



# **Anti-Bullying Policy**

## **September 2021**

This policy applies all pupils in the school, including in the EYFS

**Created:** July 2014

**Last Reviewed:** September 2021

**Date for revision:** September 2022

## **Contents**

1. Aims
2. Definition of Bullying
3. Signs and Symptoms of Bullying
4. Action Against Bullying
5. Cyberbullying
6. Bullying Outside of School
7. Bullying - Pupils with Special Educational Needs
8. Peer on Peer Abuse
9. Procedures to Follow
10. Information and Guidance for Pupils
11. Information and Guidance for Parents

# OPS Anti-Bullying Policy

---

This policy is written with the inclusion of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the following outcomes of Helping Children Achieve More:

- Stay Safe – being protected from harm or neglect
- Enjoy and achieve – getting the most out of life and developing skills for adulthood

This policy has been drawn up in accordance with:

- DfE – Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017) – advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies.
- DfE guidance 'Supporting Bullied Children' factsheet (October 2014)
- ISI – Handbook for the Inspection of Schools.
- KCSIE – Keeping Children Safe in Education
- WTSC – Working Together To Safeguard Children
- It also draws on the previous guidance, '*Safe to Learn - Embedding Anti-Bullying Work in Schools*'.

In relation to cyberbullying, the policy takes note of the DfE guidance: '*Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff (2014)*' and '*Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying (2014)*'.

In relation to online safety, reference should also be made to the school's e-safety policy, to be found as part of the safeguarding policy.

**"It is a basic entitlement of all children that they receive their education free from humiliation, oppression and abuse. Education is compulsory in our society and therefore it is the responsibility of all adults to ensure that it takes place in an atmosphere which is caring and protective."** D P Tattum

## **Statement on equality and respect**

The Oratory Preparatory School is a community where every person has the right to be themselves, to be included and to learn in a safe and happy environment. Everyone at our school is equal and treats each other with respect and kindness.

## 1. Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable in our school and will not be tolerated. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will pupils be able fully to benefit from the opportunities available at the OPS. This policy, if correctly implemented, should help both staff and pupils to deal effectively with bullying when it occurs, but even more importantly to prevent it.

In this respect, the school seeks:

- To ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment, without fear of being bullied
- To ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware of the nature and types of bullying that may occur, both in and out of school, and their causes and effects
- To ensure high expectations of pupils' behaviour, as detailed in the school's behaviour policy
- To use all pupils, staff and parents as a positive resource in the elimination of any form of bullying, drawing on peer pressure as a means of preventing bullying
- To ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware that bullying is totally unacceptable
- To ensure that everyone is aware of their responsibilities in addressing bullying issues
- To provide regular staff training in relation to the prevention of and response to bullying
- To develop effective strategies to prevent bullying
- To provide a consistent school response to any bullying and have clear procedures for dealing with incidents
- To provide support for both victim and bully.

## 2. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, by an individual or a group, which intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally and possibly causing psychological damage. It is usually repeated over a period of time, where it is often difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

It can happen anywhere, both in and out of school.

Bullying can have a negative life-long impact. It can make it difficult for children to learn and can have a lasting detrimental effect on their lives. Young people who have been bullied can become anxious and withdrawn, depressed or aggressive. Some turn to substance misuse as a way of dealing with it emotionally and, at worst, bullying has been a factor in suicide. (Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour).

Definitions of bullying:

- **PHYSICAL** – this may include hitting or physically intimidating someone, or using inappropriate or unwanted physical contact towards someone.
- **ATTACKING PROPERTY** – such as damaging, stealing or hiding someone's possessions.
- **VERBAL** – such as name calling, spreading rumours about someone, using derogatory or offensive language, forcing someone to do something against their will, tormenting, producing offensive graffiti or threatening someone.
- **PSYCHOLOGICAL** – such as deliberately excluding or ignoring people.
- **CYBER** – via technology. For example, internet/mobile phones, email, social networks, text messages, photographs. (Please refer to the separate section, below.)
- **SEXUAL** – such as inappropriate or unwanted physical contact, verbal comments or cyber messages of a sexual nature (sexting).

