



SHIRE OAK ACADEMY
TURNING POTENTIAL INTO EXCELLENCE

Anti-Bullying Policy

#BeIncredible

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Section	Contents	Page
1	Introduction	3
2	Aims	3
3	Statutory duties of schools	4
4	What is bullying?	4
5	Child on Child Abuse	6
6	Prevention	7
7	Reporting	7
8	Recording	8
9	Roles and responsibilities	8
10	Bullying Escalation	9
11	Monitoring and Quality Assurance	9
12	Support	9
13	Antibullying Ambassadors	10
14	Helpful Organisations and Support	11
15	Appendix 1 – Signs of bullying	13
16	Appendix 2 - Flow charts of bullying process	14
17	Appendix 3 – Internal investigation form	16
18	Appendix 4 – Stages of bullying letters	17

1.0 Introduction

Shire Oak Academy is committed to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive environment where all students can learn free from fear. Bullying of any kind is not tolerated. It undermines our values, damages wellbeing and disrupts learning.

We take a proactive and systematic approach: bullying is prevented through a strong culture, identified through clear reporting systems and addressed swiftly, consistently and effectively.

Bullying may also constitute a safeguarding concern. Where behaviour causes harm or presents a risk to a student's safety or wellbeing, it will be managed in line with the school's safeguarding procedures, including referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and, where appropriate, external agencies.

All members of the academy community, students, staff and visitors have a responsibility to uphold high standards of behaviour, challenge inappropriate conduct and contribute to a culture where everyone feels safe, valued and respected.

2.0 Aims

At Shire Oak Academy, our approach to bullying is underpinned by clear expectations, strong systems and a culture of safeguarding. Our aims are to:

Establish a strong, inclusive culture.

- Ensure a safe, calm and respectful environment where bullying, harassment and discrimination are not tolerated.
- Promote positive relationships, belonging and mutual respect across the academy community.

Provide clarity and shared understanding.

- Ensure all members of the academy community understand what constitutes bullying, including the distinction between bullying and relational conflict.
- Make clear how concerns can be reported and the importance of acting on them.

Implement robust systems and processes.

- Provide clear, accessible routes for reporting concerns.
- Ensure all incidents are recorded, tracked and acted upon promptly in line with safeguarding expectations.
- Apply a consistent, staged response that is proportionate and effective.

Deliver effective support and intervention.

- Provide timely and appropriate support for students who experience bullying to ensure their safety and wellbeing.
- Address the behaviour of students who display bullying through targeted intervention and support to secure sustained change.
- Prioritise vulnerable students, including those with SEND and protected characteristics.

Ensure accountability and continuous improvement.

- Monitor and analyse data to identify patterns, trends and areas for action.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and adapt practice accordingly.
- Work in partnership with parents, carer, students and external agencies to prevent bullying and promote positive outcomes.

3.0 Statutory duties of schools

This policy is in accordance with:

1. Preventing and Tackling Bullying, Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies (DfE July 2017)
2. The Education and Inspections Act 2006
3. The Equality Act 2010
4. The Children Act 1989

4.0 What is bullying?

At Shire Oak Academy we define bullying as;

Repeated negative behaviour that is intended to make others feel upset, uncomfortable or unsafe.

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group over a period of time that intentionally hurts another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. Bullying can be:

Type of Bullying	Definition
Verbal	Persistent Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
Emotional	Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting.
Physical	Hitting, kicking, pushing, taking another's belongings, any use of violence
Prejudice based and discriminatory including • Racial	Taunts, gestures, graffiti, low level mocking or physical abuse focussed on a particular characteristic (e.g. gender, race, sexuality)

• Faith-based • Gendered • Homophobic/biphobic • Transphobic Disability based	
Sexual	Explicit sexual remarks, display of sexual material, sexual gestures, unwanted physical attention, comments about sexual reputation or performance, sharing of nude or semi-nude images and/or videos (including pseudo-images, which are computer generated images that otherwise appear to be a photograph or video) or inappropriate touching.
Direct or indirect verbal Cyber-bullying	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing. Bullying that takes place online, such as through social networking sites, messaging apps, gaming sites, devices or via images, audio, video, or written content generated by artificial intelligence (AI).

Power imbalance: An incident in which a student feels hurt, humiliated or unsafe will be considered bullying where there is a clear imbalance of power between those involved. This imbalance may be created by:

- Differences in age, size, strength or status
- Being part of a group versus an individual
- A student's vulnerability, including aspects of their personality, confidence or personal circumstances.

