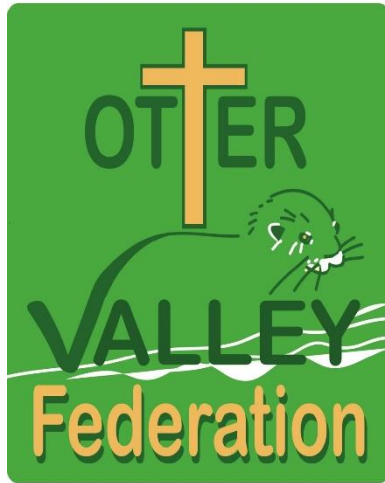


Believing and Achieving Together to be the Best We Can Be



*We aim to reflect God's love, "I have come that they
may have life, and have it to the full."
John 10:10*

*This policy has been developed and will be implemented in accordance
with the Christian vision and values of both schools.*

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Reviewed and approved by the Lead Governors for Safeguarding,
on behalf of the Governing Board on: **October 2024**

Next triannual review: Spring 2027

Otter Valley Federation Anti-Bullying Policy.

AIM

The aim of this Anti-Bullying Policy is to ensure that the pupils in the Otter Valley Federation learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. The staff appreciate we are not immune from the various forms of bullying and are therefore active in their efforts to protect everyone from harm and prioritise those most at risk. We believe that only when all issues of bullying are addressed will we be able to fulfil our Christian vision for every pupil to be the best they can be and live life to the full.

We aim to

- Be relentless in our pursuit of flourishing for all
- Be constant in our drive to eliminate bullying.
- Respect every child's needs for, and rights to, a play environment where safety, security, praise, recognition, and opportunity for taking responsibility are available.
- Respect for every individuals' feelings and views.
- Recognise that everyone is important and that our differences make each of us special.
- Show appreciation of other, by acknowledging individual qualities, contributions and progress.
- Ensure safety by having anti-bullying rules and practices, developed with the participation of children and young people, carefully explained and displayed for all to see.

Definition of Bullying

At the start of year, teachers lead sessions about building and maintaining friendships and supporting the children in understanding what bullying behaviour looks like. There is no legal definition of bullying, and we refer to DfE guidance:

Bullying is defined as:

1. **Repeated** behaviour
2. **Intention** to hurt someone physically or emotionally
3. **Power imbalance:** aiming at certain group (i.e race / gender /sexual orientation/ age/ ability / appearance)

Learning how to manage friendships is an important part of growing up and as many adults will relate to, can be a challenge as an adult. Children develop these skills at different rates and with different levels of understanding and there are times when we have to make the distinction between this and intentional bullying.

Forms of Bullying

Context: Bullying behaviours that might occur: In-school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use of discriminatory or offensive language, name-calling• Physical harm, including threats of physical harm• Coercive and harmful sexual behaviour• Damage to property or stealing• Repeated exclusion from groups, games and other activities• Intentional ignoring to cause hurt
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of untrue or private information without permission
Off-site bullying Bullying actions (such as those above) which occur off the school site.	This includes bullying which takes place on the journey to and from school. Schools retain powers to tackle these behaviours, even if they occur off-site
Online bullying (cyber-bullying)	<p>Bullying actions which occur online, such as through social media or messaging apps. These can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of discriminatory or offensive language, name-calling • Threats of physical harm • Attempts to coerce another into unwanted sexual activities • Repeated exclusion from groups, games and other activities • Intentional ignoring to cause hurt • Sharing of untrue or private information without permission • Creation and sharing of images intended to denigrate or shame another person • Inappropriate or unkind commenting on social media posts

Research shows that more than likely, bullying will cross over two or more of these contexts, so that it feels pervasive to the whole of life.

With the constant rise of the online world, children are often unable to escape bullying which can follow them wherever they are and Otter Valley Federation Schools are very mindful of the ways in which device usage can contribute to bullying, both in and out of school.

Without the victim physically present, careless and unkind messaging or rumour-spreading can feel easier and can quickly spiral into harmful targeting and victimisation. Therefore any approach to tackling and eliminating bullying needs to go beyond the school to engage families and households, churches, local community groups and other partners involved in pupils' lives.

Use of Language

We should expect pupils of all ages to use kind words with their peers. It is therefore important to challenge harmful and discriminatory language or behaviour at any age. Children's curiosity, when handled well, can also provide an opportunity to teach accurate and positive usage of language in an age appropriate way.

In contrast schools must challenge remarks which are:

- Derogatory (i.e. intending to put another person down)
- Outdated terms. Where these are used accidentally, the school has a clear role to play in educating the pupils and adults who use them.
- Indiscriminate and which present being a LGB/GQ pupil or LGBT+ adult negatively (e.g. indiscriminate use of the word 'gay' to describe things we don't like)
- Dehumanising (i.e. devaluing a person or treating them as worthless)

When challenging this kind of language, it is vital to be clear that such language cannot be considered as merely 'banter'. A joke is only a joke if both people are laughing, and even then, a person may 'laugh off' or dismiss hurtful behaviour because they are not ready to challenge it, feel

unable to challenge it or are so used to it that they are desensitised. We must be relentless in our efforts to create a culture in which this kind of behaviour or language is never acceptable. Staff do not need to seek the permission of the pupil in question (who may be traumatised by a range of discriminatory experiences) before intervening and challenging the behaviour. Often, if a pupil is being bullied they will resist intervention for fear of reprisal, so it is incumbent on the school to advocate for them and act.

- Children from ethnic minorities, disabled children, young people who are LGBT, or those with learning difficulties are more vulnerable to this form of abuse and may well be targeted.
- Appropriate staff and volunteers should have access to training on anti-bullying
- Where a child is found to be exhibiting sexually harmful behaviour to another child, it is important to involve the relevant Local Safeguarding Children Board as soon as possible.
- Where a child's bullying behaviour is of a particularly violent or aggressive nature and the establishment is unable to address the behaviour through behaviour management strategies or disciplinary measures within a reasonable time, it is worth considering instigating child protection procedures.

Commitment to equal opportunities

We are committed to equality of opportunity for all our children, irrespective of race, gender, religion or disability. The effectiveness of our policy is monitored, and any issues dealt with immediately. For SEND children, this includes a duty to make reasonable adjustment to policies and practices. (The Equality Act 2010)

In writing this policy we have referred to *Flourishing For All, Anti-Bullying Guidance*, Sept 2024, National Church of England

BEHAVIOUR GUIDELINES:

In the classroom we:

- Live out our **Christian vision of 'believing and achieving together to be the best we can be' and referring to our HEART values** to discuss our feelings and behaviours.
- Have a **welcoming and inclusive culture** in which all can feel a sense of belonging.
- **Value and engage with difference** in individuals and groups of people. Supporting pupils to view their peers and community with dignity and respect.
- Have **Class Rules** for behaviour, which have been discussed and put together by the whole group. Language is kept simple and clear and reflect the ethos of the school.
- Have the **School Behaviour Policy** which clearly set out in the steps which are followed by all teaching staff.
- Give **teacher attention and praise for positive pro-social behaviours** from all children. This is done verbally and through the House Point System (Feniton), class rewards and Certificates of Achievement

- Teach **about discrimination and prejudice** to help pupils view all others with dignity and respect.
- The school follows a PSHRE programme, which includes key units on Bullying across the age range. Teachers also take more informal opportunities throughout the week to discuss friendship issues as they occur, so they can be dealt with promptly.
- Teaching staff promote and reinforce the anti-bullying approach during assemblies, collective worship and within lessons, through role plays, stories, and discussions of current affairs.

In the playground we:

- Use a parallel behaviour code for playtime duty staff and the MTA'S at lunch time.

ANTI-BULLYING GUIDELINES

BULLYING INCIDENTS:

The following steps are taken when dealing with bullying incidents:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached.
- A clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to the Head of School.
- The Head of School will interview all concerned and will record the incident in the online behaviour chronology which follows the cohort of pupils up through the school and in the whole school incident log.
- After evidence has been obtained the Head of School will decide if it is appropriate for the bullied child and the bully to meet.
- Class teachers will be kept informed and if it persists other members of staff may need to be advised.
- Where the Head of School has investigated the allegation and remains concerned, the parent or guardian will be informed.
- Sanctions in accordance with the School Behaviour Guidelines will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned.

PUPILS

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff.
- Reassuring the pupil
- Offering support with social and emotional needs and building positive relationships
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence

Pupils who have bullied will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened with experienced member of staff.
- Discovering why the pupil became involved
- Establishing the wrong-doing and the reasons why the bullying has taken place
- Support with social and emotional needs and building positive relationships
- Informing parents or guardians to help change the attitude of the pupil

The following disciplinary steps can be taken:

- Official warning to cease offending
- Daily monitoring – children report to Head of School to review progress.
- Exclusion from certain areas of the school grounds or premises
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion

MONITORING, EVALUTION AND REVIEW**Devon County Council Guidance**

The school may decide that the bullying meets the criteria to report to Devon County Council who keep a record of the number and type of bullying incidents in the county.

When reporting to DCC, the following guidelines will be followed:

When reporting incidents of bullying the reason behind the bullying should always be understood, whether it stems from racism, prejudice or general human differences. If the bullying stems from racism or prejudice, it should be recorded and reported as such, as the main focus of the incident. Bullying affects all children, including those who are bullied, those who bully others, and those who witness bullying. The effects of bullying may continue into adulthood and many studies demonstrate that those who are involved with bullying are more likely to have mental health difficulties in their adult lives.

- There is not a single profile of a child involved in bullying. Children who bully can be either be well-connected socially or marginalised and may be bullied by others as well. Similarly, those who are bullied sometimes bully others.
- Solutions to bullying are not simple. Bullying prevention approaches that show the most promise confront the problem from many angles. They involve the entire establishment's community—children, families, administrators, teachers, and staff such as bus drivers, nurses, cafeteria and front office staff—in creating a culture of respect.
- Bystanders, or those who see bullying, can make a huge difference when they intervene on behalf of someone being bullied. Empowering children to recognise if something isn't right and to inform an adult will go a long way to protect children from bullying. This can only happen if establishments educate against it being 'tattle tailing' and 'snitching'.
- Studies also have shown that adults can help prevent bullying by talking to children about bullying, encouraging them to do what they love, modelling kindness and respect, and seeking help. Demonstrating that it is vital the parents and guardians are provided with the information to have those discussions at home too.

The school will review this policy every three years and assess its implementation and effectiveness.