



1. Oakmoor AP Anti-Bullying Policy

OAKMOOR AP CENTRES ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

Anti Bullying Policy

Review Cycle	Date of Current Policy	Author(s) of Current Policy	Review Date
Annual	01/10/2025	Christian Lang	01/10/2026

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1. Anti-bullying policy statement of intent

This policy is applicable to all students, and has regard to; the equality act 2010, KCSIE September 2019 and current non-statutory DfE guidance: preventing and tackling bullying October 2014.

The community at **Oakmoor AP** will be based upon **respect, good manners and fair play**. Our provision is committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of its students can develop his/her full potential. It expects its students to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed and orderly atmosphere. All students should care for and support each other. Our provision prides itself on its inclusivity, respect and mutual tolerance.

Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting the provision in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is important that parents are involved, and we (**Oakmoor AP**) make sure that students are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders. Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. All students and their parents are treated fairly and with consideration and they are expected to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the provision. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable.

The provision raises awareness of staff through training, so that the principles of our policy is understood, legal responsibilities are known, action is defined to resolve and prevent problems and sources of support are available. **Oakmoor AP** will implement disciplinary sanctions which reflect the seriousness of an incident and convey a deterrent effect (e.g. Strong sanctions such as exclusion may be necessary in cases of severe and persistent bullying).

Oakmoor AP has clear policies communicated to parents, students and staff and creates an environment of engaging behaviour and respect, with helpful examples set by staff and older students. Our anti bullying policy is intended not only to help staff and students deal with bullying when it occurs but even more importantly to prevent it.

2. Definition of bullying

Bullying may be defined as the **intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another student or group** by physical (including sexual), verbal (including email, chat room and SMS messages) and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidating. Bullying is often motivated by and may involve actions or comments on the grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability, or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape), or because a child is adopted or is a carer. It may occur directly or through cyber-technology (social websites, mobile 'phones, text messages, photographs and email).

Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve everyone—students, other younger people, staff and parents. There are many definitions of bullying but they all have three things in common:

- It is deliberate, hurtful, targeted behaviour.
- It is often repeated over a period of time.
- It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

Bullying can take many forms, but the main types are:

- **Physical** - hitting, kicking, taking or interfering with belongings.
- **Verbal** - name calling, insults, cultural, religious, homophobic, special education needs and disability or racial remarks - 'banter'.
- **Peer/peer** - physical or verbal sexual/sexist abuse.
- **Indirect** - spreading nasty stories about someone; excluding someone from another social group.
- **Cyber** - social websites, mobile phones, texting, sexting, photographs or email.

Physical and emotional bullying are equally serious and may cause psychological damage. We recognise that it is vital that all students understand what bullying is and are made aware that it will not be tolerated for students to directly act in a way that is bullying, to encourage or join in with behaviour that is deemed to be bullying or further to witness bullying and not report it.

Due to the nature of our provision, as an SEMH provision we are aware that our students may be more vulnerable to being either the victim of or the perpetrator of bullying and that this may not always be apparent to them. We aim to promote transparency in human relationships so that children, by default, are held to account for the feelings that they may evoke in others. As a staff we will be sensitive to our students' vulnerability in relation to their social skills and communication needs and will ensure that all incidence of bullying are handled sensitively, without shaming and with further support and if appropriate counselling being offered to all students involved.

3. Oakmoor AP's response to bullying

Oakmoor AP intends to always treat bullying, including allegations of bullying, very seriously. It conflicts sharply with our policy on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles. Bullying can be so serious that it causes psychological damage, eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide and, whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour. Peer/peer abuse will be treated as a **safeguarding issue** and reported and dealt with as such by the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). A bullying incident will always be treated as a safeguarding concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

4. Signs of bullying

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a student is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to the provision.
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet.
- Failure to produce work or producing unusually bad work or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others.
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing or are damaged.
- Change to established habits (e.g. Giving up music lessons, change of accent or vocabulary).
- Diminished levels of self-confidence.
- Frequent visits to the medical centre with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches.
- Unexplained cuts and bruises.
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival.
- Choosing the company of adults.
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact.
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiencing nightmares.
- Talking of suicide or running away.

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers. Bullying is a form (albeit extreme) of children learning how to pattern their behaviour in society. It may also include bystanders (innocent or otherwise).

There are a number of important reasons for challenging bullying behaviour in schools:

- **The safety and happiness of students.** A bullied student is an unhappy student who may come to harm through physical or psychological damage and may even consider suicide.
- **Educational achievement.** An unhappy student may lose concentration and their work will suffer.
- **Providing a model for helpful behaviour.** Bullying that goes unchallenged may teach students that it is a quick and effective way of getting what they want.
- **Reputation** - recognition as a caring school with a pro-active anti-bullying policy.

Our provision aims to provide a happy, secure atmosphere for both students and staff, recognising that bullying is an unacceptable part of modern life that should be minimised or prevented. We would hope our students do not identify bullying as a problem at our provision. However, bullying can happen in any place. Recognising its existence is the first stage of dealing with it and attempting to minimise it is a vital step forward.

