



# Anti-Bullying Policy

Reviewed by	Lorna Legg Curriculum & Learning Committee
Agreed on	May 2022
Signed	Ian Wallace

Our Core Values: Honesty, Loyalty, Caring, Sharing and Forgiveness

**Be Well; Learn Well; Live Well**



## Offwell C of E Primary School

### A shared understanding; an agreed procedure.

Bullying in any form is never acceptable, but we know that it happens. ‘Children and young people tell us that bullying and prejudice/hate incidents (BPHIs) happen, and we are encouraging schools to record, report and respond to such incidents.’ (Devon County Council’s Equality and Diversity website)

Because we know the impact bullying can have on people, sometimes for life, we need to prevent it, raise awareness of it and have clear procedures to address it in our school. At Offwell C of E Primary School, as part of our vision, we strive for our children to **Be Well** – to have good mental and physical wellbeing - so they can **Learn Well** and **Live Well**. As a church school, our values of caring, honesty, forgiveness and compassion always underpin our approach.

Bullying can be seen as both a symptom and a cause of poor mental health, as well as adversely affecting physical health, so it our moral duty to prevent this harm to pupils. To prevent bullying, we aim to help children to learn right from wrong, know how to recognise bullying behaviour, challenge it and how to address it if it happens. The following policy sets out information for teaching staff, children and parents/carers about bullying; it identifies aspects of the curriculum which are directly relevant (Personal Social Health Education/PSHE) and sets out the procedure we will adopt to deal with any suspected or proven case of bullying.

### What is Bullying?

In order to tackle the problem of bullying practically, an agreed definition is required.

- **Bullying is deliberate:** *the wilful, conscious desire to threaten, frighten or hurt someone else.*
- **Bullying is repeated:** *it’s generally not a one-off act; it usually develops over a sustained period.*
- **Bullying depends on an imbalance of power:** *the perpetrator may sometimes be older, stronger, or may benefit from a perception of higher status, or may be part of a group. However, the reverse may also be true, where despite being older, or stronger, the target is still subject to aggression.*
- **Bullying is aggression,** *either physical, verbal, visual, online, or psychological – this can include the threat of violence, or actual violence. Emotional or psychological aggression – name-calling, rumours, threats online etc. can have long-lasting, negative impact on the victim and require equal attention.*

Incident	description
Verbal	Name calling and ridicule such as racist, sexist or homophobic remarks. Offensive stereotyping.
Visual	Graffiti, gestures, wearing racist insignia or showing offensive pictures.
Incitement	Spreading rumours or encouraging others to participate.
Cyber	Using technology such as text, email or social media. It can include ‘sexting’ – making someone share sexual images of themselves.
Segregation	Excluding, isolating, ignoring or avoiding an individual from activities or a peer group because of their identity/background.
Physical	Hitting, pushing, unwanted touching, kicking, threat with a weapon. Forcing someone to perform an act against their will.
Property	Theft or damage to personal property, extortion.



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### Understanding Bullying and Victimisation:

There is no collection of visible characteristics that mean someone is a perpetrator, aggressor, or 'bully', nor are there characteristics that indicate someone might become the subject of bullying, a target or 'victim'. To rely on a stereotype of a bully or victim may mean that the children's real roles are mistaken or not recognised.

A bullying incident may be overlooked if a perpetrator does not fit the stereotype; the person who has been victimised may feel blamed if behaviours or attributes they possess are seen as contributing to the bullying, when they have simply been used as an excuse for unacceptable behaviour. To label children is also unhelpful in terms of helping children to feel they can move on, or learn and change their behaviour for the better.

The reason for the bullying behaviour usually resides within the child who bullies, rather than being caused by the child who has been affected. To engage in bullying behaviours, a child may feel a need to control aspects of their life, may also have low self-esteem, or could have been bullied themselves. However, bullying is a complex behaviour – it can be seen as rooted in the psychological need of the bully, or in family dynamics, or in school culture or societal issues - bullying is not usually caused by people who have been targeted.

