



Anti-Bullying Policy

Orange Tree School Main Site and Ridgeway Hospital Provision
Independent School Standards: paragraphs 10 and 34.



DOCUMENT DETAILS	
Applies to:	All pupils, employees, agency staff, volunteers, contractors, visitors, parents and carers across Orange Tree School Main Site and Ridgeway Hospital Provision.
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Anti-Bullying Policy Summary

Purpose

Orange Tree School is committed to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive environment where every pupil feels valued, protected and able to learn. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will always be taken seriously.

This policy explains how the school prevents, identifies, investigates and responds to bullying. It should be read alongside the Relationship and Behaviour Policy and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to:

- all pupils;
- all members of staff;
- volunteers;
- contractors and visitors;
- parents and carers; and
- where appropriate, partner agencies working with the school.

Our Principles

Orange Tree School believes that:

- every pupil has the right to feel safe, respected and included;
- bullying is never acceptable;
- positive relationships are central to our therapeutic ethos;
- concerns will always be taken seriously and investigated fairly;
- responses will be individual, proportionate and informed by pupils' developmental needs;
- bullying is recognised as one form of child-on-child abuse and safeguarding concerns will be managed in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; and
- both the pupil experiencing bullying and the pupil displaying bullying behaviour are entitled to appropriate support.

Our Approach

As a specialist therapeutic school, we recognise that many pupils have experienced trauma, adverse childhood experiences, social communication differences or difficulties with emotional regulation.

Staff therefore distinguish carefully between bullying, conflict, misunderstanding and behaviours arising from unmet need, whilst ensuring that no pupil is left feeling unsafe or unsupported.

Our approach combines:

- prevention;
- early intervention;
- restorative practice where appropriate;
- therapeutic support;
- education; and
- effective safeguarding.

Reporting Concerns

Pupils, parents, carers and staff are encouraged to report concerns as early as possible.

All concerns will be listened to, taken seriously and responded to promptly.

Review

This policy is reviewed annually or sooner where legislation, statutory guidance or School practice changes.

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1. Introduction

Orange Tree School is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful environment in which every pupil feels valued, protected and able to achieve their full potential. Positive relationships are central to the school's therapeutic ethos, and we believe that every pupil has the right to learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, intimidation and discrimination.

As a specialist therapeutic school, Orange Tree School recognises that many of our pupils have experienced trauma, adverse childhood experiences, social communication differences, emotional regulation difficulties or unmet educational needs. These experiences may affect how pupils communicate, interpret social situations and respond to others. Whilst these factors are carefully considered when responding to incidents, they do not diminish our commitment to ensuring that every pupil feels safe and supported.

The school adopts a restorative and therapeutic approach wherever appropriate, supporting pupils to understand the impact of their behaviour, repair relationships and develop positive social and emotional skills. However, where bullying is identified, it will always be taken seriously and responded to promptly, fairly and proportionately.

Bullying is recognised as one form of child-on-child abuse and may, in some circumstances, constitute a safeguarding concern. This policy should therefore be read alongside the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Relationship and Behaviour Policy.

Orange Tree School promotes kindness, empathy, acceptance and mutual respect through its curriculum, therapeutic provision, daily interactions and Orange Tree Values. Preventing bullying is everyone's responsibility, and all members of the School community are expected to contribute to a culture where pupils feel safe to speak up, seek help and support one another.

The school aims to create a culture in which bullying is prevented through positive relationships, early intervention, therapeutic support and the consistent promotion of the Orange Tree Values.

2. Legal and Regulatory Framework

Orange Tree School is committed to preventing and responding to bullying in accordance with current legislation, statutory guidance and the Independent School Standards. The school recognises that bullying can have a significant impact on a pupil's safety, wellbeing, mental health and educational outcomes and may, in some circumstances, constitute child-on-child abuse or another safeguarding concern.

This policy has been developed with regard to, and should be read alongside, relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including but not limited to:

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (Paragraphs 10 and 34);

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (current edition);
- Equality Act 2010;
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- DfE *Preventing and Tackling Bullying* guidance (current edition); and
- DfE *Searching, Screening and Confiscation* guidance, where relevant.

The school recognises that bullying may overlap with safeguarding concerns, discriminatory behaviour, online safety, child-on-child abuse and criminal offences. Where this occurs, the matter will be managed in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and other relevant procedures.

Orange Tree School is committed to promoting equality, preventing discrimination and fostering a culture of respect, inclusion and acceptance. All pupils are entitled to learn in an environment where they feel safe, valued and protected from bullying, harassment and victimisation.

