

Oakmont Education

Policy

Anti-Bullying

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Introduction

Bullying can happen in several ways including verbally (such as name calling and teasing), physically (such as hitting and hair pulling) and indirectly (such as spreading rumours). Cyber-bullying can also occur using social media.

At our school, we aim to provide a safe and supportive environment for all our pupils. We believe that every child should be able to live their life to the fullest without fear of bullying, harassment, or discrimination. We are committed to creating a school community where all students feel valued, respected, and included. Although there is no agreed definition of bullying, Welsh Government publications (and regional policies and procedures) suggest that:

BULLYING

Bullying refers to behaviour, which is deliberately hurtful, repeated often over a period and difficult for victims to defend themselves against.

Welsh Government (2011)

In November 2019, Welsh Government published the following guidance documents:

- Challenging bullying. Rights, respect, equality: guidance for parents and carers
<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-11/rights-respect-equality-guidance-for-parents-and-carers.pdf>
- Challenging bullying. Rights, respect, equality: Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools
<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-11/rights-respect-equality-statutory-guidance-for-governing-bodies-of-maintained-schools.pdf>
- Challenging bullying. Rights, respect, equality: Statutory guidance for local authorities
<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-11/rights-respect-equality-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities.pdf>
- Challenging bullying: rights, respect, equality. A guide for children
<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-11/rights-respect-equality-guide-for-children.pdf>
- Challenging bullying: rights, respect, equality. A guide for young people
<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-11/rights-respect-equality-guide-for-young-people.pdf>

Anti-bullying processes form part of safeguarding protocols – protecting children and young people identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This is of importance to children at Oakmont Education who may be considered 'vulnerable'. A variety of organisations may be involved in safeguarding – this is commonly referred to as a 'multi-agency' approach.

Members of staff at Oakmont School are expected to help to create and nurture a learning environment where children and young people feel safe and where individuals are supported to reach their personal aspirations. We will work together to encourage a culture of:

- mutual consideration and empathy towards others
- respect for property and personal belongings
- fairness and honesty
- self-respect and self-discipline.

What is bullying?

Bullying is characterised by several distinct elements, including the deliberate intention to cause harm, an outcome that results in physical or emotional pain, and acts of aggression that can be either direct or indirect. In addition, bullying is typically characterised by repetition, with a pattern of behaviour that can develop over time. It also involves an abuse of power, with one person or group exerting control over another.

There are many different forms of bullying, including physical, verbal, emotional, indirect, online, relational aggression, sexual, and prejudice-related bullying. Each of these forms involves a different type of behaviour, such as physical violence, verbal insults, or spreading rumours.

Bullying can also be related to specific protected characteristics, including age, disability, gender identity, race, religion, and sexual orientation. For example, learners with disabilities may be targeted for bullying, as may those who are LGBTQ+. In addition, there are specific types of bullying that are associated with each of these characteristics, such as sexist or racist bullying.

What is not bullying?

There are certain behaviours that are not classified as bullying but are still considered unacceptable. The Welsh Government expects schools to address these incidents in line with their behaviour and relationship policies to effectively deal with them and prevent them from potentially escalating to bullying.

Examples of incidents that are not typically classified as bullying include:

- Friendship fallouts: While not considered bullying, these situations may escalate into bullying behaviour if former friends have intimate knowledge of each other's fears and insecurities. Children and young people who are targeted by former friends can feel isolated from their former friendship group.
- One-off fights: These incidents should be addressed according to the school's Community Values, unless they are part of a pattern of intentional targeting of another individual.
- Arguments or disagreements: While not usually considered bullying, children and young people involved in these incidents may require assistance to learn to respect others' views.
- One-off physical assaults: These incidents should be stopped and addressed immediately, and police involvement may be appropriate.
- Prejudice-related incidents: Although not classified as bullying, these incidents can be hurtful to the child or young person subjected to them. It is crucial for schools to record and address them to ensure they are not accepted within the school community. Prejudice-related incidents can be linked to stereotypes or presumptions about identity.

What are the signs of bullying?

There are many warning signs that may indicate that a child or young person is being bullied or is bullying others. Recognising the warning signs is an important step towards acting against bullying. At Oakmont School we must all remember that children and young people who are being bullied or are bullying others do not always ask for help.

Warning signs can often point to other issues and problems such as anxiety or substance abuse. Good communication can help identify the root of the problem.

Signs that an individual is being bullied:

- unexplainable injuries, damaged and destroyed possessions.
- frequent headaches, stomach aches or faking illness
- skipping meals or binge eating at certain times of the day
- sleep deprivation or night terrors
- sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- self-destructive behaviours such as self-harm or absconding
- Reluctance to go to school.
- Bed-wetting in a previously dry child or young person
- Coming home regularly with missing or damaged possessions
- Arriving home hungry
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Being aggressive and bullying others

Family issues, stress and trauma are among the reasons why people become bullies. Bullying is a behaviour that is often used as a coping mechanism.