Repetition and persistence: Bullying is typically repeated over time. It involves a deliberate and ongoing intention to harm, intimidate or cause distress. This includes repeated behaviours intended to upset, humiliate or intimidate another person.

Relational Conflict v Bullying: Relational conflict involves occasional disagreements between students of equal power, whereas bullying is defined by repeated, intentional harm and an imbalance of power. The table below clarifies the distinction.

Relational Conflict	Bullying
Equal power	Imbalance of power
Occasional	Repeated over time
Can be accidental	Deliberate
Remorse is shown	Little or no remorse

Relational Conflict	Bullying
Both parties seek resolution	No attempt to resolve

Bullying is not:

- A one-off comment made in anger where there is no power imbalance.
- A disagreement or argument between students of equal power
- A one-off physical incident where both parties are willing participants.

Such incidents will be addressed in line with the academy's Behaviour Policy.

Some behaviours may meet the threshold of child-on-child abuse and will be addressed as a safeguarding concern in line with the academy's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

5.0 Child-on-Child Abuse

Shire Oak Academy recognises that some behaviours between students may constitute child-on-child abuse and must be treated as a safeguarding concern rather than solely as bullying or behaviour. Child-on-child abuse is any form of abuse that occurs between children. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Physical abuse (e.g. hitting, kicking, shaking)
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment (including harmful sexualised behaviour)
- Abuse within intimate relationships.
- Serious bullying (including cyberbullying) where it results in significant harm.
- Prejudice-based and discriminatory abuse.
- Initiation or hazing-type behaviours

We recognise that these behaviours can take place both in person and online, and that all students are capable of abusing others.

Where an incident meets the threshold of abuse or risk of harm, the academy will:

- Treat the incident as a safeguarding concern.
- Record the concern immediately on MyConcern.
- Refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay.
- Act in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Work with external agencies, including children's social care and the police, where appropriate

A zero-tolerance approach is taken to sexual violence and sexual harassment. Such behaviour will never be dismissed as "banter", "part of growing up" or "just having a laugh".

All students involved will be taken seriously, supported and kept safe. A risk assessment will be undertaken where appropriate, and action will prioritise the safety and wellbeing of those affected.

6.0 Prevention

Bullying is not tolerated at Shire Oak Academy; it is prevented through culture, challenged through consistency and addressed without delay. We take a proactive, whole-school approach to prevention. We establish high expectations, strong relationships and clear systems to create a safe and inclusive environment for all.

We prevent bullying through:

- **Clear reporting systems** – well-promoted, accessible routes for students, staff and parents, including online reporting (e.g. Academy website “Tell Me “Function”), with regular reminders to encourage early reporting.
- **Consistent safeguarding practice** – all concerns are recorded, tracked and acted upon promptly to ensure effective oversight and intervention.
- **Curriculum and campaigns** – planned delivery through PSHE, assemblies, bullying ambassador form visits and whole-Academy events, including Anti-Bullying Week, to develop understanding of bullying, its impact and how to seek support.
- **Student leadership** – trained anti-bullying ambassadors (Diana Award) who promote inclusion, lead campaigns and support peers to stay safe both online and offline.
- **Staff training** – professional development for all staff to identify, challenge and respond to all forms of bullying consistently.
- **Visible staff and strong routines** – high staff presence and effective supervision at social times to prevent issues and address behaviour early.
- **High expectations and challenge** – consistent challenge of inappropriate behaviour and language, including ‘banter’, which does not align with Academy values.
- **Parental and community engagement** – working in partnership with parents, carers and external agencies, including the police where appropriate.
- **Review and improvement** – regular review of practice and data to identify trends, strengthen provision and ensure continuous improvement.
- **Inclusive culture and targeted support** – promoting respect, tolerance and positive relationships, recognising that bullying can affect any member of the community, and ensuring early identification and additional pastoral support for vulnerable students, including those with SEND and other identified needs.

7.0 Reporting

Students, staff and parents can report bullying through clear and accessible routes:

- **Direct report to a member of staff** – including form tutor, pastoral team, teaching staff or senior leaders.

- **Online reporting systems** – including school platforms (e.g. “Tell Me “On the academy website
- **Email or academy communication systems.**
- **Student leadership routes** – Anti-Bullying Ambassadors

All students are regularly reminded how to report concerns and are encouraged to do so. Students will be listened to, believed and taken seriously. Their views will inform the academy’s response, and they will be kept informed throughout. Where a concern meets safeguarding thresholds, it will be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and managed in line with the academy’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

8.0 Recording

All bullying incidents are recorded on the academy’s safeguarding system (MyConcern) and monitored regularly by DSL, pastoral leaders and senior staff.