### **Prejudice/hate incidents**

These are one-off incidents, which should also be addressed and reported, which relate to a protected characteristic but may or may not be directed at an individual. A 'hate' incident intends to cause harm or offence, whereas a 'prejudice' related incident may be out of ignorance or stereotyping and with no intention to, or expectation that it will, cause harm or offence. Any of these actions can become bullying if sustained and all must be addressed.

**Bullying behaviour may also focus on noticeable, protected characteristics, such as skin colour, race or ethnicity, age, gender or ability.** Victimisation due to these characteristics equals discrimination – acting upon stereotypical, biased views – and is against the law (See the Equality Act 2010) as well as being morally unacceptable.

**Racism, Homophobia, Sexism, Ableism or Ageism** – these may be a one-off incident, or a series of incidents. Either way, the school needs to make it clear that we stand in solidarity with the person or group experiencing the aggression and that the school will always challenge victimisation and the kind of stereotypical and biased thinking that contributes to it.

Racism, sexism and all forms of victimisation require care and support for the person affected. There also needs to be an approach that addresses the issues raised by an incident with the class, or school population, as appropriate, and offers the perpetrator the possibility of learning and making amends, to allow change to be possible. Treating others without empathy and compassion and seeking to obliterate what makes each of us human and unique, is wrong and incredibly damaging, whoever does it?

### **Peer on Peer Abuse and Bystanders:**

Bullying by a gang or group of children happens. A gang is made up of individuals and each individual must take responsibility for their role within the group and make amends for their actions, but social psychology can shed light on why people may behave differently within groups. An understanding of peer pressure and why it is important to resist it is an important aspect of learning for children in PSHE lessons, which can help protect them from getting involved in negative, damaging behaviours.

There can be a sliding scale between a gang of equally culpable perpetrators, who have cheered each other on, and a group of bystanders, who did nothing, but implicitly enabled the bullying, by not standing up for others. While this behaviour – being a bystander or onlooker – allows bullying to take place, which should never happen, it can be that they also felt intimidated. Discussion of what they should do next time and having the courage to act on behalf of others, is part of the learning that should take place in the latter situation, rather than sanctions.



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Education is vital: all children need to understand what bullying is and what they can do about it, so they know what to do if they are being affected; so they neither accept nor support bullying behaviour and will call it out; and so they refuse to take part in it, because of the impact on others.

See **Equality Curriculum Statement**

### Anti-bullying actions

#### 1. Prevention

All children are taught at school that they can and should speak out if anyone is doing anything to them or others that they feel is wrong. This message is reinforced at an age-related level in Personal Social and Health Education lessons (PSHE), through conversations with key staff and in assembly themes. The message is: if someone is doing something to you that upsets or harms you, it is right to take action to change this by saying 'No', walking away and **TALKING** to an adult you trust.

All children will be taught to recognise bullying behaviours (see What is Bullying?) and understand what can cause them e.g.: fear, insecurity, jealousy, or a need to control others. This is so that they know what to do if they see this behaviour, and also know to seek help if they experience these emotions.

Children are given ideas and strategies to support and help themselves and others, through our PSHE programme of lessons where ideas are explored, such as: feeling positive about themselves and others; accepting and celebrating differences; naming their own and others' emotions, thinking through relationship scenarios and the impact of a range of responses and understanding what healthy relationships are.

Where incidents occur in school, as in society, they do not happen in a vacuum. An incident can be an opportunity for the school community to recall and evaluate our values, culture and ethos. In terms of curriculum, we need our children to value diversity and know how to challenge bias and stereotypes, to prevent further harm to others and build our children's empathy and cultural capital. **SEE PSHE Progression Map and Equality Curriculum Statement and resources.**

#### 2. Responding to bullying

**All staff** must address behaviours and attitudes which contribute to victimisation: offensive behaviours such as name calling should not be ignored, as it contributes to a culture of acceptance and aggression. The long-term impact of bullying, where it is not challenged, can be devastating to a child's self-image.

