



Our Anti-Bullying Approach

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Recommendation Date: 17.08.2026

Ratified by: Doug Mills

Position on Board: Chair of Governors

Ratification Date: September 2026

Next Review: Autumn 2027

Policy Tier: School

Introduction

At Oak Hill First School, we believe every child has the right to feel safe, valued, respected and included.

We are committed to creating a school community where positive relationships flourish, differences are respected and every child experiences a strong sense of belonging. Bullying can have a significant impact on wellbeing, confidence, relationships and learning. We therefore take all concerns seriously and work proactively to prevent bullying from occurring.

We want every child to feel safe physically, emotionally and socially, and to know that they will be listened to when they share a concern.

This policy should be read alongside the school's Behaviour Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Online Safety Policy, SEND Policy and Equality Objectives.

Legal and Guidance Framework

This policy has due regard to relevant legislation and statutory guidance including:

- Education Act 2002
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Behaviour in Schools
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance

Our Anti-Bullying Approach

Our approach is built around five key principles.

These principles work together and should not be viewed in isolation. They reflect Oak Hill's belief that bullying is best prevented through a culture of belonging, positive relationships, respect, effective safeguarding and restorative practice.

1. Belonging

We believe children are less likely to experience or engage in bullying when they feel connected to their school community.

At Oak Hill we seek to ensure that every child:

- Feels welcomed and included.
- Experiences positive relationships with adults and peers.
- Has opportunities to contribute and succeed.
- Feels heard and valued.
- Knows they belong within the Oak Hill community.

We recognise that belonging is a protective factor that supports wellbeing, confidence and positive behaviour.

We recognise that some children may be more vulnerable to bullying, including pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils, children known to social care, young carers and pupils who may experience prejudice or discrimination. We are committed to ensuring that all children are safe, included and supported to thrive.

2. Relationships

Positive relationships are central to preventing bullying.

Staff work hard to build trusting relationships with children and create classroom communities where kindness, empathy and respect are actively taught, modelled and celebrated.

Children are encouraged to:

- Treat others with kindness and respect.
- Resolve disagreements appropriately.
- Seek help when they need it.
- Support one another.
- Speak to a trusted adult if they are worried.

Adults will:

- Listen carefully.
- Take concerns seriously.
- Act promptly.
- Support children to repair relationships where appropriate.

3. Respect

We celebrate diversity and value every member of our school community.

Children are taught that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect regardless of:

- Race or ethnicity.
- Religion or belief.
- Disability.
- Sex.
- Family circumstances.
- Appearance.
- Any other characteristic or difference.

Discriminatory language, prejudice and unkind behaviour are challenged and addressed.

Through our curriculum, assemblies, PSHE education and everyday interactions, children learn about empathy, inclusion, equality and mutual respect.

4. Protection

Bullying is not tolerated at Oak Hill First School.

We use the Department for Education definition of bullying:

“Behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally.”

Bullying typically involves:

- Intentional harm.
- Repeated behaviour.
- An imbalance of power.

An imbalance of power may include:

- Being physically stronger or older.
- Having a larger friendship group.
- Having greater social influence or popularity.
- Repeatedly targeting someone who finds it difficult to defend themselves.
- Using online anonymity or technology to intimidate or upset someone.
- Exploiting a person's vulnerability, disability, SEND, wellbeing needs or circumstances.

Bullying may be:

- Physical.

- Verbal.
- Emotional.
- Social or relational.
- Online or cyberbullying.
- Prejudice-based.

Understanding the Difference

We recognise that not all friendship difficulties, disagreements or one-off incidents are bullying.

Relational conflict occurs when children experience disagreements, arguments or friendship difficulties where there is no ongoing pattern of targeted behaviour or significant imbalance of power.

Examples may include:

- Falling out with a friend.
- Disagreements during play.
- One-off incidents of unkindness.
- Arguments between children of equal power.
- Friendship groups experiencing difficulties.

Relational conflict can be upsetting and may require adult support, restorative conversations, coaching and guidance. However, it is not necessarily bullying.

Bullying is behaviour that is:

- Deliberately hurtful.
- Repeated over time.
- Involves an imbalance of power.

Examples may include:

- Repeated name-calling.
- Ongoing exclusion from groups.
- Repeated intimidation or threats.
- A group repeatedly targeting an individual child.
- Persistent online harassment.

While relational conflict and bullying require different responses, all concerns will be taken seriously and addressed appropriately.

Our aim is always to:

- Keep children safe.
- Support children to be heard.
- Promote understanding and responsibility.
- Restore relationships where appropriate.
- Ensure every child feels valued, respected and included.

Prejudice-Based Bullying

We recognise that some bullying behaviour is motivated by prejudice or discrimination linked to protected characteristics or perceived differences.

This may include behaviour relating to:

- Race or ethnicity.
- Religion or belief.
- Disability or SEND.
- Sex.
- Gender identity.
- Sexual orientation.
- Family circumstances.

Prejudice-based incidents will always be taken seriously, recorded appropriately and addressed in line with the school's safeguarding, behaviour and equality responsibilities.

Online Bullying

The school recognises that bullying can take place online through messaging platforms, gaming, social media and other digital technologies.

Where online behaviour affects the wellbeing, safety or education of pupils, or impacts members of the school community, the school may investigate and respond in accordance with this policy, the Behaviour Policy and safeguarding procedures.

Preventing Bullying

Bullying prevention is embedded throughout school life through:

- Strong relationships with trusted adults.
- High expectations for behaviour.
- The school's Ready, Respectful and Safe expectations.
- PSHE education.
- Online safety education.

- Assemblies.
- Curriculum opportunities that promote equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Staff vigilance and early intervention.
- Positive play and social development opportunities.

We believe that the most effective way to tackle bullying is to create a culture in which kindness, respect and belonging are actively promoted every day.

Reporting Concerns

Children, parents, carers and staff are encouraged to report concerns as soon as possible.

All concerns will be:

- Acknowledged promptly.
- Investigated fairly and sensitively.
- Recorded where appropriate.
- Followed up by relevant staff.

The school will gather information from those involved and determine the most appropriate response.

Parents and carers will be kept informed of significant developments and involved in supporting positive outcomes where appropriate.

If Parents Have a Concern

Parents and carers should contact the class teacher in the first instance. Concerns may also be raised with a member of the leadership team.

The school will listen carefully, gather information and determine appropriate next steps.

While confidentiality may mean that specific information about other children cannot be shared, parents and carers will be informed about the actions the school is taking to address concerns and keep children safe.

Timely Responses

All reports of bullying, prejudice-based incidents and child-on-child abuse concerns will be taken seriously and responded to promptly.

When concerns are raised, the school will:

- Consider immediate safety and wellbeing needs.
- Take appropriate action to protect those involved.
- Record concerns appropriately.
- Gather relevant information.

- Communicate with parents and carers where appropriate.
- Provide support whilst enquiries are ongoing.

The school will seek to complete investigations and follow-up actions as quickly as reasonably practicable. The timescale will depend on the nature and complexity of the concern and the availability of those involved.

Parents and carers will be kept informed of significant developments throughout the process.

Outcomes

Following investigation, concerns may be identified as:

- Bullying.
- Relational conflict.
- Friendship difficulties.
- Child-on-child abuse.
- A prejudice-based incident.
- Another form of unacceptable behaviour.

Appropriate action will then be taken in line with the Behaviour Policy and safeguarding procedures.

5. Restoration

Our approach is not simply about stopping harmful behaviour; it is also about helping children learn, grow and rebuild positive relationships.

When appropriate, restorative approaches may be used to help children:

- Understand the impact of their actions.
- Take responsibility.
- Repair harm caused.
- Rebuild trust.
- Make positive choices in the future.

Restorative approaches do not replace consequences where these are necessary.

Examples of Restorative Conversations

Restorative conversations provide children with an opportunity to reflect on their actions, understand the impact of their behaviour and consider how they can put things right.