Signs that a child is bullying others:

- getting in to physical or verbal fights
- have peers who bully others or are aggressive.
- have unexplained extra money or new belongings.
- blame others for wrong-doings or do not accept responsibility.
- being worried about reputation and popularity
- creating an alternative reality or fantasising

What do we do to help prevent bullying?

Oakmont School has a duty to act in accordance with safeguarding processes and to take immediate action where suspicion of bullying is taking place. Creating a strong awareness of unacceptable behaviour throughout the entire school community is crucial in encouraging more pupils to speak up about it. To achieve this, we will:

- Provide regular training on the school's anti-bullying policy and procedures to all staff.
- Ensure that all new staff members are informed about the policy and procedures during their induction process.
- Survey the pupils regularly to gain their feedback on the extent and nature of bullying.
- Teach pupils how to report both one-off incidents and bullying.
- Ensure that all pupils know the consequences that may result from engaging in bullying or one-off incidents.
- Post the anti-bullying policy on the school website.
- The school staff is committed to assisting parents in increasing their awareness about parental controls. This includes offering home visits, if requested and deemed suitable.
- Staff will receive updates about new video games and potential issues that could arise from game releases or excessive online activity.
- The school will prioritise listening to pupils, providing ample opportunities for them to voice their opinions and perspectives.
- Creative outlets such as writing stories or poems or creating drawings about bullying will be encouraged.
- Reading stories about bullying, either individually or in a group setting like a class or assembly, will be part of the learning experience.
- Role-plays will be used as an educational tool, with the potential of inviting appropriate drama groups and speakers to the school.
- Open discussions about bullying and its implications will be held in whole school meetings, class discussions, and integrated into the curriculum.
- The school will observe initiatives like Anti-Bullying Week to further emphasize the importance of combating bullying.
- The school will work alongside multiple agencies, such as the police, youth service, housing and health professionals, and race equality organisations to ensure a comprehensive approach to tackling bullying.

At Oakmont School our approach to education is centred around the following principles:

- We will provide an innovative curriculum which aligns with the Curriculum for Wales and aims to equip our pupils with the skills and knowledge needed for lifelong learning.
- Our teaching methods will involve the application of knowledge, skills, and creativity through rich tasks, ensuring that our pupils are prepared to contribute to society in a meaningful way.
- We will expose our pupils to a variety of opportunities that promote physical and mental well-being, enabling them to become healthy, confident individuals who can lead fulfilling lives.
- We will instil positive and respectful values in our pupils, preparing them to be responsible citizens of Wales and the world.

Procedure

1. Incident Reporting: Any bullying incidents should be promptly reported to Headteacher and recorded on Behaviour Watch. It is crucial to record every detail of the incident. This will ensure the incident is properly documented and can be followed up on accordingly.
2. Support for Victims: School staff will provide a supportive environment for victims of bullying. They will listen attentively to the victims, validating their experiences and offering necessary assistance.
3. Police Consultation: Depending on the severity of the bullying incident, police involvement may be necessary. The headteacher will make the decision about police consultation, considering the nature of the incident and the safety of all pupils.
4. Bully Rehabilitation: The school will actively work towards changing the behaviour of the bully or bullies. This may involve counselling, conflict resolution techniques, and other forms of support to promote positive behaviour change.
5. Staff Involvement: In cases where a member of the school staff is identified as the perpetrator of bullying, disciplinary proceedings will be initiated by the Senior Leadership Team. The team will follow the school's policies and procedures for staff disciplinary actions to ensure a fair and thorough process.
6. The headteacher decide the actions that must be taken against the alleged bully, making sure that the safety and dignity of the injured party are protected. The approach will be separate from the 'red card sanctions' and may include for severe and persistent cases of bullying fixed term or permanent exclusion.

If a pupil has been involved in bullying:

- Clarify the Situation: Clearly communicate to the pupil that their behaviour is unacceptable and is considered bullying.
- Understanding Misconceptions: It's important to remember that children and adolescents may not always comprehend that their actions are perceived as bullying, or fully grasp the extent of emotional distress they have caused.

To pupils in comprehending the nature of bullying behaviour:

- Illustrate the Impact: Describe to them how bullying can negatively affect a person's emotions and well-being.
- Resource Reference: Mention that ChildLine (0800 1111) is a helpful platform that provides insightful advice on dealing with bullying.
- Empathy Encouragement: Guide them towards understanding the implications of their actions on the victim. Encourage them to put themselves in the other person's shoes and think about how that person might be feeling.
- Personal Reflection: Ask them to recall instances when they were on the receiving end of unkind words or actions, and how that made them feel.
- Questioning for Change: Invite them to pose any questions they might have about why their behaviour is problematic and why it needs to be modified.