3. Principles

Orange Tree School is committed to creating a culture where kindness, respect, inclusion and positive relationships are actively promoted. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will always be taken seriously.

The school recognises that preventing bullying is a shared responsibility and that every member of the school community has a role to play in creating a safe, supportive and respectful environment.

The following principles underpin this policy:

3.1 Every Pupil Has the Right to Feel Safe

Every pupil has the right to attend school without fear of bullying, intimidation, harassment or discrimination.

The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils feel safe, listened to and supported.

3.2 Bullying Will Always Be Taken Seriously

All reports of bullying will be listened to and considered carefully.

The school will investigate concerns fairly, proportionately and objectively, considering the available evidence and the views of all those involved before reaching conclusions.

3.3 A Therapeutic and Individualised Approach

As a specialist therapeutic school, Orange Tree recognises that pupils may have differing levels of social understanding, communication ability, emotional regulation and life experiences.

Staff will consider each pupil's individual needs, developmental stage and additional needs when responding to incidents. However, individual needs will not prevent the school from taking appropriate action where behaviour causes harm or places another pupil at risk.

3.4 Safeguarding Takes Priority

Bullying may constitute child-on-child abuse or another safeguarding concern.

Where there are concerns regarding a pupil's safety or wellbeing, safeguarding procedures will always take precedence, and concerns will be managed in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

3.5 Fairness and Professional Judgement

The school recognises that not all incidents of unkind behaviour constitute bullying.

Staff will distinguish carefully between:

- bullying;
- conflict;
- misunderstanding;
- behaviour arising from unmet need;
- social communication difficulties; and
- safeguarding concerns.

Professional judgement will always be exercised before determining the most appropriate response.

3.6 Supporting All Pupils

The school recognises that both the pupil experiencing bullying and the pupil displaying bullying behaviour may require support.

Responses will seek to:

- protect pupils from harm;
- promote accountability;
- repair relationships where appropriate;
- develop understanding and empathy; and
- reduce the likelihood of repeated incidents.

Supportive interventions, restorative work and appropriate protective measures may operate alongside one another where necessary.

4. Definition of Bullying

Orange Tree School adopts the Department for Education definition of bullying as:

"Behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally."

(DfE Preventing and Tackling Bullying – current edition)

Bullying is recognised by Orange Tree School as one form of child-on-child abuse. Bullying usually involves repeated harmful behaviour and an imbalance of power between those involved. Intention, context and impact will all be considered when determining whether bullying has occurred. However, a single incident may still constitute child-on-child abuse or another serious safeguarding concern and must not be dismissed simply because it has not been repeated.

Bullying can have a significant impact on a pupil's emotional wellbeing, mental health, confidence, relationships and ability to access education. All reports of bullying will therefore be taken seriously and responded to appropriately.

4.1 Characteristics of Bullying

Bullying commonly involves one or more of the following:

- repeated behaviour over time;
- an intention to cause physical or emotional harm;
- an imbalance of power between those involved; and
- behaviour that causes distress, fear, humiliation or exclusion.

An imbalance of power may arise through:

- physical strength or size;
- age or maturity;
- popularity or social influence;
- communication ability;
- disability or additional needs;
- access to technology or social media;
- possession of personal information or images; or
- any other factor that makes it difficult for a pupil to protect themselves.

4.2 Forms of Bullying

Bullying may include, but is not limited to:

- Physical bullying – hitting, kicking, pushing, damaging belongings or intimidating behaviour.
- Verbal bullying – name-calling, insults, threats, teasing or humiliation.
- Social or relational bullying – excluding others, spreading rumours, manipulating friendships or encouraging others to reject a pupil.
- Online (cyber) bullying – abusive messages, social media posts, sharing images without consent, online intimidation or harassment.

- Prejudice-based bullying – bullying related to race, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or any other actual or perceived difference.
- Sexualised bullying or harassment – unwanted sexual comments, gestures, online behaviour or conduct of a sexual nature.

4.3 Distinguishing Bullying from Behaviour Associated with SEND

As a specialist therapeutic school, Orange Tree recognises that many pupils have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), including autism, social communication differences, speech and language needs, ADHD, developmental trauma and difficulties with emotional regulation.

The school recognises that these needs may affect how pupils understand social situations, communicate with others and interpret the actions or intentions of their peers.

Some pupils may:

- misunderstand social rules or boundaries;
- communicate in ways that appear blunt, inappropriate or insensitive;
- struggle to recognise the impact of their words or actions on others;
- imitate language or behaviours without understanding their meaning;
- find it difficult to interpret social cues or the intentions of others;
- experience emotional dysregulation that affects their behaviour; or
- engage in behaviours arising from anxiety, distress or unmet need rather than an intention to cause harm.

Staff will carefully consider these factors when determining whether behaviour constitutes bullying, conflict, a misunderstanding, behaviour associated with SEND, or another safeguarding concern.

Understanding the reasons for a pupil's behaviour does not mean that harmful behaviour is accepted or minimised. The impact on the pupil experiencing the behaviour will always be considered, and the school will take appropriate action to safeguard pupils, promote positive relationships and support learning.

Professional judgement will be applied in every case, recognising that pupils may require both support and accountability in order to develop safe, respectful and positive relationships.

Orange Tree School recognises that, in a specialist therapeutic setting, behaviours arising from a pupil's SEND, communication profile, developmental stage or emotional regulation needs may sometimes be experienced by others as upsetting, unkind or distressing. Whilst these behaviours will always be addressed and appropriate support provided, they will not automatically be classified as bullying. Staff will exercise professional judgement, considering the intention, context, pattern of behaviour, impact on others and the individual needs of all pupils before determining the most appropriate response.

Parents and carers can expect the school to investigate all reported concerns thoroughly and objectively. The school will explain the outcome of its investigation and the actions being

taken, although these actions may not always involve a finding that bullying has occurred. Where behaviour is determined to be associated primarily with a pupil's identified SEND or therapeutic needs, the school will implement appropriate support and intervention whilst continuing to safeguard and support the pupil affected by the behaviour.

The school recognises that pupils with SEND are entitled to the same protection from bullying as their peers. Equally, a diagnosis of SEND does not prevent a pupil from displaying bullying behaviour. Each concern will therefore be considered individually using professional judgement and the evidence available.

4.4 Child-on-Child Abuse

Bullying is one form of child-on-child abuse. Some incidents may meet safeguarding thresholds because of their seriousness, nature or impact rather than their frequency.

Where an incident involves:

- significant physical harm;
- sexual behaviour;
- coercion or controlling behaviour;
- discriminatory abuse;
- exploitation;
- threats of serious violence; or
- any concern regarding a pupil's safety or welfare,

staff must report the concern immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Child-on-child abuse will never be dismissed as banter, having a laugh, part of growing up or an inevitable consequence of a pupil's SEND. Individual needs will inform the School's response, but they will not be used to minimise harmful or abusive behaviour.

5. Preventing Bullying

Orange Tree School believes that the most effective way to address bullying is to create a positive school culture in which respectful relationships, inclusion and emotional wellbeing are actively promoted. Preventing bullying is a whole-school responsibility and is embedded within the school's therapeutic approach, curriculum and daily practice.

The school adopts a proactive approach to preventing bullying by promoting positive relationships, identifying concerns at an early stage and providing pupils with the skills and support needed to develop healthy, respectful interactions.

5.1 Creating a Positive School Culture

Orange Tree School promotes a culture where pupils feel safe, valued and respected through:

- positive relationships between staff and pupils;
- high levels of supervision throughout the school day;
- consistent therapeutic and pastoral support;
- the promotion of the Orange Tree Values;
- clear expectations through the Relationship and Behaviour Policy;
- restorative practice where appropriate;
- celebrating diversity, inclusion and mutual respect; and
- maintaining a calm, structured and supportive learning environment.

Staff are expected to model the Orange Tree Values in all interactions with pupils, colleagues and families. Through calm, respectful communication, co-regulation and restorative practice, staff demonstrate the behaviours and relationships they seek to develop in pupils.

The Orange Tree Values underpin the school's approach to preventing bullying and promoting positive relationships. Through the curriculum, assemblies, PSHE, Social Skills, therapeutic interventions and everyday interactions, pupils are supported to develop kindness, respect, empathy, acceptance, teamwork, good listening, engagement and responsible citizenship. These values provide the foundation for how pupils are expected to treat one another and contribute to a safe and inclusive school community.

5.2 Curriculum and Therapeutic Support

Bullying prevention is embedded throughout the curriculum and wider therapeutic provision.

Pupils are supported to develop:

- emotional literacy;
- empathy;
- resilience;
- communication skills;
- conflict resolution;
- healthy relationships;
- online safety awareness; and
- an understanding of diversity and protected characteristics.

This learning is delivered through PSHE, Relationships Education, therapeutic interventions, assemblies, Social Skills lessons, Anti-Bullying Week and individual support programmes where appropriate.

Pupils are introduced to the Orange Tree Code of Conduct during induction, and it is reinforced throughout school life. The Code of Conduct provides clear expectations for respectful behaviour and positive relationships and supports pupils in understanding their responsibilities towards others.

All pupils receive an appropriate induction, including the School's expectations regarding respectful relationships, bullying, the Orange Tree Values, the Code of Conduct and how to seek help if they are worried about themselves or another pupil.

5.3 Early Identification

Staff are expected to remain professionally curious and vigilant for signs that a pupil may be experiencing, or displaying, bullying behaviour.

Possible indicators may include:

- changes in behaviour or presentation;
- increased anxiety or emotional distress;
- reluctance to attend school;
- friendship difficulties or social withdrawal;
- unexplained injuries or damaged belongings;
- changes in engagement or academic performance; or
- concerns raised by pupils, families or professionals.

Early identification enables concerns to be addressed before behaviours become established or risks increase.

The school maintains an attitude that child-on-child abuse and bullying could happen here. The absence of reports will not be taken as evidence that harmful behaviour is not occurring, and staff will remain alert to pupils who may find it difficult to disclose concerns.

5.4 Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers

Orange Tree School recognises that effective partnerships with parents and carers play an important role in preventing bullying.

Parents and carers are encouraged to:

- talk regularly with their child about friendships and wellbeing;
- monitor the use of social media, gaming and online communication outside school;
- report concerns promptly;
- work collaboratively with the school to resolve concerns; and
- avoid approaching other pupils or families directly regarding alleged bullying incidents.

The school will work openly and sensitively with families to promote positive outcomes whilst respecting confidentiality for all pupils involved.

5.5 Staff Training

All staff receive appropriate safeguarding and behaviour training, including recognising, preventing and responding to bullying.

Training may include:

- child-on-child abuse;
- discriminatory bullying;

- online bullying;
- trauma-informed practice;
- autism and communication differences;
- restorative approaches; and
- relevant safeguarding updates.

The school reviews training regularly to ensure staff remain confident in identifying, responding to and preventing bullying.

6. Reporting Concerns

Orange Tree School encourages pupils, parents, carers and staff to report concerns about bullying as early as possible. Early reporting enables the school to provide timely support, reduce the risk of escalation and ensure that pupils feel safe and listened to.

All reports of bullying or suspected bullying will be taken seriously, considered sensitively and responded to in accordance with this policy.

6.1 Reporting by Pupils

Pupils are encouraged to report bullying, or any behaviour that makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable, to any trusted member of staff.

The school recognises that some pupils may find it difficult to communicate concerns because of anxiety, communication differences, previous experiences or additional needs. Staff will therefore provide appropriate support and adapt communication methods where required to enable pupils to share their concerns.

Pupils will never be criticised or blamed for reporting bullying in good faith.

6.2 Reporting by Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are encouraged to contact the school promptly if they believe their child may be experiencing bullying or displaying bullying behaviour.

Concerns should be reported directly to the school rather than discussed with other families or shared through social media or messaging platforms.

The school will work in partnership with parents and carers whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality for all pupils involved.

6.3 Reporting by Staff

All members of staff have a responsibility to act upon concerns relating to bullying.

Where staff witness, receive or suspect bullying, they must:

- listen carefully to those involved;
- reassure pupils that concerns will be taken seriously;
- make an accurate factual record;
- report concerns promptly in accordance with School procedures; and
- avoid making assumptions or reaching conclusions before the matter has been considered.

Where a concern may amount to child-on-child abuse or another safeguarding matter, staff must report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Staff must not undertake their own safeguarding investigation. Where there is uncertainty about whether an incident constitutes bullying, child-on-child abuse or another safeguarding concern, staff must seek advice from the DSL or Deputy DSL.

6.4 Immediate Response

Where a pupil appears to be at immediate risk of harm, staff will take appropriate action to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils involved.

This may include:

- separating pupils where appropriate;
- providing immediate emotional support;
- seeking assistance from senior staff;
- informing the DSL where safeguarding concerns are identified; and
- taking any other reasonable steps necessary to reduce immediate risk.

Immediate action does not replace the need for a full investigation and appropriate follow-up.

6.5 Confidentiality

The school will handle reports sensitively and share information only with those who need to know in order to safeguard pupils and investigate concerns appropriately.

