

SOKE EDUCATION TRUST

Anti-bullying Policy

Approved via Governorhub

Approved date	January 2026
Review date	January 2027



Anti-Bullying Policy

Aims

- Recognise that bullying may be taking place in our community, if we are not made aware of it.
- Ensure that all governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, children and parents have an understanding of what bullying is.
- Ensure that everyone knows the school policy for anti-bullying and follow it if bullying takes place.
- Create a supportive ethos and break down the culture of secrecy, which so often accompanies bullying.
- Encourage open discussion of the issues at all levels.
- Raise awareness of positive ways of solving problems through PSHCE and other cross-curricular activities and suggest ways of building healthy relationships so that we have strategies for dealing with problems.
- Ensure that as a school we take bullying seriously. Children and parents should be assured that staff will respond positively and promptly to all reported incidents of bullying, in line with agreed procedures.
- Give support and advice to victims, bullies, staff, governors and parents.
- Provide a follow-up service to those involved to ensure incidents are not repeated.
- Create an ethos where bullying will not be tolerated.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on DfE guidance “Preventing and Tackling Bullying” July 2017 and supporting documents. It also takes into account the DfE statutory guidance “Keeping Children Safe in Education” 2025. The school has read Childnet’s “Cyberbullying: Understand, Prevent and Respond: Guidance for Schools”.

Our Shared Beliefs about Bullying

The Soke Education Trust knows that bullying may occur in the community and provides a stimulating and caring environment in which each child will experience high standards of education and preparation for the future, working in partnership with the parents and the local community. The Policy for Anti-Bullying is written in accordance with this philosophy.

Definition

Bullying is a subjective experience that can take many forms. The three common aspects in most definitions of bullying are that:

- It is deliberately hurtful behaviour.
- It is usually repeated over time.
- There is an in-balance of power, which makes it hard for those being bullied to defend themselves.

Bullying Forms and Types

The school recognises that although children may be particularly vulnerable to bullying as a result of personal characteristics such as height, weight, colour of hair or more structural inequalities such as race, disability or sexuality, anyone can be bullied for almost any reason or difference.

Forms of Bullying

Bullying behaviour across all types of bullying can represent itself in a number of different forms. Children can be bullied in ways that are:

- **Physical** – by being punched, pushed or hurt; made to give up money or belongings; having property, clothes or belonging damaged; being forced to do something they don't want to do.
- **Verbal** – by being teased in a nasty way; 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. Some bullying is physical:
- **Electronic / 'Cyberbullying'** - for example, 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.
- **Direct** – taking, hiding or destroying people's possessions. Frightening someone into doing things they don't want to do. Inciting others to engage in any form of the above behaviours.

It is important to note that not all aggressive behaviour is bullying.

Recognising Signs and Symptoms

Soke Education Trust recognises that some children are more vulnerable to bullying than others and is sensitive to the changes of behaviour that may indicate that a child or young person is being bullied. Children who are being bullied may demonstrate physical, emotional and behavioural problems. The following physical signs and behaviour could indicate other problems but bullying will be considered as a possibility:

- Being frightened of walking to or from school
- Losing self confidence and self-esteem
- Being frightened to say what's wrong
- Developing unexplained cuts, bruises and other injuries
- Unwilling to go to school, development of school phobia and unusual patterns of non-attendance
- Not wanting to go outside onto the playground
- Failing to achieve potential in school work
- Becoming withdrawn, nervous and losing concentration
- Becoming isolated and disengaged from other CYP
- Developing changes in physical behaviour such as stammering and nervous ticks
- Regularly having books or clothes destroyed
- Having possession go 'missing' or 'lost' including packed lunch and money
- Starting to steal money (to pay the perpetrator)
- Becoming easily distressed, disruptive or aggressive
- Developing problems with eating and food
- Running away
- Developing sleep problems and having nightmares
- Developing suicidal thoughts or attempting suicide
- Bullying other children or siblings

Recognising Reasons for why Children may Bully

At Soke Education Trust we recognise that children may bully for a variety of reasons. We take several steps to eradicate bullying before it starts e.g. the use of our Learning Mentors, Behaviour Mentor and Family worker who children and families can speak to. A safe environment at lunch time called the 'Zone' where children can go and speak to adults and other children and/or carry out creative activities, social skills away from the playground.

Possible reasons for why some children may engage in bullying include:

- Struggling to cope with a difficult personal situation e.g. bereavement, changes in family circumstances
- Liking the feeling of power and using bullying behaviour to get their own way
- Having a temperament that may be aggressive, quick tempered or jealous
- Having been abused or bullied in some way
- Feeling frustrated, insecure, inadequate, humiliated
- Finding it difficult to socialise and make friends
- Being overly self-orientated (possibly displaying good self-esteem) and finding it difficult to empathise with the needs of others
- Being unable to resist negative peer pressure
- Being under pressure to succeed at all costs

Reporting incidents of Bullying

Incidents of bullying should be reported as soon as possible after the event, to a member of staff or parent. Children will be encouraged to report to a member of staff either verbally or anonymously if they feel necessary.

Responding to Incidents of Bullying

A Bullying Log and Incident File is stored in the main office. Records will be held by the school for five years. Record sheets will be completed by a member of the Leadership Team whenever incidents of bullying occur. All involved parents will be informed as soon as possible.

How will Bullying be monitored?

The Bullying Log will be monitored by a senior teacher to identify any recurring patterns who will act upon them.

When responding to incidents involving any type of bullying the school will consider the situation in relation to the school's Child Protection Policy and Procedures. In cases of severe or persistent bullying, staff will liaise with the Designated Person for Child Protection particularly where there are concerns that a child or young person may be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm in terms of emotional abuse.