What can learners expect

At Oakmont School we will:

- Frequently seek children and young people's perspectives on the prevalence and nature of one-off incidents and bullying
- Ensure that pupils are aware of how to voice and report concerns regarding one-off incidents and bullying.
- Inform all pupils about the range of sanctions that can be imposed on individuals who engage in one-off incidents and bullying.
- Engage pupils in anti-bullying campaigns within the school.
- Promote helpline and website information to pupils.
- Provide support to students who have experienced bullying.
- Work with students who have engaged in bullying to address underlying problems.
- Foster conversations about anti-bullying, for example, through the school council
- Appoint an anti-bullying advocate.
- Display posters throughout the school in clear language understandable by all pupils

What can parents expect

At Oakmont School we will:

- Ensure that parents/carers are aware of the appropriate channels to report any concerns regarding one-off incidents and bullying.
- Inform parents/carers about our curriculum and how it can address issues of one-off incidents and bullying.
- Provide clear information to parents/carers about the complaints procedure and how they can utilise it effectively if they are dissatisfied with the school's response.
- Ensure that parents/carers are aware of independent advice and support services they can access if they have concerns about one-off incidents and bullying.
- Collaborate with parents and the local community to address wider issues outside the school that may contribute to one-off incidents and bullying.

If a learner or their parent/carer feels that their concern regarding bullying has not been taken seriously or addressed adequately by the school, they may make a formal complaint. The school's complaints policy is easily accessible on the school website and can also be obtained by request from the school.

Links to other policies

Code of conduct
Pupil wellbeing
Community values
Safeguarding
Online safety
Educational visits

Monitoring

The policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure that it is being implemented effectively. Monitoring will focus on whether the policy is preventing incidents of bullying and whether it is being followed by members of the community.

Oakmont Education

Useful numbers

Children and young people

Meic – Information advice and advocacy for young people. www.meiccymru.org

Childline – Provide counselling for anyone aged under 19 in the UK. www.childline.org.uk
Tel: 0800 1111

Kooth – Online counselling and emotional well-being platform for children and young people.
www.kooth.com

CALL (Community Advice and Listening Line) – Emotional support and information/literature on mental health and related matters for the people of Wales. www.callhelpline.org.uk

Parents/carers

Family Lives – Support and advice for parents/carers. Tel: 0808 800 2222

Parent Zone – Support and advice for parents/carers. www.parentzone.org.uk

Young Minds – Support to help improve the mental health of children and young people.
www.youngminds.org.uk
Tel: 0808 802 5544 (parents'/carers' helpline)

Schools/professionals

Professionals Online Safety Helpline – For those working with children and young people who require help for an online issue.
Tel: 0344 381 4772
e-mail: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk

Advice and support networks

General

Internet Watch Foundation – For reporting online images of child sexual abuse.
www.iwf.org.uk

Victim Support – Report hate crime in Wales. www.reporthathe.victimsupport.org.uk

CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) – If child sexual abuse or exploitation is suspected. www.ceop.police.uk

NSPCC – National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. www.nspcc.org.uk
Tel: 0808 800 5000

Mental Health Matters Wales – Works with people who have a mental health-related issue.
www.mhmbcb.com/index.htm

Children and young people

Heads Above The Waves – Support for children and young people suffering depression or self-harming.
<http://hatw.co.uk/straight-up-advice>

Parents/carers

Internet Matters – Advice on online issues for parents/carers and children and young people.
www.internetmatters.org.uk

Resources for schools

EACH (Educational Action Challenging Homophobia) – Provide services to inspire lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans equality.
<https://each.education>

Show Racism The Red Card – Training and resources to tackle racism in society.
www.theredcard.org

The ACE Support Hub Wales – Toolkit for school staff on ACEs. www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/888/page/88504

South West Grid for Learning (SWGfL) – Self-evaluation tool for schools and guidance.
www.swgfl.org.uk

Other

School Beat – All Wales School Liaison Core Programme. www.schoolbeat.org/en/parents/know-the-programme/national-events/what-is-the-all-wales-school-liaison-core-programme

Children in Wales – www.childreninwales.org.uk/our-work/bullying

Children's Commissioner for Wales – www.childcomwales.org.uk

Time to Change Wales – Campaign for young people, which aims to change attitudes towards mental health, ending stigma and discrimination.
www.timetochangewales.org.uk/en/mental-health-stigma/young-people/ [wecanwewill](http://wecanwewill.org)

Online issues

Childnet International – Support on all aspects of online safety. www.childnet.com

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Bullying Incident Form

Name of person reporting incident

(Please note anonymous if this is an anonymous report)

Name of person recording incident

Date of report

Type of bullying incident (please tick all that apply)

Physical		Relational	
Verbal		Prejudice-related	
Indirect		Online or via mobile	
Exclusion		Face to face	
Other <i>(Please state)</i>			

For prejudice-related bullying please select the category which best describes the prejudice involved

Racist <i>(focused on race, religion or culture)</i>		Related to gender identify	
Homophobic (LGBT+)		Prejudice-related	
Related to family status or looked after child (CLA) status		Related to disadvantage	
Transphobic		Sexist	
Focused on appearance			
Other <i>(Please state)</i>			

Describe the incident

Where incident took place

Brief summary of incident

(Also keep record of witness statement)

Member/s of staff reported to/witnessed by

Impact of incident

Follow up action

(including dates)

Action taken

Signed (Name)

Date

Reviews By