Records will include:

- The names of the students involved (victim and perpetrator)
- Form/group information.
- Vulnerability indicators (including looked after status and protected characteristics)
- A summary of the incident
- The member of staff managing the case.
- Actions taken and outcomes.

9.0 Roles and Responsibilities

- **Staff** – All staff will take immediate action. This includes listening, reassuring, recording concerns on safeguarding systems and informing the pastoral team.
- **Pastoral Team** – Lead on investigation, intervention and ongoing monitoring. Ensure all incidents are followed up, recorded and resolved effectively.
- **Senior Leaders** – Provide strategic oversight, ensure consistency and monitor patterns, trends and the effectiveness of the academy’s response.
- **Students** – Expected to report concerns, support others and not be bystanders.
- **Parents/Carers** – Expected to report concerns promptly and work in partnership with the academy.

10.0 Bullying Escalation

Where bullying is persistent or serious, a staged approach is applied in line with the Behaviour Policy:

Stage 1 – Initial Intervention

Restorative approach, parental contact and monitoring

Stage 2 – Formal Intervention

Formal recording, parental meetings, targeted intervention and proportionate sanctions

Stage 3 – Escalated Intervention

Increased monitoring, further parental engagement and escalated sanctions

Stage 4 – Senior Leadership Intervention

SLT involvement, formal processes and significant sanctions where appropriate

Stage 5 – Headteacher/Governor Intervention

Formal disciplinary procedures in line with statutory guidance

Sanctions are proportionate, consistent and applied alongside intervention to secure sustained behaviour change.

11.0 Monitoring and Quality Assurance

- All incidents are recorded on MyConcern, tracked and reviewed.
- Data is analysed by key groups and trends over time to identify patterns, inform targeted intervention and evaluate impact.
- Senior leaders ensure consistency and impact of practice.
- The effectiveness of interventions is reviewed to prevent recurrence.

12.0 Support

Shire Oak Academy provides timely, compassionate and effective support. Support is tailored to need and secures safety, wellbeing and positive outcomes for all students affected by bullying. Safeguarding procedures will be followed where there is a risk of harm.

Support for Students who Experience Bullying:

- Immediate response – providing the opportunity to speak to a trusted adult and ensuring concerns are taken seriously.
- Safety and protection – ensuring access to a safe space for example Ethos room, SEND hub and, where appropriate, a personalised plan.

- Ongoing pastoral support – providing targeted mentoring and regular review to sustain improvement, including support from pastoral staff and wider provision (e.g. Ethos Team, City Year).
- Parental partnership – ensuring parents/carers are informed and involved in support.
- Peer support – providing access to trained student leaders, including Anti-Bullying Ambassadors.
- Targeted intervention – securing improvements in confidence, resilience and emotional wellbeing.
- Online safety support – providing guidance to address online bullying and promote safe behaviour.
- External support – accessing specialist services where required.

Support for Students Displaying Bullying Behaviour:

- Clear intervention – ensuring opportunities to reflect on behaviour and understand impact.
- Targeted pastoral support – providing mentoring and intervention to address underlying needs and secure sustained behaviour change, including internal provision (e.g. Ethos Team, City Year).
- Behaviour support strategies – implementing monitoring and personalised plans where appropriate.
- Restorative approaches – repairing relationships and rebuilding trust where appropriate.
- External agency involvement – accessing specialist support where concerns are persistent.
- Safeguarding response – ensuring referral to external agencies, including the police, where required.

Support is regularly reviewed to ensure impact. The academy prioritises the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all students.

13.0 Anti-Bullying Ambassadors

Shire Oak Academy utilises trained Anti-Bullying Ambassadors to support the prevention of bullying and promote a positive, inclusive culture. Students across Key Stages 3 and 4 volunteer for this role and complete recognised training through the Diana Award.

Ambassadors play an active role in:

- Promoting anti-bullying messages and raising awareness across the academy
- Supporting the delivery of assemblies and tutor time activities
- Acting as positive role models for respectful behaviour and inclusion
- Providing peer support and signposting students to appropriate help
- Contributing to campaigns and whole-academy initiatives to prevent bullying

Anti-Bullying Ambassadors work alongside pastoral staff to strengthen student voice, encourage reporting and ensure students feel safe, supported and heard.

