

Sonning Church of England Primary School

Anti-bullying policy



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Introduction

Sonning Church of England Primary School is committed to developing an anti-bullying culture where the bullying of adults, children or young people is not tolerated in any form. This policy is a reflection of the school's vision and values. As we endeavour to build strong foundations for the years ahead for every member of our community, the effective prevention and tackling of bullying in our school helps to create a safe and disciplined environment. By creating a culture where our school values of love and respect are so highly prized, pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential, free from bullying and discrimination. We also seek to learn from good anti-bullying practice elsewhere and utilise support from The Keys Academy Trust, Oxford Diocese, our local authority and other relevant organisations when appropriate. This policy is based on guidance, best practice, research and law.

Sonning Church of England Primary School's vision is to build strong foundations for the years ahead. We recognise that all forms of bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a damaging effect on individuals, thus weakening those foundations. By effectively preventing and tackling bullying, our school can help to create a safe and disciplined environment, where pupils are able to learn, fulfil their potential and go on to live life in all its fullness.

It should be noted that all references to 'parents' should be read as 'parents or carers'.

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Aims

This policy sends a firm message that bullying will not be tolerated. It is imperative to ensure there is no ambiguity concerning the definition of bullying, and that everyone understands what constitutes bullying. As a school, we take bullying seriously, and pupil and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported. In addition:

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is, what the school's policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what they should do if bullying arises.
- The school will ensure the policy has been discussed with and agreed by a range of stakeholders.

Responsibilities

Anti-bullying is everyone's responsibility and all members of the school community are expected to promote and model positive behaviours and challenge intolerance, prejudice and bullying behaviours at all times. Within this, individuals and groups have specific responsibilities:

- The Headteacher must communicate this policy to the school community, to ensure that disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably, and that a member of the senior leadership team has been identified to take overall responsibility.
- Governors will be involved in monitoring and reviewing this policy.
- Clergy (and staff) will reinforce the key messages of love and respect through Collective Worship.
- All staff, including governors, senior leadership, teaching and non-teaching staff, will support, uphold and implement this policy.
- Parents will support their children and work in partnership with the school.
- Pupils will abide by the policy.

Definition of bullying

Bullying emotionally or physically harmful behaviour, and is specifically defined as the following:

- Repetitive, wilful or persistent
- Intentionally harmful, carried out by an individual or a group.

It is "the intentional repetitive or persistent hurting of one person by another, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power" (Anti-Bullying Alliance).

Forms and types of bullying

Bullying behaviour can present itself in a number of different forms when repetitive and intentional:

- **Physical:** by being punched, pushed or hurt; made to give up money or belongings; having property, clothes or belongings damaged; being forced to do something they don't want to do.
- **Verbal:** by being teased in a unkind way; insulted about their sexuality, insulted about their race, religion or culture; called names in other ways; or having offensive comments directed at them.
- **Indirect:** by having nasty stories told about them; being left out, ignored or excluded from groups.
- **Electronic or cyberbullying:** via text message; via instant messenger services and social network sites; via email; and via images or videos posted on the internet or spread via mobile phones (see E-Safety Policy).

Specific types of bullying

The school recognises that although anyone can be bullied for almost any reason or difference, some children may be more vulnerable to bullying than others. Research has identified various different types of bullying experienced by particular vulnerable groups of children. These include the following:

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- Bullying related to race, religion or culture.
- Bullying related to special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities
- Bullying related to being gifted or talented.
- Bullying related to appearance or health conditions.
- Bullying related to sexual orientation or gender.
- Bullying of young carers or looked-after children or otherwise related to home circumstances.
- Sexist, sexual or transphobic bullying. (See Appendix B: Specific Types of Bullying).

Roles within a bullying situation

The school recognises that bullying is a complex type of behaviour occurring between individuals and groups. Different roles within bullying situations can be identified and include the following:

- The **ring-leader** who, through their position of power, can direct bullying activity.
- **Assistants/associates** who actively join in the bullying (sometimes because they are afraid of the ring-leader).
- **Reinforcers** who give positive feedback to those who are bullying, perhaps by smiling or laughing.
- **Outsiders/bystanders** who stay back or stay silent and thereby appear to condone or collude with the bullying behaviour.
- **Defenders** who try to intervene to stop the bullying or comfort pupils who experience bullying.