The following should be considered in order to minimise bullying:

- Students should be encouraged to behave responsibly with good manners and respect for others.
 - Students should be listened to and opinions respected and valued.
 - Items of value should not be brought to school and personal property should be respected.
 - Students should be encouraged to report incidents of bullying to a member of staff.
 - Staff should respond in a professional manner.
 - Any investigation should ensure that both sides have a fair hearing.
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5. Preventative measures

Oakmoor AP takes the following preventative measures:

- All new students are briefed thoroughly on our expected standards of behaviour. They are told what to do if they encounter bullying.
- **Oakmoor AP** guarantees that whistle-blowers who act in good faith will not be penalised and will be supported.
- All new members of staff are given guidance on **Oakmoor AP's** anti-bullying policy and in how to react to allegations of bullying in their first week at the provision. They are required to read **Oakmoor AP's** policy as part of their induction.
- Educational elements such as personal, social and health education (PSHE), projects, drama, stories, literature, historical events, current affairs and so on will be used to promote our policy on anti-bullying. They also reinforce this message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing social skills, with discussion of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language.
- Where and when it is appropriate, **Oakmoor AP** will appoint, train and support anti-bullying ambassadors to provide peer guidance and advice to fellow students in order to foster a community in which everybody recognises bullying behaviour and supports each other to avoid being drawn into such behaviour.
- Raising awareness of staff through training; taking action to reduce the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely.
- Safeguarding and anti-bullying training will be provided to all staff and will form part of every new member of staff's induction programme. Support staff will also be provided with a copy of this policy document.
- All students are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place. All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once.
- **Oakmoor AP** always monitors reported incidents. Staff are always on duty at all times, particularly areas where bullying might occur. They are alert to inappropriate language or behaviour.
- **Oakmoor AP** welcomes feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of its preventative measures.

6. Procedures for dealing with reported bullying

If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedures are adopted:

- Take the incident or report seriously and investigate as quickly as possible.
- The member of staff to whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation will control the situation, reassure and support the students involved.
- The victim may be interviewed on his/her own and asked to write an account of events.
- The person displaying bullying behaviours, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events.
- The incident should be recorded.
- All relevant staff should be informed.
- The victim will be interviewed at a later stage by one of the above mentioned members of the pastoral team, separately from the alleged perpetrator. It will be made clear to him/her why revenge is inappropriate. He/she will be offered support to develop a strategy to help him or herself.

The team member will:

- Re-assure the victim(s).
- Ensure that they clearly understand the course of action that has been taken.
- Not make them feel inadequate or foolish.
- Offer concrete help, advice and support to the victim(s).

The person alleged to have displayed bullying behaviours will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why the alleged behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. Upon establishing the facts to a reasonable level of clarity, the staff member will offer guidance on modifying his or her behaviour to the person displaying bullying behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions.

The team member will:

- Make it plain to the person displaying bullying behaviour that he/she disapproves.
- Encourage the person displaying bullying behaviour to see the victim's point of view.

A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place. In very serious cases, and only after the DSL has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the police or to the social services. However, it is the policy of **Oakmoor AP** to attempt to resolve such issues internally, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely. If a criminal act has taken place, this must be reported to the police. Full records of all incidents and any action/resolution will be kept. Information should also be transferred into the student's file. Other

colleagues should be informed of the incident, especially if it arose out of a situation where everyone should be vigilant, e.g. Unsupervised areas.

The incident should be brought to a close to ensure it does not linger on. Staff should think ahead to prevent a recurrence (if he/she has found the trigger) and incidents should be recorded clearly in such a way to enable patterns to be identified.

Things to avoid:

- Being over-protective - refusing to allow the victim to help him/herself.
- Assuming the person displaying bullying behaviour is all bad - try to look objectively at them and the incident.
- Keeping the whole incident to yourself because you have dealt with it.
- Trying to hide the incident from the parents of the victim or the person displaying bullying behaviour.
- Informing the parents without having a constructive plan to offer both sides.

Communicate:

- Keep publicising this policy to students and staff.
- Integrate this policy with the normal curriculum.
- Keep parents informed. Let them know the provision acts to prevent bullying not just to deal with bullying incidents.

The DSL will have overall responsibility for the implementation and promulgation of this policy. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's behaviour policy. Strong sanctions such as exclusion may be necessary in cases of severe and persistent bullying. Students will be encouraged to learn to look after their own possessions and to respect others' possessions. **Oakmoor AP** expects students to be honest, helpful and polite and to work hard and to listen to others. Students will be encouraged to respect everyone and learn to value differences and diversity.

7. Guidelines for staff - assessing the risks

Staff will continuously:

- Consider when and where bullying may potentially take place.
- Risk assess all activities and put preventative procedures in place.
- Be vigilant at all times.
- Reinforce our behaviour expectations at all times.
- Inform relevant staff of any concerns, including isolated events, group/pairings.
- Update policy and procedures as necessary.