



Odyssey House School

Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Equality Policy

Objectives of this policy

- All teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

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Definition

Bullying is defined as “Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can involve verbal taunts, name-calling, physical injury, shunning or ridicule. It can be manipulative and can be done through mobile phones, websites and email.” (DfE ‘Safe to Learn’)

This can be further defined as:

- Physical (hitting, kicking, theft)
- Verbal (name calling, racist remarks, including homophobic and transphobic remarks)
- Indirect (spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups)

The children and young people at Odyssey House School have a wide-range of complex needs. As a school community we understand that bullying in this context can have additional subtleties and raise issues that are in themselves complicated to resolve. Not all students at the school will recognise bullying behaviour if they experience it; equally not all students would recognise their own behaviour as bullying towards another individual. Cognitive understanding and communication impairment are strong factors in how/what the children and young people communicate. As such, the school will take into account the needs of the children.

Bullying will not be tolerated at Odyssey and is seen as the misuse of power. The school community has a duty to protect all its members and provide a safe, healthy environment.

While recognising that bullying happens in all schools and within the wider community, parents/carers and students at Odyssey are encouraged to report incidents of bullying to any member of staff and be confident that action will be taken as per the school procedures set out in the Appendix 1 to deal effectively with the victims of, and those responsible for, acts of bullying.

Education to prevent bullying will be provided to all students during their time at Odyssey and appropriate behaviour will be reinforced during lessons and around the school site. Curriculum opportunities are used to address bullying through:

- Subject areas e.g. English, Drama, RE
- PSHCE
- Assemblies e.g. National Anti Bullying Week – November, National Safer internet day February
- Presentations from outside agencies and theatre groups
- Offsite activities
- Tutorial activities

Students are encouraged to develop and understand:

- Patience
- Empathy
- Co-operation
- Understanding

As well as the British Values shown below:

- Mutual respect
- Democracy
- The rule of the law
- Individual liberty
- Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs

The school communicates its stance on bullying to all students and parents by publishing its policy on the school website.

The school recognises that there are several forms of bullying and that they can be thought of as bullying if they are done maliciously, deliberately or persistently to hurt or upset or have that effect. This policy follows all statutory guidance in relation to bullying (please refer to Appendix 3). Bullying encompasses all the following forms of bullying:

Verbal e.g

- Deliberate, unkind and persistent remarks.
- Racist, sexual or homophobic name calling.
- Being hurtful about appearance.
- Name calling, sarcasm, persistent teasing.

Emotional e.g

- Spreading hurtful rumours.
- Writing graffiti or using images/offensive materials.
- Tormenting, humiliating.
- Excluding someone and leaving them out on purpose

Theft/Damaging property e.g

- Taking someone's bag deliberately and breaking it.
- Malicious damage to property e.g. pencil case, uniform

Physical e.g

- Pinching, punching, pushing, kicking and hitting.
- Any violence that is done on purpose to others.

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Racist e.g.

- A racial taunt, graffiti, gestures.
- Making inappropriate comments regarding faiths and beliefs

Sexual e.g

- Making sexual comments.
- Inappropriate touching.

Cyber bullying e.g

- The use of ICT, particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else. Hurtful, harmful messages sent from individuals and groups.

Homophobic e.g

- Because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality.

Roles and Responsibilities/strategies

The Proprietor

- Creating the right ethos for the school that ensures it is an inclusive environment.
- Ensure regular review of anti-bullying policy and practice to keep it up to date, including analysis of data published under its single equality scheme.
- Ensure the school is promoting equality for its whole community.

The Headteacher

- To deliver and organise any necessary training for staff to ensure they understand and implement the anti-bullying policy.
- Keep up to date on bullying related data from the school's behaviour report analysis and plan appropriate interventions either at an individual or whole school level.
- Promote anti-bullying week and anti-bullying work in general. Ensure the curriculum covers anti-bullying.

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- Work with families so that they are aware of the school's policy/practice and specific circumstances if they arise.
- To act as a port of call to advise staff on any bullying related matter
- To liaise with external agencies as necessary in partnership to support anti-bullying strategies
- To ensure bullying is factored into any analysis of student behaviour
- Ensure that behavioural recording systems record any instances of bullying

All school staff

- To be constantly monitoring the students for bullying-related behaviour and follow the correct procedure where evidence points towards bullying taking place.
- To be constantly modelling high standards of behaviour and to have high expectations for all the students.

The Pupils' Voice

School staff should be constantly vigilant for signs that a student may be subject to bullying behaviour expressed either through a student voice or from signs such as distress, change in mood, injury, change in behavioural norms. Claims or expressions of bullying made by pupils will be taken seriously.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Proprietor will annually review a report from a member of the Senior Leadership Team on instances of bullying during the year to ensure that procedures are adequate.

Staff will regularly evaluate and update their approach to bullying to take into account the developments in technology.

Appendix 1

School procedures

The school recognises that bullying is never acceptable and will follow the procedures as outlined below:

1. Incidents of bullying should be reported immediately to any staff member who in turn will report the matter to the Headteacher.
2. All students will be listened to, and individual issues understood. The school provides opportunities for students to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incident acted on.
3. Staff will take appropriate action on information given. It will be the professional judgement of the headteacher to determine the nature of the problem and the appropriate level of response and course of action.
4. In most cases written accounts of the incident will be taken through discreet interviews where necessary and following investigation, the incident will be dealt with appropriately.
5. Incidents of bullying will be recorded in the Anti Bullying Log by type and outcome. This data is used for monitoring and evaluation by the headteacher and Proprietor.
6. A variety of appropriate strategies may be used to deal with reported incidents:
 - Apology from bully to victim (verbal/written).
 - Discussion of victim's own behaviour leading up to the incident.
 - Positive steps to be taken with bully to encourage improved behaviour.
 - Monitoring of bully after incident to see any repeated behaviour.
 - Counselling of victim/bully.
 - Parents /carers may be contacted by letter /telephone/invited into school, if appropriate.
 - Implement disciplinary sanctions, including detentions/exclusions.

- Record incidents of bullying according to type in Anti Bullying log and use this data to monitor incidents of bullying in the school.
- Use specific organisations and resources for help with particular problems.
- Work with the wider community such as the police and children’s services where bullying is particularly serious or persistent and when a criminal offence may have been committed.

Appendix 2

Signs and Symptoms

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

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn’t want to go on the school vehicle / taxi
- 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 themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares feels ill in the morning
- 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 bully
- has possessions or other monies continually “lost”
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving
- 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

This is not an exhaustive list

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

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Appendix 3

The law and statutory guidance with respect to bullying

THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

Under the Equality Act 2010, new duties on schools and other public bodies came into force from April 2011. The Act strengthens and simplifies existing equality legislation. The Act brings together existing duties not to discriminate on grounds of race, disability and gender which schools are already bound to comply with, and it extends these to include duties not to discriminate on the grounds of age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or gender re-assignment. It places a requirement on governing bodies and proprietors of schools to eliminate discrimination and promote equal opportunities.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, the school staff should report their concerns to their local authority children's social care. 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 doing the bullying.

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 Communication Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send 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.

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BULLYING OUTSIDE SCHOOL PREMISES

Head teachers have a specific statutory power to discipline pupils for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives head teachers the power to regulate pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, in a town or village centre, cyber bullying or via social networking sites.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The head teacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the actions 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.