullying assemblies.

Bullying outside the school premises

The schools policy encourages pupils to tell a parent/carers or member of school staff if incidents of bullying have taken place. Sometimes bullying occurs beyond school (in terms of the time and location of the event(s)). The bullying may be by pupils at the school, pupils at other schools, or people not at school at all. In certain circumstances, the school may take following steps:

- Talk to pupils about how to avoid or handle bullying outside the school premises
- Talk to the head of another school whose pupils are bullying off the school premises
- Talk to providers of extended services
- Talk to the community police officer about problems on local streets

Lunchtimes

Lunchtimes are a time when pupils are most able to interact socially with their friends and peers. It might be perceived that it is also a time when children are most at risk of bullying – both as a ‘victim’ or a perpetrator; however apparent bullying might simply be ‘rough and tumble play’. Consequently supervisors share any concerns they have with regard to regular observations that may be a cause for concern, with the lead dinner supervisor who then liaises with the senior manager for that phase. Dinner supervisors are aware of children who may be at risk of being bullied and are aware of children with SEN, hearing, vision and communication difficulties who might be vulnerable to bullying.

To achieve a consistent response to bullying lunchtime supervisors follow this policy. If an incident of bullying is reported to a lunchtime supervisor, the Deputy or a member of the Senior Management Team will take action 1 of the procedure.

Factors which contribute to bullying type behaviour

Within child characteristics, personality, temperament, ability, self-perception

Environmental characteristics e.g. parental attitudes, poor level of achievement, low self-esteem, lack of clear boundaries, expectations of behaviour and undifferentiated consequences of poor behaviour, lack of support for the victims of bullying type behaviour, consequences.

Factors which reduce the likelihood of bullying type behaviour

- Physically robust
- Extroverted
- Socially sensitive
- Unselfish
- Flexible
- Conforming to group norms
- Give of themselves
- Non-aggressive
- Non-attention seeking
- Modest

Through all our work in school we strive to promote these characteristics in order to lessen the chances of children being bullied.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

Along with the school’s behaviour and self-esteem policy, the Anti-Bullying Policy will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis. The school returns ‘Bullying Incident Records’ to the Local Authority within a week of the investigation. These are monitored by the Local Authority annually.

Reviewed: 23rd March 2015 Children and Learning Committee

To be reviewed: March 2016