Whilst the School will always seek to work openly with families, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where doing so would place a pupil at risk or prevent the school from fulfilling its safeguarding responsibilities.

7. Investigation, Evidence and Recording

All reports of bullying will be investigated promptly, fairly and proportionately. The School will consider the individual circumstances of each case, apply professional judgement and ensure that all pupils involved are treated with dignity and respect throughout the process.

The purpose of an investigation is to establish the facts, understand the context of the incident and determine the most appropriate response to safeguard pupils and promote positive relationships.

7.1 Initial Assessment

Following a report of bullying, an appropriate member of staff will undertake an initial assessment of the information available.

This will consider whether the concern is likely to involve:

- bullying;
- conflict or misunderstanding;
- behaviour arising from unmet need;
- child-on-child abuse;
- discrimination or prejudice-based behaviour;
- another safeguarding concern; or
- a combination of the above.

Where safeguarding concerns are identified, the matter will be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

7.2 Investigation

The school will investigate concerns in a manner that is fair, objective and proportionate.

The investigation may include:

- speaking with the pupils involved;
- obtaining accounts from witnesses where appropriate;
- reviewing written records or previous concerns;
- considering information from parents, carers or professionals;
- reviewing available CCTV or electronic evidence where appropriate and lawful; and
- considering the wider context, including any previous incidents or identified vulnerabilities.

The school will ensure that pupils are given the opportunity to explain their perspective and that reasonable adjustments are made where communication or additional needs require this.

7.3 Evidence and Professional Judgement

In a specialist therapeutic setting, professional judgement is particularly important when distinguishing bullying from behaviours arising from SEND, communication differences, developmental delay or emotional regulation needs. The school will consider both the intent behind the behaviour and its impact on others before determining the most appropriate response.

Decisions will be based upon the balance of available evidence rather than assumptions or speculation.

When reaching conclusions, the school will consider:

- the consistency of available information;
- the context in which the incident occurred;
- the views of those involved;
- the frequency and pattern of behaviour;
- the intention and impact of the behaviour;
- any imbalance of power;
- the developmental stage and additional needs of the pupils involved;
- whether safeguarding concerns are present; and
- whether the behaviour is better explained by a pupil's identified SEND, communication profile or emotional regulation needs, whilst recognising that this does not remove the need to address behaviour that causes harm to others

Where evidence is inconclusive, this will be recorded honestly. The absence of sufficient evidence to substantiate bullying does not prevent the school from providing support or monitoring the situation where concerns remain.

7.4 Recording

All bullying concerns and investigations will be recorded appropriately on the school's management information and safeguarding systems, where applicable.

Records may include:

- the nature of the concern;
- those involved;
- actions taken;
- outcomes of the investigation;
- support provided;
- communication with parents or carers; and
- arrangements for monitoring and review.

Accurate record keeping enables the school to identify patterns, monitor effectiveness and inform future preventative work.

7.5 Communication with Parents and Carers

Where appropriate, parents and carers will be informed that a concern has been investigated and advised of the outcome, whilst maintaining confidentiality for other pupils.

The school will explain the actions taken to safeguard pupils and promote positive relationships. The school will not disclose confidential information about another pupil, including their needs, support, interventions, risk management arrangements or any action taken in relation to them.

8. Responses, Support and Intervention

Orange Tree School responds to bullying in a manner that prioritises safety, emotional regulation, relationship repair and learning. Responses are informed by the School's Relationship & Regulation Policy and are tailored to the individual needs of the pupils involved.

The school recognises that meaningful reflection and learning can only take place when pupils are emotionally regulated. Staff will therefore prioritise safety and co-regulation before restorative conversations or reflective work take place.

Whilst bullying is always taken seriously, responses are designed to promote understanding, accountability, positive relationships and long-term behavioural change rather than punishment.

8.1 Supporting the Pupil Experiencing Bullying

The wellbeing and safety of the pupil experiencing bullying will always be the school's first priority.

Support may include:

- immediate emotional support;
- access to a trusted adult;
- therapeutic or pastoral intervention;
- increased supervision where appropriate;
- agreed safety planning;
- support to rebuild confidence and relationships;
- regular welfare check-ins; and
- ongoing monitoring to ensure concerns have been resolved.

No pupil will ever be made to feel responsible for bullying they have experienced.

8.2 Supporting the Pupil Displaying Bullying Behaviour

Where bullying has been identified, the school will work collaboratively with the pupil to understand the impact of their behaviour, repair relationships and develop the knowledge, skills and strategies needed to make safer and more respectful choices.