Bullying can be take various different forms, including:

- **Race/Religious/Cultural** – (racist bullying where someone is made to feel inferior because of their background, culture or religion. )
- **Religion or belief**
- **Culture or class**
- **Gender Identity** (sexist bullying)
- **Sexual orientation** (homophobic or biphobic bullying - specific linked to gender)
- **Gender identity** (transphobic bullying)
- **Special Education Needs (SEN) or disability** - any exploitation of a particular aspect of a child's disability and/or special educational needs
- **Appearance or health conditions**
- **A child is adopted or a carer**
- **Related to home or other personal situation**
- **Related to another vulnerable group of people** e.g. young carers, bereaved pupils.

Bullying can include name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, pushing, taking belongings, inappropriate touching, producing offensive graffiti, spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours or regularly excluding someone from groups or games. It is also bullying when a young person is pressured to act against their will by others or is harassed by unwanted conduct, which violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or humiliating environment.

When a person, or group of people has been made aware of the effects of their behaviour on another person and they continue to behave in this manner, **this is bullying**. Bullying is a serious offence which may be physical and emotional and lead to psychological damage.

**No form of bullying will be tolerated and all incidents will be taken seriously.**

- Bullying is extremely serious and dangerous in that it can cause the victim lasting psychological damage. All pupils and staff must be aware that, although bullying is not specifically a criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.
- It is important to distinguish between a one-off comment and what has become bullying. This policy, therefore, largely concerns itself with persistent bullying rather than the occasional breach of good manners. However, even in minor situations pupils should be reprimanded so that no example of unkind behaviour towards another goes unchecked.
- It is important that a consistent approach is used when dealing with instances of bullying. It is also important that reaction to unpleasant incidents be immediate and that even minor incidents should not be ignored.
- **It is important to recognise that a bullying incident should be treated as a pupil protection/safeguarding concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a pupil is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.'** In such cases the school should report its concerns through the Designated Safeguarding Lead (The Headmaster) to the local authority social care department.

See 'Action Against Bullying' below for additional information.

### **3. Signs and Symptoms of Bullying**

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

- Is unwilling to go to school
- Is frequently absent from school
- Regularly has homework which is not done or lost
- Changes his or her usual routine
- Becomes anxious, withdrawn or is lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries him- or herself to sleep at night or has nightmares

- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to achieve less well 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
- Stops eating
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous or jumpy when a cyber message is received
- Is evasive or gives improbable excuses in relation to any of the above

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

### **Detecting the pupil or pupils doing the bullying**

Whilst it is natural to concentrate on looking for victims, we should also look for signs which might identify the bullies themselves. These signs will not necessarily indicate bullying but they may be surface symptoms:

- Bragging and over-confident showing off
- An assertive tendency to shout down or intervene in class or any other group
- A tendency to 'behind the hand' sniggering or comments
- An inclination to gather 'disciples'

## **4. Action against Bullying**

It is essential that all adults in the school community know what to do when they suspect that a child is being bullied and which member of staff to contact. Whether bullying occurs in school, out of school or on-line, staff will have a range of appropriate strategies on which to call:

The main aim at The Oratory Preparatory School is to create an anti-bullying ethos which needs to be constantly reinforced by all adults. Pupils need to be aware that both staff and parents disapprove of bullying behaviour and will act if it is brought to their notice. All pupils must be encouraged to bring such behaviour to the notice of the staff.

Actions used in the Oratory Preparatory School to discourage bullying are:

- Pupil Code of Conduct
- What is bullying? – Child friendly anti-bullying policy
- School Rules:
  1. Be kind, considerate and courteous
  2. Always try your best.
- School Values – following the Catholic Way of Life
- Annual Anti-bullying PSHE modules, and promotion of Anti-bullying literature; Advice Booklet distributed to all pupils
- Frequent discussions at Staff Meetings
- Weekly pastoral updates from the Headmaster
- Pupil mentoring - House and Prefect meetings, to try to achieve a common approach to what bullying is and why it occurs.
- During the normal patrolling of school spaces by duty staff and prefects, care will be taken to look closely at those areas where bullying behaviour might be expected to occur, e.g. the changing rooms, toilets, corridors, outside play areas, where access to computers is allowed.
- Investing in specialist skills to understand the needs of pupils, including those with special emotional needs or disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender pupils. • Skilled observation to recognise and respond to the symptoms noted above.
- Ready receipt of reports of bullying behaviour, which are then investigated, acted upon and the information relating to the alleged bully and their victims reported as appropriate.
- Use of the school curriculum, for example in subjects such as PSHE, Circle time, story time, drama, English and history, to embrace the topic of bullying, including its dangers, how to prevent it and the steps to take when it occurs.
- Use, as above, of other elements of school life, including assemblies, registration periods, house meetings, school council and visiting speakers.
- Use, as above, of focussed projects, such as an annual Anti-Bullying Week or E-Safety Focus week/day, and focussed training, for example in safe use of the internet.
- Availability of this policy on the school's website to enable parents to understand the school's approach and work together with staff.

- Close parent/teacher liaison to ensure that both home and school work together to help and support the victim and moderate the behaviour of the bully.
- Where appropriate and following discussion with the headteacher, engagement with the school counsellor or outside assistance, such as an educational psychologist, social worker or the police - in helping children who bully others.
- Ensuring that staff are fully aware of times and places when bullying is most likely to occur; organisation of the school day and supervision arrangements reduce the likely incidence of bullying. This includes supervision of changing and showering areas, monitoring the use of washrooms and cloakrooms at break times and the regular coverage of secluded areas at break times by duty staff.
- A good proportion of PE and games lessons and other physical activity to enable pupils to burn off energy and aggression.
- Use of the house system, tutor groups, buddy groups and strategies such as restorative/reflective meetings with the Head Boy or Head Girl leading, as part of the school's pastoral care to encourage vertical bonding between age groups, giving older pupils a sense of responsibility and younger children a chance to externalise feelings and anxieties that they may not share with an adult member of staff or even their own family.
- All children are given the opportunity to speak to their form teacher, who acts as their tutor. This person is someone they feel comfortable with, who knows the child well and understands that the child may turn to him or her. Where it is recognised that a child may not be comfortable turning to his form teacher or tutor, alternative arrangements will be put in place.
- Familiarity of all staff with this policy; staff will sign to say that they have read and understood this policy (Annual Declaration Form).
- Through staff training and by regular discussion at staff meetings, raising the awareness of all staff to the dangers of bullying, how to prevent it, what action to take to resolve problems, and developing an understanding of the legal responsibilities and the sources of support available.
- Dove-tailing this policy with the school behaviour policy so that all concerned are aware of the appropriate procedures and sanctions.
- Where appropriate, training in, or drawing on, external expertise in specialist skills to understand pupils' specific needs, for example to assist staff in being vigilant and in taking appropriate action in relation to the vulnerability to bullying of pupils with SEND.

\* Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning and Social and Emotional Aspects of Development (EYFS)

## 5. Cyberbullying

The school is conscious of the dangers of cyber-bullying, in relation to both safeguarding and anti-bullying strategies. A range of measures is set in place to guard against it. The school's firewall and filtering systems are organised and monitored to ensure, so far as is possible, that pupils are protected from inappropriate content, including extremist materials and those designed to radicalise. The school recognises that no filtering system is perfect and, in their ICT and PSHE lessons, pupils learn the steps they should take, should they encounter inappropriate content. The school also recognises that systems can only protect the pupils whilst using school equipment in school. In their ICT and PSHE lessons they therefore learn how to keep themselves safe whilst online away from the school premises. This includes the development of their resilience to resist radicalisation. Similarly, the school provides information for parents and periodically runs workshops to enable them to gain a greater understanding of how they can help to keep their children safe online at home.

In their ICT and PSHE lessons, through assemblies and focussed workshops, pupils also learn at an age-appropriate stage about the dangers of cyber-bullying via technology, for example through mobile phones, email, social networks, text messaging and photography. They are given guidance on how to resist and report such approaches, including exercising prudence in the use of personal information on social networking sites.

