THE HERMITAGE and THE OAKTREE SCHOOLS
Inspire, Learn, Achieve

Anti-Bullying Policy

Person responsible: Life Skills Leaders
Date adopted: November 2015
Date of last review: Autumn Term 2023
Date of next review: Autumn Term 2024

Rationale
At The Oaktree and Hermitage Schools, we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils and adults so they can learn and work in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We aim to provide our pupils with the skills and resources necessary to recognise the signs and symptoms of bullying and act appropriately to stop any such situation escalating, either in or outside of school.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our schools. If bullying does occur, all pupils, parents/carers and staff should feel confident enough to report the behaviour and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Our Anti-bullying Policy is preventative and is based on Rights and Responsibilities.
Every-one in the school has a right:
• To be safe
• To respect
• To learn
  The policy applies to all people in the school, not just pupils.

Objectives for this Policy
- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents/carers must have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff must know what the school policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents/carers must know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- Pupils and parents/carers must be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

Policy Development
This policy was formulated in consultation with members of the whole school community. Pupils contributed to the development of the policy through our School Council, assemblies and Life Skills lessons.

Principles that underpin the policy

For children who experience bullying that:

- They are heard.
- They know how to report bullying and get help.
- They are confident in the school's ability to deal with bullying, and feel happy and comfortable with any plans that are put in place.
- Steps are taken to help them feel safe again.
- They are helped to rebuild confidence and resilience.
- They know how they can get support from others.

For children who engage in bullying behaviour that:

- Learning programmes and strategies hold them to account for their behaviour and help them to face up to the harm they have caused.
- They will learn to behave in ways which do not cause harm in future, because they have developed their emotional skills and knowledge.
- They will learn how they can take steps to repair the harm they have caused.
- They will have any safeguarding issues, around their circumstances, addressed.
- The school is aware of other circumstances and situations that may be influencing the child's behaviour.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Bullying can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment. Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Bullying can be:
- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, scratching, spitting, or any use of violence.
- Verbal: name-calling, teasing, put downs, sarcasm, insults, threats.
- Relational: silent treatment, excluding, spreading rumours, taunting, making friendship conditional.
- Cyber: use of internet and related technologies to harm people in a deliberate, repeated and hostile manner.
- Sexist: bullying based on sexist attitudes that when expressed demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender.
- Sexual/ Transgender/ Homophobic: negative attitudes and feelings towards people who are identified, or perceived as being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.
- Racist: the repeated aggression against people because of their race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin, with the purpose of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment.
- Religious: conduct, words or practices, which disadvantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin.

Bullying can take place between:
- Young people
- Young people and staff
- Members of staff
- Individuals or groups

There is no hierarchy of bullying – all forms should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately. All concerns should be reported.

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

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- begs to be driven to 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 them-self to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the mornings
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home hungry (lunch has been stolen)
- 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 the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous and jumpy when a cyber-message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Vulnerable Groups
Certain groups of pupils are known to be particularly vulnerable to bullying by others; these may include pupils with special educational needs such as learning or physical disabilities; Young Carers, Looked After Children, those from ethnic and racial minority groups and those young people who may be perceived as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning their gender role.

Special Needs and Disabilities
Children with specific special needs and/or disabilities may be more vulnerable to bullying activities. They also may be less able to report accurately what has happened, meaning that the bullying of these children is often more difficult to pick up on and resolve. Staff should be vigilant for any changes in their behaviour and should provide regular opportunities for them to discuss any worries.

In some cases, the history of a child may result in them exhibiting tendencies towards bullying behaviour. Where this is the case, support should be given for both the aggressor and the victim. Where children have experienced bullying behaviour at home, this can appear to be the acceptable way to behave by a child. This does not excuse the bullying.

Reporting and Responding to Bullying

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

At The Oaktree and Hermitage Schools, we ensure that we respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying. Any incidents of bullying must be reported immediately and documented appropriately.

The schools have a clear system to report bullying for the whole community (including staff, parents/carers, children and young people). This includes those who are victims of bullying or have witnessed bullying (bystanders). All reported incidents will be taken seriously and investigated involving all appropriate parties.

Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying

The Oaktree and Hermitage Schools have a three-tiered approach to stopping bullying in the school. It is based on prevention, detection and response (Low-Level, Escalation and High-Level). Co-ordination of this will be the responsibility of the Executive Headteacher and members of the Senior Leadership Team.

1. **Prevention**

   The Schools promote a safe school environment through the following strategies:
   - Valuing relationships: all staff and pupils are expected to show respect, tolerance and trust to each other (as promoted by the schools' values system).
   - The curriculum: Life Skills lessons. Through the curriculum, pupils will learn to build positive relationships, develop conflict resolution skills and emotional health and well-being.
   - The school staff will promote the anti-bullying message at all times, including through assemblies, Life Skills lessons and role modelling the school values.
   - An open-door policy in which pupils and parents/carers feel safe to inform staff of any worries or issues and know that matters will be treated confidentially.
   - Children know who they can speak to and know how they can contact them if they have any concerns.
   - Online safety is taught through the Computing curriculum and through cross-curricular links with other subjects.
   - The School Council establishes a student voice.
   - Pupils are taught through Life Skills lessons, how to approach bullying and who to tell.
   - All staff, including teachers, teaching assistants, administrative staff and midday supervisors, are vigilant in monitoring and following school policy.

2. **Detection**

   All reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the class teacher, teaching assistants and midday supervisors. If the incident is found to be that of bullying, a record will be made using the school's online reporting tool (CPOMS), which informs all members of the Senior Leadership Team. In this way, pupils will gain confidence in telling an adult. This confidence factor is of vital importance.