In line with the School's Relationship & Regulation Policy, responses focus upon regulation, relationships, reflection and learning rather than punishment.

Support may include:

- restorative conversations;
- guided reflection;
- emotional regulation support;

- therapeutic intervention;
- mentoring;
- social skills development;
- PSHE learning;
- individual behaviour support planning;
- increased adult support where appropriate; and
- collaborative work with parents, carers and external professionals.

The school recognises that pupils displaying bullying behaviour may themselves have experienced trauma, emotional distress or unmet educational or therapeutic needs. These factors will be considered when planning support but will not diminish the school's responsibility to safeguard other pupils and maintain a safe learning environment.

Where the behaviour indicates that the pupil displaying it may themselves be at risk, the concern will also be considered through the school's safeguarding procedures.

8.3 Restorative Practice

Restorative practice is central to Orange Tree School's approach to responding to bullying.

Once pupils are emotionally regulated, staff support them to reflect upon the incident, understand the impact of their behaviour, repair relationships where appropriate and identify strategies that will help prevent future incidents.

Restorative work may include:

- restorative conversations;
- guided reflection;
- supported relationship repair;
- therapeutic activities;
- apologies where meaningful and appropriate;
- repairing damage where appropriate; and
- agreed actions to rebuild trust.

Participation in restorative work will always be carefully planned, developmentally appropriate and facilitated by staff. Restorative approaches will never be used where they may cause further distress or place a pupil at increased risk.

8.4 Additional Protective Measures

Where bullying presents an ongoing risk to the safety or wellbeing of pupils, Orange Tree School will implement additional protective measures proportionate to the individual circumstances.

These may include:

- enhanced supervision;
- therapeutic support;

- individual risk assessments;
- amended timetables or routines where appropriate;
- increased staff support;
- involvement of parents or carers;
- involvement of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL);
- multi-agency working where appropriate; and
- any other reasonable measures necessary to safeguard pupils.

In exceptional circumstances, where there remains a significant risk to pupils or staff, the school may take further protective action in accordance with the Relationship & Regulation Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and relevant statutory guidance.

The school's priority is always to protect pupils whilst maintaining dignity, promoting learning and supporting positive relationships.

8.5 Monitoring and Review

Following any substantiated bullying incident, the school will continue to monitor the situation to ensure that:

- bullying has ceased;
- pupils feel safe;
- relationships are improving where appropriate;
- agreed support remains effective; and
- further intervention is provided if concerns continue.

The school recognises that repairing relationships and changing behaviour is often an ongoing process and will continue to work collaboratively with pupils, families and professionals to achieve positive and lasting outcomes.

9. Online bullying (cyberbullying) and Off-Site Incidents

Orange Tree School recognises that most incidents of online bullying affecting our pupils occur outside the school day, through social media, messaging services, online gaming and other digital platforms.

Although pupils do not have access to mobile phones during the school day in accordance with the school's expectations, online behaviour outside school can have a significant impact upon pupils' safety, wellbeing, relationships and ability to engage in learning.

Where online or off-site behaviour affects pupils within the school community, the school will respond appropriately in accordance with this policy, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the Online Safety Policy.

9.1 Online Bullying (Cyberbullying)

Online bullying may include:

- abusive, threatening or intimidating messages;
- repeated online harassment;
- spreading rumours or false information;
- deliberately excluding others from online groups;
- sharing photographs, videos or personal information without consent;
- impersonating another person online;
- encouraging or inciting others to target another pupil;
- discriminatory, racist, antisemitic, homophobic, sexist, transphobic or other hate-related content; and
- creating or sharing harmful, manipulated or AI-generated images or videos intended to humiliate, threaten or distress another person.

9.2 Responding to Online and Off-Site Incidents

The school recognises that pupils may disclose incidents that have taken place entirely outside school. Whilst the School cannot investigate every aspect of behaviour occurring beyond its jurisdiction, it will take appropriate action where the behaviour impacts upon the safety, wellbeing or education of pupils or members of the school community.

Where online incidents are reported, the school will consider:

- whether the behaviour constitutes bullying or child-on-child abuse;
- whether there are safeguarding concerns;
- whether criminal offences or hate incidents may have occurred;
- the impact upon the pupil experiencing the behaviour;
- whether relationships within school have been affected; and
- what support and protective measures are required.

Where appropriate, the school may work with parents and carers, Children's Services, the Police or other agencies to safeguard pupils and prevent further harm.