Further information can be found in the school's e-safety policy, which can be found as a section of the safeguarding and child protection policy.

## 6. Bullying Outside school – including journeys to and from school

The OPS has an interest in the welfare and conduct of its pupils and will respond positively to any information it receives about bullying outside school such as through the use of technology such as the internet or mobile phones, outside of school hours. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives Headteachers the power "to such an extent as is reasonable to regulate the behaviour of students when they are off the school site (which is particularly pertinent to regulating cyberbullying)".

For example, the school will intervene if it hears of:

- Cyberbullying via Social Networking sites i.e. Malicious messages on somebody's profile, creation of fake profile. Filming on mobile phones or devices and passing on inappropriate material or joining in with this behaviour even if you weren't the original author.
- Other cyberbullying or off-site bullying.

If the school is aware of a bullying incident outside of school, staff will:

- Provide support and advice to the person being bullied, if they are a pupil of OPS
- Support and work with the person bullying, if they are a pupil of OPS
- Investigate and consider the following action with respect to the pupil bullying: Confiscation of mobile phones and other items used and consider the involvement of police if the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public.

## **7. Bullying and Pupils with Special Educational Needs**

Reports show that pupils with SEN and disabilities are more likely to experience bullying than their peers.

For all pupils with SEN and disabilities discrimination based on their needs can be a challenge. Pupils with SEN and disabilities may:

- Be adversely affected by negative attitudes to disability and perceptions of difference
- Find it more difficult to resist bullies
- Be more isolated, not have many friends
- Not understand that what is happening is bullying
- Have difficulties telling people about bullying.

Therefore staff should be particularly vigilant and sensitive when the victim is a pupil with SEN or a disability. However it is important to recognise that all pupils are potentially vulnerable to bullying and those learners with SEN and disabilities may be bullied for a range of other reasons too.

## **8. Peer-on-peer abuse**

When dealing with abuse by young people on peers, staff should follow the key safeguarding documents, Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2021 and Working Together to Safeguard Children, even where an alleged perpetrator is a pupil. This will entail:

- Effective implementation of the school's safeguarding and anti-bullying policies (and that sexualized abuse, including verbal abuse, by peers is a potential safeguarding issue). See schools Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy for more details.

## **9. Procedures to Follow**

This policy only works if it ensures that the whole school community understands that bullying is not to be tolerated and understands the steps that will be taken both to prevent and to respond to bullying.

If a pupil is being bullied they are encouraged to not retaliate but to tell someone they trust about it such as a friend, family member or trusted adult. They may also report anonymously using one of three post boxes in school (including boarders).

Children (in particular, boarders) may also speak with someone at Childline in confidence on 0800 1111

All school staff, both teaching and non-teaching have a duty to report bullying, to be vigilant to the signs of bullying and to play an active role in the school's measures to prevent bullying. If staff are aware of bullying, they should reassure the pupils involved and inform their class teacher.

## **The Role of the Headteacher**

The Headteacher will be informed of any incidents of bullying and will ensure that all incidents are thoroughly investigated and properly logged centrally on My Concern. The Headteacher will then collaborate with the Heads of the Senior and Junior Prep in ensuring that an investigation takes place in every case and each situation is treated seriously. If bullying is found to have definitely occurred, the parents of any children involved will be contacted and informed of what action the school is to take by the Headteacher or the Heads of the Junior and Senior Prep.

The Headteacher will ensure that the Heads of the Junior and Senior Prep and all staff undertake appropriate training in taking action against bullying.

## **The Role of the Heads of the Junior and Senior Prep**

The main roles of the Heads of the Junior and Senior Prep in respect of bullying are:

- Managing and monitoring practices to ensure alignment with the school anti-bullying policy and procedures.
- Maintaining a clear overview of the incidence of bullying and the school's anti-bullying prevention and response strategies.
- Liaison with the Headteacher and between all parties involved, including parents.
- Ensuring that incident slips are completed by staff in all cases and that a copy is stored in the incident file.
- On a regular basis, analysis of the incident file so that patterns and trends can be identified and the analysis used to improve policy and practice.
- Promotion and co-ordination of anti-bullying initiatives and projects both within the curriculum and in the wider aspects of school life.
- Deployment of appropriate strategies to ensure that bullies change their behaviour and support them in doing so.