   Serious cases of bullying will be verbally referred to the Executive Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team immediately, as well as being logged.

If it is established that systematic or serious bullying has taken place, parents/carers of victims and aggressors will be contacted by the Executive Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team, so that they have an opportunity to discuss what has happened. Teachers and parents/carers can then work together to provide appropriate support to those involved.

3. **Response:**
   All levels including low-level:
   - When analysing incidents of bullying, staff will seek to answer questions of: what, where, when, who and why. If a group is involved, then all members will be spoken to separately, including bystanders. Other pupils may also be spoken to in order to get a clearer picture.
   - Written records of any reports of bullying and of such discussions will be logged on the school's online reporting tool (CPOMS). These records will be analysed and monitored to impact upon future practice and policy.
   - It may also be appropriate for pupils to write down their own accounts of events. All such accounts/reports should be scanned and attached to the main report logged on CPOMS.
   - Where appropriate, the parents/carers of both parties will be met with to explain the actions being taken and to discuss ways in which they can help or support the school's actions. If required, separate follow-up meetings with both parties will also be arranged.
   - The victim and aggressor, as well as bystanders, will be supported. The victim will receive support in order to deal with their feelings and the aggressor in order to change this type of behaviour and prevent further incidents occurring. Mentoring intervention may be appropriate and if so will be arranged as soon as possible.
   - Consequences of bullying will follow the school Behaviour and Wellbeing Policy.

   Escalation:
   - Where continued bullying has come to the attention of staff, staff will discuss with each pupil involved what has happened. Staff may mediate if all pupils agree to attend to resolve the situation; this may be done informally within school time or more formally after school if parents/carers need to be involved.
   - Staff may use indirect mediation where pupils do not wish to meet but where a resolution is necessary in order for both parties to feel safe in school. If appropriate, this meeting will be held after school so that parents/carers are able to attend.
   - Consequences of bullying will follow the school behaviour system.
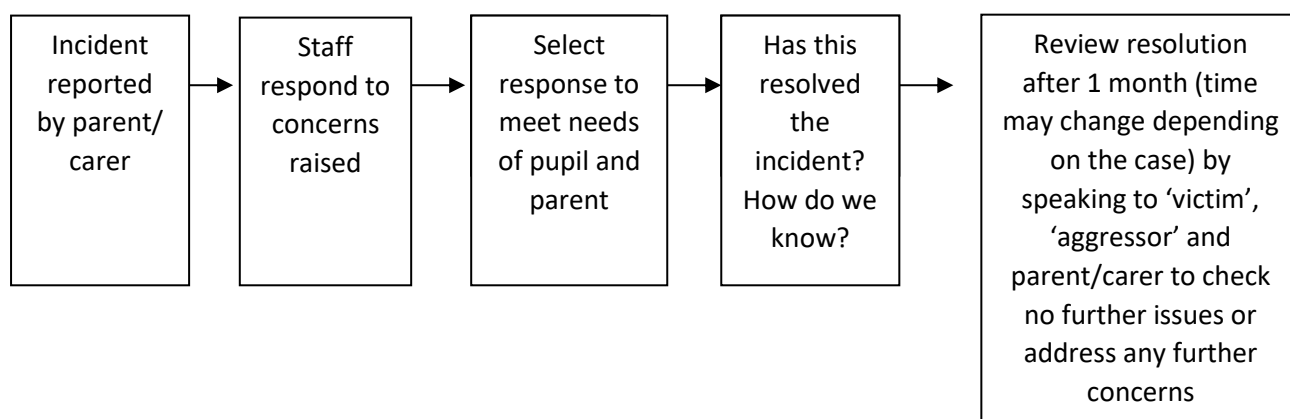
   High response:
   - Where appropriate high-level responses may include:
     o A mentoring referral.
     o A restorative conference - where a bullying incident occurs all those involved are asked to attend to acknowledge the harm caused and discuss what needs to be done to repair the damage and prevent it from happening again.
     o A referral to outside agencies (this may include the police, social services, counsellors and voluntary agencies such as victim support depending on severity).
   - Consequences will follow the Behaviour and Wellbeing Policy and may include fixed term suspension or permanent exclusion in severe cases.

Reporting systems for parents/carers
Children may make disclosures to parents/carers at home or parents/carers may notice changes in behaviour that are not evident in school. Parents/carers should feel confident to contact the school

immediately with their concerns and speak to the class teacher as a first port of call, followed by a member of the Senior Leadership Team if the bullying continues. Notes should be taken at this meeting and a report logged on CPOMS by the member of staff. It may also be appropriate for the Executive Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher to be provided with a verbal update. Actions should be made clear to the parents/carers, and the parents/carers should be given feedback as to the outcome.

We would always prefer incidents of bullying are dealt with in school and discourage parents/carers intervening themselves.

| Incident reported by parent/ carer | → | Staff respond to concerns raised | → | Select response to meet needs of pupil and parent | → | Has this resolved the incident? How do we know? | → | Review resolution after 1 month (time may change depending on the case) by speaking to 'victim', 'aggressor' and parent/carer to check no further issues or address any further concerns |

Celebrating our success
We recognise that the most successful way to prevent bullying is by having an inclusive community. Every year the schools hold an Anti-bullying Week; during this week, each school comes together to address issues, share experiences and celebrate success stories.
The Oaktree and Hermitage are happy schools and we endeavour to keep them as such.

Complaints procedures
Any complaint raised will be treated seriously, confidentially and courteously and given the time necessary for the complainant to feel that the matter has been dealt with properly. It is important that the complainant has confidence in these procedures and knows that the matter will be investigated impartially and dealt with as quickly as possible. We will ensure that we comply with all equality legislation and are sensitive to individual needs.

Policy Links
- Behaviour and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Equality Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Life Skills Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct)