

Fir Tree Junior School

Anti-Bullying Policy

2025/2026

Date for review: July 2026



Introduction

ODST takes great pride in its schools' friendly and approachable ethos and the Christian values which members of the academy trust show towards each other. This considerate behaviour is encouraged at all times in our schools. We also celebrate the fact that everyone in our community may be different and have different points of view, not that they are better.

The Trustees aim for each of its academies to be safe, friendly and secure places for each pupil to learn and thrive, but this cannot be so for any individual who is in any way bullied. ODST's objective is to promote and encourage the maintenance of a friendly atmosphere where pupils are empowered to talk openly about bullying, know what it is and the range of bullying behaviours, understand its impact on others and where and how to source support, guidance and resolution.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- that there are few, if any, incidents of bullying at Fir Tree Junior School
- that pupils and the wider community have a good understanding of the meaning of bullying, how to recognise it and how to react to it
- that any incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively and that children, parents and carers have confidence in the school's ability to deal with any incidents
- that children feel safe

Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a *TELLING* school. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

Aims of the Policy

- To assist in creating an ethos in which attending school is a positive experience for all members of the school community.
- To make it clear that all forms of bullying are unacceptable at school.
- To enable everyone to feel safe while at school and encourage pupils to report incidences of bullying.
- To deal effectively with bullying.
- To support and protect victims of bullying and ensure they are listened to.
- To help and support children involved in bullying to change their attitudes as well as their behaviour and understand why it needs to change.
- To liaise with parents and other appropriate members of the school community.
- To ensure all members of the school community feel responsible for combating bullying.

What is Bullying?

In order to recognise, prevent and successfully tackle bullying it is important that we are clear in our understanding of different terms. Unkind behaviour means any behaviour that could harm somebody, either physically or emotionally. Unkind behaviour may often be deliberate, but it could also be unintentional or unthinking.

Bullying means any hurtful behaviour that includes these important characteristics:

- It is deliberate
- It is targeted at an individual
- It happens repeatedly over a period of time
- There is usually a power difference – the person doing the bullying is stronger, or older, or in a group, or more popular, etc. We consider both unkind behaviour and bullying behaviour to be very serious. Both can seriously impact on a child's wellbeing and his or her achievement at school. Bullying can have long term negative impacts on a child's wellbeing.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional- being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical- pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist- racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual- unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic- because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal- name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber

We will also consistently promote a school culture that is open and welcoming, that celebrates differences, that encourages children to grow up as people who are respectful of differences such as in belief, gender, sexuality, and who value diversity. We will be a school that promotes good behaviour by recognising it and celebrating it.

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of this Policy

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Responding to children's concerns.

All children must know that all adults (governors, teaching and non-teaching staff) at Fir Tree Junior School will take their concerns seriously. Bullying can only happen when there is silence, or a reluctance to intervene or take something seriously. For this reason children must never be given the message – either intentionally or accidentally – that their concerns are insignificant or a waste of time. Very often a child's concerns are about minor, one-off incidents that can be resolved quickly - these incidents are important teaching opportunities though, where children can learn:

- that adults take their concerns seriously and will listen to what they say
- that upsetting things happen but they can be resolved

- that there are ways to deal with upset calmly that makes it easier to move on

Adults must:

- Listen carefully to children's concerns
- Acknowledge children's feelings ('I can see you are upset', 'That sounds unkind')

Adults must not:

- Tell children not to tell tales
 - Say things like 'Just stay away from him then'
 - Unintentionally communicate to children that they are too busy or are irritated by the concern.
- How staff must react to hurtful behaviour**
- Wherever possible and appropriate adults should try to bring children together quickly, hear both sides of a concern, and model finding an appropriate resolution to the problem.
 - Where ever possible staff should specifically use the phrase 'unkind' behaviour when talking to children during or after an incident for example by saying to a child 'Pushing in the line could hurt the person in front of you'.
 - Where it is not possible to deal with a situation immediately, staff must tell children clearly how and when things will be followed up ('I have to go to assembly now but I'll speak to you at break-time', 'I'm just dealing with this now but can you go over to Miss ... and tell her what you just told me?') then ensure that this follow through is carried out.
 - All staff, volunteers and adults must follow the school behaviour policy in dealing with unkind behaviour, and follow the school behaviour policy in applying any consequences.
 - Staff must also ask themselves, could this incident be part of a wider pattern of bullying? Is this a particularly vulnerable child? Any concerns must be passed on to the relevant responsible staff member, according to the escalation line: Class teacher/Assistant Head Teacher/Head teacher

How staff must react to allegations of bullying from children or parents

- Staff must listen carefully to the concerns, and acknowledge feelings.
- Record the details of the concern on CPOMS, alerting the Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher and relevant Phase Leader.
- Explain to the child (or adult) that it will be necessary to talk to senior staff about the problem, and then offer reassurance that it can be sorted out.
- Within 24 hours inform the head teacher or assistant head teacher of the allegation.

How the school will handle reports of bullying between children (including cyberbullying)

- Allegations will be recorded on CPOMS and promptly investigated by staff under the guidance of the Headteacher. (Establish what happened, how often it happened, who was involved, who saw it happening, where it happened).
- Within 24 hours discuss and agree next steps with Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher:

- Allegations will be taken seriously and will be investigated fully, under the direction of the Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher.
- Where incidents of bullying are confirmed Parents and Carers will be kept informed.
- Where bullying is not confirmed behavioural concerns will continue to be dealt with in line with school policy and parents will be informed of the outcome of the investigation.
- The school will offer reassurance and support to the child who has been bullied, and will avoid any approach that could unhelpfully label the child as a 'victim'.
- The school will work with the perpetrator to change their attitude and behaviour, as well as imposing appropriate sanctions.
- The school will make use of the range of sanctions available to it, which may include removal from playground, or classroom, isolation within school and could include the use of exclusion.
- The school will also consider the motivation behind bullying behaviours and whether it raises any concerns about the safety and welfare of the perpetrator – and will bear this in mind when considering appropriate sanctions and support.

How the school will protect children from cyber-bullying

Staff will teach children:

- to recognise cyber-bullying in its various forms [e-mail, instant messaging, chat rooms, social network sites, mobile 'phone videos or texts, gaming web-sites, sent viruses, sharing of personal information without permission].
- to never reply to hurtful messages or material
- to preserve evidence of cyber-bullying, for example by not deleting messages
- to tell an adult that they trust, and if possible to block the sender
- about different ways to anonymously report concerns, for example through Childline
- about using technology in positive and beneficial ways, for example through our use of the school learning platform The school will also inform children and parents about strategies to report harmful or offensive messages and material on line, and will encourage parents to keep up to date with recommended sources of helpful information (e.g. thinkuknow.co.uk)

Special Educational Needs

Fir Tree Junior School staff will, in seeking to protect children from bullying, be aware of the particular potential needs of children with recognised SEN, including:

- the vulnerability of some children to being isolated or victimised because of an SEN or disability
- the difficulty some children may have in describing or explaining unkind behaviour they have been subjected to, because of their SEN or disability
- the difficulty some children may have in explaining their own behaviour, because of their SEN or disability

- the risk of children with behavioural difficulties being wrongly identified as 'bullies' Where appropriate the school will seek specialist advice, for example from the Educational Psychology or Behaviour Support services. Recording and Monitoring

- School staff will record behavioural concerns using the school's standard Behaviour Incident record forms and forms AB1 & 2, in line with current behaviour policy and practice.

- Where an incident has been recognised as bullying this will be flagged, and details held in the relevant pupil records.

- The head teacher will monitor the frequency and character of any bullying incidents, and report to the governing body. Success criteria

The effectiveness of this policy will be judged through questionnaires and other feedback, against the extent to which:

- incidents of bullying at Fir Tree Junior School are low

- levels of pupil awareness and understanding of bullying are good

- pupil and parent confidence in the school's ability to react to bullying is high

- children feel safe at Fir Tree Junior School