The school recognises that online conflict or abuse may escalate immediately before or after the school day and will consider any resulting impact upon pupils' safety, travel, attendance, relationships and engagement in education.

9.3 Education and Prevention

Online safety education forms part of the school's wider curriculum and therapeutic approach.

Pupils are supported to develop:

- safe and respectful online behaviour;
- an understanding of digital citizenship;

- awareness of online risks;
- confidence to report concerns;
- critical thinking when using technology; and
- strategies for maintaining positive online relationships.

This work is delivered through the curriculum, therapeutic interventions and everyday opportunities to promote safe and respectful behaviour.

9.4 Working with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers play an important role in promoting safe online behaviour.

The school encourages families to:

- maintain open conversations about online activity;
- support age-appropriate use of technology;
- monitor online behaviour where appropriate;
- report concerns promptly; and
- work collaboratively with the school to resolve concerns affecting pupils.

10. Prejudice-Based and Discriminatory Bullying

Orange Tree School is committed to creating an inclusive community in which every pupil is treated with dignity, respect and fairness. Bullying, harassment or victimisation based on actual or perceived difference is unacceptable and will always be taken seriously.

Prejudice-based bullying may relate to, but is not limited to:

- race, ethnicity or nationality;
- religion or belief;
- disability or additional needs;
- sex;
- sexual orientation;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy or maternity (where relevant);
- family circumstances; or
- any other actual or perceived difference.

The school also recognises that prejudice-based bullying may occur through association with another person who shares a protected characteristic.

10.1 Responding to Discriminatory Behaviour

All reports of discriminatory language, conduct or bullying will be investigated promptly and responded to in a manner that safeguards pupils whilst promoting understanding, accountability and respectful relationships.

The school recognises that, within a specialist therapeutic setting, some pupils may repeat discriminatory language or engage in inappropriate behaviour without fully understanding its meaning, impact or wider context. Staff will therefore seek to understand the pupil's level of awareness, intent, communication profile and developmental stage before determining the most appropriate response.

However, a lack of understanding will not diminish the seriousness of discriminatory behaviour or the impact upon the person experiencing it. Such behaviour will always be addressed, and appropriate support, education and restorative work will be provided.

The school will explain the outcome of its investigation to parents or carers and the actions being taken. However, the response may focus upon education, therapeutic intervention and restorative practice where this is considered the most appropriate way to safeguard pupils and reduce the likelihood of repeated behaviour.

10.2 Education and Restorative Practice

Where appropriate, responses may include:

- restorative conversations;
- guided reflection;
- therapeutic intervention;
- education regarding diversity, equality and inclusion;
- support to develop empathy and understanding;
- PSHE or curriculum-based learning; and
- collaborative work with parents, carers and external professionals where appropriate.

The aim is to help pupils understand why discriminatory language or behaviour is harmful, develop respectful attitudes and reduce the likelihood of repeated incidents.

10.3 Recording and Safeguarding

All incidents of prejudice-based bullying or discriminatory behaviour will be recorded in accordance with the school's recording procedures.

Where discriminatory behaviour also constitutes child-on-child abuse, a hate incident or another safeguarding concern, the matter will be managed in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) involved where appropriate.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

Preventing and responding to bullying is a shared responsibility. Every member of the Orange Tree School community has a role in promoting a safe, respectful and inclusive environment where pupils feel valued and protected.

11.1 The Proprietor and Advisory Board

The Proprietor and Advisory Board are responsible for ensuring that:

- the school has effective arrangements for preventing and responding to bullying;
- this policy is reviewed regularly and implemented consistently;
- bullying concerns are monitored as part of the school's safeguarding and wellbeing arrangements; and
- the school complies with its statutory responsibilities and the Independent School Standards.

11.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- ensuring this policy is implemented effectively;
- promoting a whole-school culture that does not tolerate bullying;
- ensuring staff receive appropriate training;
- overseeing the investigation and management of serious or complex incidents where appropriate;
- monitoring patterns and trends; and
- ensuring that bullying is addressed in a manner consistent with the School's therapeutic ethos and safeguarding responsibilities.

11.3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is responsible for:

- providing advice where bullying may constitute child-on-child abuse or another safeguarding concern;
- ensuring safeguarding procedures are followed where required;
- supporting risk assessment and safety planning;
- liaising with external agencies where appropriate; and
- maintaining oversight of safeguarding records relating to bullying.