**The targeted child:** Being heard, helped and having some agency in the solution can be empowering for those targeted. Those who are subject to bullying must be cared for, listened to and supported throughout the process. They need to know it is not their fault; anyone could be subjected to bullying. They may fear exposure and reprisal, so adults need to be sensitive and do all they can to merit the trust the child has placed in them. We do this by:

- Ensuring the target's safety in the first place
- Identifying the known facts of the situation and recording these
- Agreeing on the appropriate response with the target of the bullying
- making sure that appropriate emotional support is discussed and planned with key staff
- Making sure the support is provided and is having a positive impact.

**The Aggressor:** We also believe that those who engage in bullying behaviour need help: to understand the impact of their behaviour on others and develop empathy; to understand the cause of their need to victimise and develop self-esteem in better ways. While there may be a desire to punish and condemn an aggressor, it is important to give the opportunity for redemption, allow the targeted person some say in the outcome, and remember that the perpetrator is also a child, learning how to behave.

**Procedure:** In the first instance, or in appropriate cases, we use a restorative justice approach, based on the **Pikas Method of Shared Concern**.



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1. Class teacher/SLT discusses with each child individually what happened and informs the Head.
2. The teacher/SLT agrees a way forward with the victim and informs parents/carers of the action/s.
3. The solution is shared with all parties and a plan put in place to make sure the actions happen.
4. Class teacher/SLT monitors the plan, following up with all children.

In a **repeated, or serious incident**, alternative actions are necessary to send a clear message. The Headteacher, in consultation with the targeted child, parents/carers, teacher and SLT, will follow our **Behaviour Policy** and also refer to Devon's suggested responses. See actions (as set out on Devon's reporting form) below:

### Devon's response

#### Appropriate action agreed to be taken:

With the aggressor(s)	With the target(s)	With the school
<input type="checkbox"/> Apology to the target(s).	<input type="checkbox"/> Comfort and reassurance.	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff/governor training.
<input type="checkbox"/> Awareness raising (behaviour unacceptable/valuing diversity).	<input type="checkbox"/> Buddying, mentoring or peer support.	<input type="checkbox"/> Class/peer group workshop.
<input type="checkbox"/> Restorative justice.	<input type="checkbox"/> Counselling.	<input type="checkbox"/> Assembly subject.
<input type="checkbox"/> Disciplinary action.	<input type="checkbox"/> Referral to specialist help/agency.	<input type="checkbox"/> Review of curriculum or policy.
<input type="checkbox"/> Notify parent/guardian.	<input type="checkbox"/> Notify parent/guardian.	<input type="checkbox"/> Campaign e.g. posters.
<input type="checkbox"/> Exclusion.	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical treatment.	<input type="checkbox"/> Letter to parents/guardians.
<input type="checkbox"/> Notified police (if criminal activity/serious offence).	<input type="checkbox"/> Set review dates.	<input type="checkbox"/> Initiative with learning community/loc authority.

### 3. Reporting an incident

Devon requires schools to record and report all bullying, racist, homophobic, sexist, ableist, ageist incidents. Schools who report bullying or request help will get support from County.

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/equality/reportincidents/schools>

Incidents of bullying behaviour can be reported by a child, a parent/carer, or a member of staff. A confirmed incident of bullying will be reported, using Devon's form (extract above). A record will be kept (See below)

- A concern log is to be completed by the adult who has first heard the disclosure and any adult witnesses.
- The concern is to be shared with the Headteacher (verbally as well as via form)
- The Head will initiate or continue a chronology, so that all further actions can be collected
- Further actions should be noted on the Concern Form.

#### Further actions:

- Contact and discussion with parent/carer of both parties
- Support from outside agencies may be sought for the targeted child, or the perpetrator, as appropriate.
- Exclusion – fixed or permanent – may be necessary in cases where safety is at risk, or further adjustment is required.
- All incidents of bullying, prejudice or hate incidents and exclusions will be reported to the governing body.

Lorna Legg  
Headteacher  
May 2022