Some children may adopt different roles simultaneously or at different times (e.g. a bullied child might be bullying another child at the same time, or a 'reinforcer' might become a 'defender' when the ringleader is not around).

Recognising the reasons why a child may bully

The school recognises the fact that children may bully for a variety of reasons. Recognising why children bully supports the school in identifying children who are at risk of engaging with this type of behaviour. This enables the school to intervene at an early stage to prevent the likelihood of bullying occurring, and to respond promptly to incidents of bullying as they occur. Recognising reasons why a child has bullied someone does not condone or excuse the actions, but seeks to understand the reasons and support the child to change their behaviour.

Understanding the emotional health and wellbeing of children who bully is key to selecting the right responsive strategies and to engaging the right external support. Children who bully may have some of the following difficulties:

- Be struggling to cope with a difficult personal situation e.g. bereavement, changes in family circumstances.
- Like the feeling of power and use bullying behaviour to get their own way.
- Have a temperament that may be aggressive, quick tempered or jealous.
- Have been abused or bullied in some way.
- Feel frustrated, insecure, inadequate or humiliated.
- Find it difficult to socialise and make friends.
- Be overly self-orientated and find it difficult to empathise with the needs of others.
- Be unable to resist negative peer pressure.
- Be under self-imposed pressure and/or pressure from others to succeed at all costs.

Reporting incidents of bullying

The school encourages and equips the whole school community to report all incidents of bullying, including children who have been bullied and bystanders who have witnessed an incident. The school endeavours to provide clear, accessible and confidential incident reporting systems.

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Pupils are encouraged to show courage and tell somebody they trust if they feel they are being bullied. Pupils are taught that Sonning Church of England Primary School is a 'telling school', and that they should feel safe to tell an adult if they feel they are being bullied.

Parents who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's class teacher immediately. Parents have a responsibility to support the school's Anti-Bullying Policy, and actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school.

Responding to bullying

If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached or witnessed the concern. The staff member will raise the issue with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will record the instance of bullying using our school systems. Then, the school will follow a three-stage system for dealing with bullying, which is outlined below:

Initial Stage

The procedures for this stage are as follows:

- Arrange a support network for the child who is being bullied, so they have a regular point of contact throughout the school day.
- Reassure the pupil and provide pastoral support, including self-esteem and confidence support.
- Offer an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their teacher, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a member of staff of their choice.
- Ask the child who is allegedly being bullied what they want the outcome to be.
- Support for the alleged bully.
- Involve parents/carers at an early stage.
- Record discussions with all parties.
- Ensure there is a record in the class behaviour/communication book.
- Discuss as part of the school's standing item in staff meetings regarding safeguarding and behaviour.

Investigation Stage

The procedures for this stage are as follows:

- The Headteacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or another appropriate member of staff will interview all parties involved.
- Establish facts by asking open questions to all concerned.
- Create a detailed chronology of the alleged incidents and any key events as part of the investigation and action plan.
- Establish a system for regular contact with parents/carers.

Implementation Stage

If bullying is found to have taken place, the procedures for this stage are as follows:

- Provide support for the victim of bullying, bespoke to the needs of that child.
- Address the bully/bullies and communicate that their behaviour is unacceptable.
- Begin a plan of Restorative Approach work (see the relevant section within this policy), including referral to appropriate staff or other agencies (where deemed necessary) to provide support for both the victim and the bully.
- Issue sanctions, where appropriate.
- Ensure regular follow-up contact with the child/ren and parents.

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Cyber / Online Bullying

When responding to cyberbullying concerns, the school will follow the same three-stage approach as above, but will also endeavour to act in the following ways:

- Encourage the person being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation.
- Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible; this may include the following:
 - Looking at use of the school systems.
 - Identifying and interviewing possible witnesses.
 - Contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary.
- Provide information to staff and pupils regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online. This may include the following:
 - Advising those targeted not to retaliate or reply
 - Providing advice on blocking or removing people from contact lists
 - Helping those involved to think carefully about what private information they may have in the public domain.
- Work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation. This may include the following:
 - Support reports to a service provider to remove content if those involved are unable to be identified or if those involved refuse to or are unable to delete content.
 - Requesting the deletion of locally held content and content posted online if they contravene school behavioural policies.