11.4 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- modelling respectful relationships;
- promoting an inclusive school culture;
- remaining professionally curious;
- responding promptly to concerns;
- recording and reporting concerns appropriately;
- supporting pupils through regulation, restorative practice and reflection;
- working collaboratively with families and professionals where appropriate; and
- maintaining appropriate professional judgement when distinguishing bullying from conflict, behaviours associated with SEND or other safeguarding concerns.

11.5 Pupils

Pupils are encouraged to:

- treat others with kindness and respect;
- contribute to a safe and inclusive school community;
- report concerns to a trusted adult;
- participate in restorative work where appropriate; and
- support one another in maintaining positive relationships.

11.6 Parents and Carers

Parents and carers play an important role in supporting the School's approach to preventing bullying.

They are encouraged to:

- report concerns promptly;
- work collaboratively with the school;
- support agreed strategies and interventions;
- encourage respectful behaviour and positive relationships; and
- avoid discussing allegations with other families or through social media.

The school recognises that parents and carers naturally wish to advocate for their children. All reported concerns will be investigated carefully, and the school will explain the outcome of its investigation and the actions being taken. However, responses will always be informed by professional judgement, the evidence available and the individual needs of the pupils involved.

11.7 Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers

Orange Tree School values open and constructive partnerships with parents and carers. The school recognises that parents naturally wish to advocate for and protect their children and that they may experience incidents from the perspective of their own child.

The school will investigate all reported concerns thoroughly, objectively and fairly, considering the views of all pupils involved, the available evidence and the professional judgement of staff.

In a specialist therapeutic setting, the school recognises that behaviours associated with a pupil's SEND, communication profile or emotional regulation needs may sometimes contribute to incidents between pupils. Equally, the presence of SEND does not prevent a pupil from displaying behaviours that may constitute bullying or cause significant harm to others.

Parents and carers should therefore expect the school to consider both the individual needs of the pupil and the impact of the behaviour on others. The school's response will be based upon the evidence available, safeguarding responsibilities and the individual circumstances of the case, rather than assumptions or solely the views of those involved.

Where behaviour is found to be associated with SEND or therapeutic need, the School will implement appropriate support and intervention. Where behaviour is identified as bullying, the school will respond in accordance with this policy and the Relationship & Regulation Policy.

12. Monitoring, Recording and Review

Orange Tree School is committed to monitoring bullying concerns to ensure that pupils remain safe, supported and able to engage positively in school life. Monitoring enables the school to identify patterns, evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and continuously improve practice.

12.1 Recording

All bullying concerns, investigations and outcomes will be recorded in accordance with the school's recording procedures.

Records may include:

- the nature of the concern;
- pupils involved;
- actions taken;
- support and interventions provided;
- communication with parents or carers;
- safeguarding actions where applicable; and
- arrangements for monitoring and follow-up.

Where appropriate, incidents will also be recorded on the School's safeguarding and behaviour recording systems.

12.2 Monitoring

The Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and other appropriate senior leaders will monitor bullying concerns to:

- identify patterns or emerging themes;
- monitor the effectiveness of interventions;
- identify pupils requiring additional support;
- review trends relating to protected characteristics;
- evaluate the effectiveness of preventative strategies; and
- inform staff training and school improvement.

The school recognises that effective monitoring contributes to safeguarding, pupil wellbeing and the continuous development of a safe and inclusive school culture.

12.3 Review of Practice

Following significant or repeated incidents, the school may review:

- individual support plans;
- risk assessments;
- therapeutic interventions;
- environmental or organisational factors;
- curriculum provision; and
- wider preventative strategies.

The school is committed to learning from incidents and continually improving practice.

12.4 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where there are significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance or the needs of the school.

13. Complaints

Orange Tree School is committed to responding to concerns about bullying fairly, transparently and in accordance with this policy.

Parents and carers who are concerned about bullying are encouraged to raise concerns with the school as soon as possible so that they can be investigated promptly and appropriate support can be provided.

Where a parent or carer remains dissatisfied following the school's response, concerns will be managed in accordance with the School's Complaints Policy.

The school will explain the outcome of its investigation and the actions being taken, whilst maintaining confidentiality for all pupils involved. Information relating to another pupil's personal information, support arrangements or interventions will not be disclosed.

The school recognises that, within a specialist therapeutic setting, responses may include therapeutic intervention, restorative practice, education, risk management or safeguarding measures rather than punitive approaches. These responses are intended to safeguard pupils, repair relationships and reduce the likelihood of repeated incidents.

14. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside the following School policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Relationship & Regulation Policy
- Online Safety Policy

- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Equality Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force and Physical Intervention Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Data Protection Policy