14.0 Helpful Organisations and Support

Shire Oak Academy recognises that students, parents and carers may require additional support beyond the academy. The following organisations provide advice, guidance and support in relation to bullying and wellbeing:

Organisation	Who it is for	Area of Support	Contact Details
Childline	Students	Free, confidential support for children and young people on a wide range of issues, including bullying, mental health and safeguarding concerns	0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk
YoungMinds	Students	Mental health support for young people, including access to 24/7 crisis text support	Text YM to 85258 www.youngminds.org.uk
CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection)	Students / Parents / Carers	Reporting concerns about online abuse, exploitation, grooming or inappropriate contact	www.ceop.police.uk (Click 'Report')

Organisation	Who it is for	Area of Support	Contact Details
NSPCC Helpline	Parents / Carers	Advice and guidance for adults concerned about a child's safety, wellbeing or possible abuse	0808 800 5000 help@nspcc.org.uk www.nspcc.org.uk
Kidscape	Parents / Carers	Specialist advice and support relating to bullying, including practical strategies to support children	0300 102 4481 WhatsApp: 07496 682785 parentsupport@kidscape.org.uk www.kidscape.org.uk

Appendix 1: Signs of Bullying

Bullying can affect everyone, those who experience it, those who display bullying behaviours and those who witness it. It is linked to a range of negative outcomes, particularly for mental health and wellbeing.

Students experiencing bullying may show changes in behaviour, wellbeing or engagement. Early identification is essential to ensure timely support and intervention.

The following indicators do not always mean a student is being bullied; however, they should be taken seriously and explored.

Emotional and Behavioural Signs

- Frequent distress, anxiety or low mood
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns.
- Mood swings or increased anger
- Becoming withdrawn or isolated
- Reluctance to talk about concerns.
- Becoming aggressive or targeting others (e.g. siblings)
- Unexplained loss of money or belongings

Physical Signs

- Unexplained injuries (e.g. bruises, cuts or scratches)
- Missing, damaged or lost belongings or clothing
- Regularly appearing hungry

Academy-Based Signs

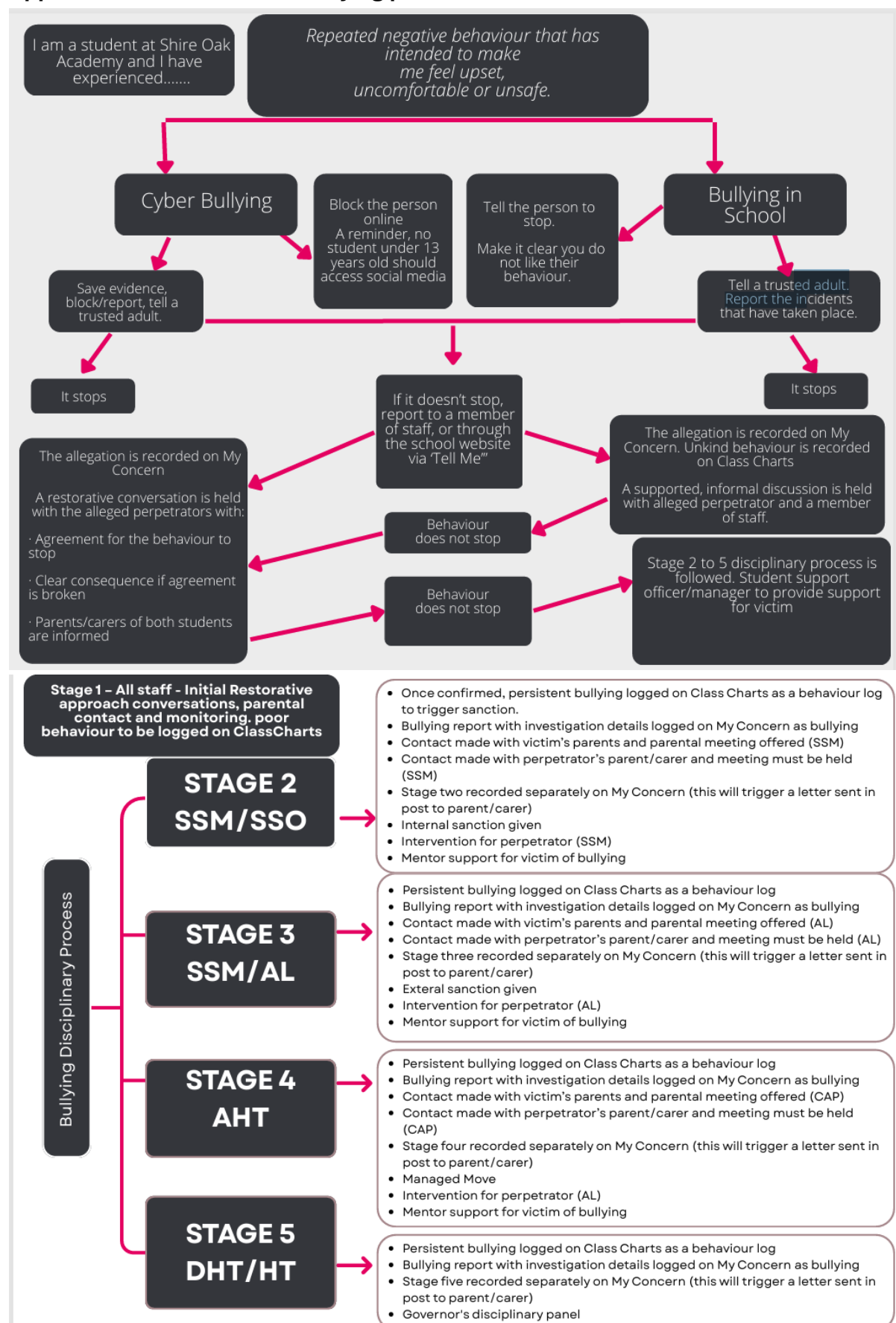
- Reluctance or refusal to attend school.
- Changes to usual travel routines or fear of travelling to academy.
- Avoidance of specific places or times in school
- A decline in academic engagement or attainment