The Heads of the Junior and Senior Prep will be fully briefed by the Headteacher, who will ensure that he or she receives appropriate training, guidance and information.

## **The Role of the Staff**

It is essential that all members of staff contribute to creating a school ethos which does not tolerate bullying and minimises the likelihood of incidents ever occurring.

- Staff must ensure that they have read and understand this policy. They must sign to confirm this.
- Staff must ensure that their training in taking action against bullying remains up to date.

- Staff will be aware of and exploit aspects of the curriculum and wider aspects of school life where they can embrace the topic of bullying, including its dangers, how to prevent it and the steps to take when it occurs.
- All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered from bullying

***In any case where bullying is reported or suspected, staff must follow this procedure:***

1. In most cases the incident should be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who is approached.
2. Listen carefully and intently.
3. Reassure the child that you are sympathetic and that the problem will be resolved.
4. Do not ask any leading questions.
5. Do not promise to keep the issue confidential – it is important to maintain the pupils' trust by remaining honest.
6. Make a clear account of the conversation on an Anti-Bullying Form as soon as it has ended, but try to avoid taking notes during discussion. These are found in the shared drive, staffroom or the Office of the Head of the Junior Prep.
7. Report the matter as soon as is practical to the Head of the Junior or Senior Prep. In their absence, report the matter to the Headmaster.
8. Discuss with the Heads of the Junior and Senior Prep how to proceed with, for example, further interviews, liaison with parents and what action is to be taken, in accordance with the school's behaviour policy.
9. Continue to address the incident as agreed with the Heads of the Junior and Senior Prep.
10. Ensure that the incident continues to be fully recorded on the Anti-Bullying Form, together with details of what action has been taken.
11. Liaise with the Heads of the Junior or Senior Prep to ensure that all staff are kept informed of the incident and action taken, as appropriate
12. Remember that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person. Staff should refer to the section in the Safeguarding Policy on physical restraint
13. Ensure that appropriate support is provided for all parties concerned.

14. A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm; the matter should be reported to the DSL and procedures should be followed, as detailed in the safeguarding policy. This is likely to involve reporting the incident to Social Care, and also to the police if it is believed that the safeguarding situation constitutes a criminal concern.
15. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following the child protection policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

## **10. Information and Guidance for Pupils**

- As a member of the school, we expect you not to have to put up with any form of bullying behaviour. We can and will help to put a stop to it.
- You should feel free to speak out to your mum or dad or any teacher if you are being bullied. We can help you to cope with it straight away.
- When someone else is being bullied or is in distress, inform a member of staff immediately.
- Do not be afraid to report any incidents. Watching and doing nothing can suggest support for the bully. Even if you are just a bystander, you have a role to play in reporting any incidence of bullying.
- If you wish to inform the school of an incident involving bullying or perceived bullying but want to remain anonymous, you can write a note and put it in the "post boxes" on the Head of the Junior Prep's door, teachers desk, bottom and top of stairs of the boarding house/san.
- Do not put up with bullies in your group of friends. Bullies will soon stop if they are left out or are by themselves.
- Take care how you speak and act towards other pupils. Always aim to be kind, considerate and courteous at all times.

## **11. Information and Guidance for Parents**

- You may not recognise that your child is being bullied. However, changes in their manner, behaviour and general state of health can sometimes be explained by bullying.
- Encourage your child to talk about it, but be patient. It is quite natural for him or her not to want to discuss the matter and not to want you to do anything about it.
- Listen and try not to interrupt.
- Reassure them that you are sympathetic and that it is a problem that can be solved. It happens to most people at some time.

- Ask him or her if there are ways of changing things and help them to try to develop strategies to cope, strategies which should then be practised.
- Try to keep the situation in proportion and so remain good-humoured.
- Encourage your child to talk to their form teacher or tutor about the matter.
- You should feel free to contact your child's teacher to discuss the matter if you are concerned.