A restorative approach to supporting a perpetrator

Where appropriate, and in most cases of bullying, the school will initially consider the use of a therapeutic and restorative approach to resolve the situation. These approaches involve perpetrators of bullying focusing on their unacceptable behaviour in an emotionally intelligent way, and ensures children causing harm are held to account for their behaviour by enabling them to:

- Help the child understand their behaviour and how they could make better choices in the future.
- Impress on the child that what they have done is unacceptable.
- Deter them from repeating that behaviour.
- Signal to other children that the behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from doing it (where appropriate).

The school believes that all bullying is unacceptable, but that many children who display anti-social behaviour and lack empathy for others can be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and change their behaviour in the long term. However, sanctions will be used in line with our Behaviour Policy if required and appropriate.

Preventing bullying

The whole school community will endeavour to create an ethos of love and respect in school in line with our school values. The school agrees to provide the following:

- Deliver a curriculum, particularly PHSE, RSHE and PE, which is rooted in respect, dignity and respect for all; that celebrates difference; which clearly articulates the consequences in law of bullying behaviours.
- Regular learning experiences for children (e.g. Anti-Bullying Week and other events) to educate children to understand that bullying is not acceptable, how to share worries and the impact of bullying on others.
- Create and support an inclusive environment which promotes a culture of mutual respect, consideration and care for others, which will be upheld by all.
- Recognise that bullying can be perpetrated or experienced by any member of the community, including adults and children.

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- Recognise the potential for children with SEND and disabilities to be more vulnerable and to be disproportionately impacted by bullying, and will implement additional pastoral support as required.
- Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as: children with different family situations, looked after children; those with caring responsibilities; religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related differences.
- Challenge practice and language which does not uphold the school values of tolerance, non-discrimination, and respect towards others.
- Be encouraged to use technology, especially mobile phones and social media, positively and responsibly. This will be reinforced to parents via our annual Online Safety Day.
- Work with staff, the wider community, and outside agencies to prevent and tackle concerns including all forms of prejudice-driven bullying.
- Actively create 'safe spaces' for children.
- Celebrate success and achievements to promote and build a positive school ethos.
- Ensure anti-bullying has a high profile throughout the year, reinforced through key opportunities such as anti-bullying week and regularly in Collective Worship.
- Provide systematic opportunities to develop pupils' social and emotional skills, including building their resilience and self-esteem.
- Providing training on behaviour management and anti-bullying for all relevant staff, including lunchtime controllers and OSC staff.
- Providing a School Council, enabling children to raise issues and have a key role in shaping school policy on behaviour and anti-bullying.
- Providing peer support systems, such as peer mediators.

Supporting adults who may experience bullying

Our school takes measures to prevent and tackle bullying among pupils, but also recognises that bullying of adults, including staff and parents (whether by pupils, parents or other staff members) is unacceptable. Adults who have been bullied or affected will be supported in the following ways:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the concern with the designated safeguarding lead, a senior member of staff and/or the Headteacher.
- Advising them to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience, as appropriate.
- Where the bullying takes place off school site or outside of normal school hours (including online), the school will still investigate the concern and ensure that appropriate action is taken in accordance with the school's policies.
- Reporting offensive or upsetting content and/or accounts to the service provider, where the bullying has occurred online.
- Working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance.

Adults who have perpetrated the bullying will be helped in ways that include the following actions:

- Discussing what happened with a senior member of staff and/or the Headteacher to establish the concern.
- Establishing whether a legitimate grievance or concern has been raised and signposting to the school's official complaints procedures.
- If online, requesting that content be removed.
- Instigating disciplinary, civil or legal action as appropriate or required.



How to involve key stakeholders

We will involve stakeholders (including pupils and parents) by ensuring the following:

- Understand where to find information on behaviour and anti-bullying.
- Understand the school's approach, and are clear on the part they play in preventing bullying.
- Are asked for their opinion on shaping and monitoring the policy.
- Are able to view support opportunities and access support.
- Understand the support for victims and sanctions/support for those who bully.

Pupil-specific considerations

- Pupils will be taught to know how to express their worries and anxieties about bullying.

Parent-specific considerations

- Ensure all parents know who to contact if they are worried about bullying and where to access independent advice.
- Work with all parents and the local community to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to bullying.
- Ensure that parents work with the school to role model positive behaviour for pupils, both on and offline.
- Ensure all parents know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively, to raise concerns in an appropriate manner.