Social Signs

- Being isolated or excluded from friendship groups.
- Regularly the subject of teasing, mimicking or ridicule
- Appearing fearful, insecure or unwilling to participate

All concerns should be reported in line with the school's safeguarding procedures. Early reporting enables timely intervention and prevents escalation.

Appendix 2: Flow charts of bullying processes



Staff Guidance



Appendix 3 – Internal Investigation form



Investigation into allegation of bullying

Completed by: Position: Date:	Reported by: Date:
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Form of referral:

☐ Verbal Report	☐ Phone Call	☐ Email/Letter	☐ Text/Text
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Student(s) name(s) alleged to be experiencing bullying behaviour	Form
Student(s) name(s) alleged to be engaging in bullying behaviour	Form
Reported account:	

Details gathered to date:

Determining if incident constitutes bullying

Following investigation, is this incident to be confirmed as bullying?	
YES	NO
Incident was bullying because: Incident is bullying if all 3 warnings below are confirmed: ☐ Hurt has been deliberately/knowingly caused (physically or emotionally) ☐ It is a repeated and intentional incident or experience ☐ Involves an imbalance of power: o Target feels he/she cannot defend him/herself, or o Perpetrator/s exploiting their power (size, age, popularity, coolness, abusive language, labelling/name calling etc.) ☐ Incident was cyberbullying if repeated messages of an intimidating, humiliating or threatening nature were sent or left on a social networking site.	Incident was not bullying on this occasion because it was: ☐ the first hurtful incident between these students. ☐ teasing between friends between these students. ☐ Falling out between friends after a quarrel, disagreement, or misunderstanding. ☐ conflict that got out of hand. ☐ Activities that all parties have consented to and enjoyed.

Actions taken

☐ Checked for earlier incidents involving same students ☐ Individual discussions with students involved ☐ Discussion of incident with peers ☐ Discussion with staff involved ☐ Referral to peer mentor	☐ Restorative Intervention ☐ Spoken to parents/carers ☐ Meeting with 'Target' parents/carers ☐ Meeting with 'Offenders' parents/carers ☐ Applied sanctions (see below) ☐ Action plan agreed with students
Any additional action taken?	
Details of sanctions applied / Action plan	
Details of planned support	

For confirmed bullying please complete section below:

Focus of bullying behaviour

Please tick all elements which apply in your understanding of the incident(s)

	Applies	Possibly applies
Age/Maturity		
Appearance (e.g. size/weight)		
Class/Socio-economic		
Family circumstance (e.g. caring role)		
Ethnicity/Race		
Religion/Belief		
Gender		
Transphobia/Gender identity		
Homophobia/sexuality		
Sexualised		
SEN and Disability		
Ability/application		



Manifestation of bullying (Indicate those that apply)