The purpose is not to assign blame or force apologies, but to promote understanding, responsibility and positive future behaviour.

For the child whose behaviour has caused harm:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What were you feeling?
- Who has been affected by what happened?
- How do you think they may have felt?
- What do you think needs to happen to put things right?
- What will you do differently next time?

For the child who has experienced harm:

- What happened from your perspective?
- How did this make you feel?
- What has been the impact on you?
- What would help you feel safe and supported?
- What would you like to happen next?

When rebuilding relationships:

- What can we learn from this situation?
- What would help us move forward?
- How can we make sure this does not happen again?
- What support do people need now?

Restorative conversations will always be conducted in a manner that is appropriate to the age, understanding and needs of the children involved.

Where bullying, discriminatory behaviour, safeguarding concerns or child-on-child abuse are identified, restorative approaches may be used alongside other actions and interventions but will never replace measures required to keep children safe.

Support for Children

Children who have experienced bullying may receive:

- Emotional support.
- Pastoral support.
- Opportunities to speak with a trusted adult.
- Additional monitoring.
- Support to rebuild confidence and wellbeing.

Children whose behaviour has caused harm may receive:

- Behaviour coaching.
- Restorative support.
- Social and emotional support.
- Additional guidance and intervention.

The aim is to support all children to learn from their experiences and move forward positively.

Safeguarding

Some incidents initially reported as bullying may also constitute child-on-child abuse, discriminatory behaviour, sexual harassment, online abuse or another safeguarding concern.

Where safeguarding concerns are identified, staff will follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The safety and wellbeing of children will always be the school's primary consideration.

Responsibilities

Staff will:

- Promote positive relationships, belonging and inclusion.
- Take concerns seriously.
- Listen to children and families.
- Challenge bullying behaviour.
- Record and report concerns appropriately.
- Follow safeguarding procedures where required.

Parents and Carers will:

- Share concerns promptly.
- Work in partnership with the school.
- Support agreed actions and strategies.
- Encourage respectful relationships.

Pupils will:

- Treat others with kindness and respect.
- Report concerns when they arise.
- Seek help from trusted adults.
- Support a culture where everyone feels safe and included.

Leaders will:

- Promote a positive anti-bullying culture.
- Monitor bullying information and trends.
- Ensure concerns are addressed consistently.
- Support staff and families.
- Review the effectiveness of prevention and response strategies.

Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- Monitor implementation of this policy.
- Review bullying trends and outcomes.
- Ensure compliance with safeguarding and equality duties.
- Provide appropriate support and challenge to school leaders.

Recording and Monitoring

Bullying concerns, prejudice-based incidents and child-on-child abuse concerns will be recorded on CPOMS where appropriate.

The school will record and monitor prejudice-based incidents separately in order to identify patterns, evaluate practice and fulfil its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

The school uses behaviour and safeguarding information to:

- Identify patterns and trends.
- Monitor vulnerable groups.
- Evaluate interventions.
- Inform future support.
- Promote consistency across the school.

Leaders will review bullying information regularly in order to identify patterns relating to:

- Year groups.
- Location.
- Time of day.
- Type of concern.
- SEND.
- Disadvantage.
- Protected characteristics.

This information will be used to inform prevention strategies, strengthen inclusion and improve outcomes for pupils.

Working with Parents and Carers

We believe positive outcomes are most likely when schools and families work together.

Parents and carers will be:

- Listened to respectfully.
- Kept informed of significant concerns.
- Updated where appropriate.
- Encouraged to work in partnership with the school.

The school will treat all concerns seriously whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality.

Together we aim to ensure that every child feels safe, supported and able to thrive.

Appendix 1: Oak Hill Anti-Bullying Response Pathway



Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if changes in legislation, guidance or school practice require it.

Our Commitment

At Oak Hill First School, we believe that every child deserves to feel safe, valued, respected and included.

Bullying has no place within our community.

Through Belonging, Relationships, Respect, Protection and Restoration, we work together to ensure every child is known, supported and able to flourish.