When responding to incidents involving sexting, any devices involved will be confiscated and set to flight mode, where possible, or off, while investigation are carried out in line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

How Will Bullying Behaviour be treated at Soke Education Trust?

All staff, children and parents need to know how to respond to an incident of bullying. We will adopt the “No-Blame” Approach in our dealing with bullying incidents.

A Summary of the “No-Blame” Approach

AIM: *To restore victim’s confidence. To get the bully to modify their behaviour.*

What? Why? Who? Where? When? How?

- 1 Interview the victim –pose the questions based on the above as appropriate and relevant. Allow them to talk without interruption. Remember to listen to both sides fairly and not prejudge.
- 2 Interview alleged bully separately either verbally or with written responses where appropriate.
- 3 Work out support strategies for the victim such as daily, weekly reporting, assertive behaviour, saying “no” using bystanders.
- 4 Talk to the bully about strategies for changing behaviour –keep a record. Suggestions may come from the bully. Work on these once the bully has shown signs of understanding the other’s point of view. Give the bully an opportunity to change his or her behaviour. Arrange another meeting. The aim must be to get the bully to feel concern for the recipient. A place to be set aside where children can go to be on their own.
- 5 Parents of bully and victim must be contacted as soon as possible. Maintain contact with parents throughout process.

Throughout this process a written record and log will be kept of the initial incident and any subsequent incidents. These records detail what happened and who was involved including the views and observations of any bystanders. Follow up action / strategies and the monitoring and impact of these strategies are also recorded.

Prevention

At Soke Education Trust we believe that the whole school community should work together to reduce bullying as part of our efforts to promote a positive and inclusive whole school ethos and create a safe, healthy and stimulating environment. Alongside the school’s responsive strategies for dealing with incidents of bullying, the school adopts as part of our pastoral support system, a whole school approach to implementing proactive and preventative interventions at a school, class and individual level to reduce bullying. Our approach includes:

- *Implementing an effective school leadership that promotes an open and honest anti bullying ethos*
- *Adopting positive behaviour management strategies as part of the school’s Behaviour Policy*
- *Implementing a whole school approach to the teaching of PSHE and Citizenship and the implementation of the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning Programme (SEAL)*
- *Providing opportunities to celebrate effective anti-bullying work e.g. anti-bully week activities.*
- *Providing training on behaviour management and anti-bullying for all relevant staff including playground staff*
- *Providing a school council and regular circle time, enabling children to talk about their feelings and concerns in a safe environment and to enable them to share concerns about bullying*
- *Participating in the national annual anti-bullying week and supporting learning on bullying through whole school activities, projects and campaigns*

- *Reviewing the development and supervision of the school inside and outside including the outdoor areas and playground to ensure provision is safe, inclusive and supports children's emotional wellbeing.*
- *Providing confidential communication systems such as the Learning Mentor, Behaviour Mentor and Family Worker.*
- *Praise children for appropriate behaviour*
- *Reward system*
- *Assembly themes (linked to SEAL program where necessary)*
- *Providing social skills groups for vulnerable individuals and groups*
- *Providing cross-year group family days such as Passport Day, Sports Day*
- *Linking with other schools in a local school partnership and with local authority and national strategies*

Communicating with the whole school community.

The school will communicate to the whole school community that the bullying has been taken seriously and has been responded to well. This will include talking to parents/ carers.

Monitoring and following up with all parties concerned, including parents/carers to ensure that the bullying has stopped.

Part of the school's process of responding to an incident is to seek an agreement to meet at some point in the future to see whether the situation has been resolved or whether further work needs to take place. This will include evaluating the effectiveness of the follow up strategies that have been put in place to ensure that the bullying has stopped. The school does not assume that a situation requires no further attention simply because a child has made no further complaints. Where a problem has not been resolved to the satisfaction of all parties the follow up strategies will be reviewed and/or further advice sought.

Sanctions: Please refer to our Behaviour Policy

Working with Parents/Carers

Where the school has become aware of a bullying situation, parents/carers of the child who is being bullied and the child, who is allegedly bullying, may be invited to the school to discuss their children's behaviour. The school will endeavour to involve parents/carers constructively at an early stage to support the process of investigating allegations and positively working together to seek ways of resolving the situation and bringing about reconciliation. The outcome of the meeting and agreed actions/responses will be recorded by the school.

The school will work alongside those parents/carers whose children have been bullied to support them in developing their children's coping strategies and assertiveness skills. Parents/carers of those causing the bullying will also have support in coming to a balanced view of what is happening and appreciating their role in helping their children to learn about the consequences of their actions.

The school takes parents/carers reporting bullying seriously. Parents are initially encouraged to refer their concerns to the class teacher and more senior members of staff such as Phase Leader. The Assistant Head, Deputy Head or Headteacher will be involved where appropriate. Parents/carers are encouraged to note details of the incident to share with the class teacher/ member of staff. A record of the incident and the agreed actions/response made at the meeting will be recorded by the school and added to the school's bullying incidents report form. The school will then invest the time to further establish and record what happened by listening to the different perspectives of all those reportedly involved in the incident, including those of the person bullied, the person doing the bullying and those that have witnessed the

bullying ('bystanders'). The school ensures that staff and parents/carers remain fully aware of the measures that have been put into place to prevent the occurrence of further incidents. Follow up appointments are made with parent/carers to share these agreed measures and to monitor their success in preventing further bullying.

Links to other policies:

Behaviour & Discipline

E-Safety

Safeguarding and Child Protection