Perception of individual: feeling being bullied/harassed	
Isolation/ignoring	
Teasing	
General expression of prejudice/stereotype	
Verbal abuse or name calling	
Racist language	
Targeted graffiti or hurtful notes	
Threats including physical assault	
Mobile phone/messaging bullying/harassment	
Internet related bullying/harassment	
Actual physical assault	
Other:	

Support given for targeted student

Support provided:	Examples: ☐ Separate on-site provision ☐ Regular contact with chosen member of staff ☐ Restorative process ☐ Resilience Training ☐ Pastoral team support ☐ Counselling ☐ Parental meetings
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Appendix 4 - Stage 1 Letter

Date: [DATE]

Dear [PARENT/CARER NAME],

Re: Anti-Bullying Concern – Initial Support and Monitoring

We are writing to inform you of a concern that has been raised involving your child, [STUDENT NAME], in relation to unkind or inappropriate behaviour towards another student.

At Shire Oak Academy, all reports of bullying are taken seriously. At this stage, the behaviour has been assessed as requiring early intervention and has been addressed using a restorative approach, in line with the academy's Anti-Bullying Policy.

A member of staff has spoken with the students involved to reinforce expectations around respectful behaviour. The situation will continue to be monitored closely, and support has been offered to the student who raised the concern.

No formal sanctions have been issued at this stage. We ask for your support in reinforcing positive behaviour and respectful conduct at home.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact [STAFF NAME / ROLE].

Yours sincerely,

[STAFF NAME]

Appendix 5: Stage 2 Letter

[Academy Letterhead]

Date: [DATE]

Dear [PARENT/CARER NAME],

Re: Anti-Bullying Concern – Stage 2 Formal Intervention

We are writing to update you regarding a concern involving your child, [STUDENT NAME], which has now been assessed as persistent bullying behaviour in line with the academy's Anti-Bullying Policy.

Following investigation, the behaviour meets the definition of bullying as repeated negative behaviour intended to cause upset, discomfort or distress. The matter has therefore progressed to Stage 2 – Formal Intervention.

The incident has been formally recorded on the academy's safeguarding system (MyConcern), and appropriate actions have been taken. Support is being provided to the student who has experienced the bullying to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

A member of the pastoral team has spoken with your child to address the behaviour and reinforce expectations moving forward. Continued monitoring will now take place.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this further and agree next steps.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 6: Stage 3 Letter

[Academy Letterhead]

Date: [DATE]

Dear [PARENT/CARER NAME],

Re: Anti-Bullying Concern – Stage 3 Escalated Intervention

We are writing following further concerns regarding persistent bullying behaviour involving your child, [STUDENT NAME].

Despite earlier intervention and support, the behaviour has continued. As a result, the matter has now progressed to Stage 3 – Escalated Intervention, in line with the academy's Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Policies.

At this stage, increased monitoring, further pastoral intervention and proportionate sanctions are being applied alongside targeted support. All actions and outcomes continue to be recorded on the academy's safeguarding system (MyConcern).

We request a meeting with you to discuss this matter and agree expectations and next steps. Failure to secure improvement may result in escalation to senior leadership.

Please contact the academy as soon as possible to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 7: Stage 4 Letter

[Academy Letterhead]

Date: [DATE]

Dear [PARENT/CARER NAME],

Re: Anti-Bullying Concern – Stage 4 Senior Leadership Intervention

We are writing to formally notify you that concerns regarding bullying behaviour involving your child, [STUDENT NAME], have now escalated to Stage 4 – Senior Leadership Intervention.

This decision has been made due to the persistence and seriousness of the behaviour, despite earlier interventions, parental meetings and targeted support.

At this stage, senior leaders are directly involved, formal disciplinary procedures are in place, and significant sanctions may be applied. The academy continues to prioritise the safety and wellbeing of all students.

A meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team is required. You will be contacted to arrange this.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 8: Stage 5 Letter

[Academy Letterhead]

Date: [DATE]

Dear [PARENT/CARER NAME],

Re: Anti-Bullying Concern – Stage 5 Formal Intervention

We regret to inform you that concerns regarding bullying behaviour involving your child, [STUDENT NAME], have now progressed to Stage 5 – Headteacher and Governor Intervention.

This decision follows a continued pattern of behaviour that has not improved despite extensive intervention, support and disciplinary action. The academy has a duty to ensure a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.

At this stage, the Headteacher is directly overseeing the case and formal disciplinary procedures may be initiated in line with statutory guidance. A Governor disciplinary process may also be convened.

You will be contacted regarding next steps and any formal meetings required.

Yours sincerely,

[HEADTEACHER NAME]

Headteacher

Shire Oak Academy