



# **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

This policy applies to the whole school, including the EYFS

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following related policies:

Child Protection & Safeguarding  
Behaviour & Discipline  
E-safety\_Acceptable Use  
Cyber bullying

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## **Definitions**

“DfE”	Department for Education
“DSL”	Designated Safeguarding Lead
“DDSL”	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
“MIS”	Management Information System
“PSHE”	Personal, Social, Health and Education
“SLT”	Senior Management Team

## Introduction

At Oakwood School, our community is based upon respect for others, compassion and personal responsibility. Pupils learn best in a safe and calm environment that is free from disruption and in which education is the primary focus. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can develop his or her full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that pupils can learn in a relaxed and orderly atmosphere. The ethos of the school encourages pupils to care for and support each other.

Oakwood School is firmly committed to promoting partnership with parents as the prime educators of their children, and they play a vital role in supporting the School in maintaining high standards of behaviour. Our unique tutorial system allows parents and teachers to work hand-in-hand to ensure that pupils are constantly striving to be the best they can be through the Character Education programme. It is essential that the school and families have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate very closely together.

Various legislation and government guidance is reflected in this policy, including the Equality Act 2010, the Children Act 1989, the Education Act 2011 and DfE advice Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017). This guidance is aimed at eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act in all areas of society.

When there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern under the Children Act 1989. In such cases, procedures to be followed would be as per our Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy. Staff are aware of the need to be extra vigilant and alert to pupils who may be vulnerable or at risk of bullying i.e., those that fall under the nine protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity, race, religion / belief, sex and sexual orientation. **Bullying on the basis of these protected characteristics is taken particularly seriously.**

Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions, also enshrined in the PACT Charter, to which every parent must adhere. The policy is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils on our website and on request. It is also available and made known to staff. This policy was written with reference to the advice for preventing and tackling bullying provided by the Department of Education July 2017.

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated at Oakwood School. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration. A strong relationship of trust is developed and encouraged which makes any kind of bullying unacceptable. This policy applies to all pupils in the school.

### **Aims and objectives of this policy**

- To promote a positive caring ethos in Oakwood School and to ensure that all the pupils feel safe in our environment.
- To enable pupils to understand clearly what constitutes bullying throughout the curriculum and day to day life at school by raising awareness and ensuring that it will not be tolerated by the school community.
- To enable parents to feel confident that bullying will be firmly dealt with by Oakwood School.
- To raise staff awareness of the presence of bullying and alert staff to any pupils who may be vulnerable and at risk from bullying.
- To ensure the school implements the guidelines for action and makes referral on all serious cases where bullying is identified.
- Bullying is wrong and damages individual pupils. We therefore do all we can to prevent it, by developing a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.
- As a school, we aim to produce a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety, and measures are in place to reduce the likelihood of bullying. Essentially, we wish to establish a climate of trust and respect for all.
- This policy aims to produce a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur.
- We aim to make all those connected with our school aware of our opposition to bullying, and we make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the eradication of bullying in our school.

### **Definition of Bullying**

*"Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally." (Preventing and Tackling Bullying, 2017).*

There are various definitions of bullying, however the key points are that it is unwanted, aggressive behaviour by an individual or group, **either an isolated incident or repeated over time**, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

The DfE recommends three documents as guidance for preventing and responding to bullying: Preventing and tackling bullying (2017), Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff (2014), and Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying (2014), as well as guidance on the Independent Schools Standards (2019).

Bullying is targeted, intentional and may or may not be repetitive. It can take many forms (for example verbal, social, physical and cyberbullying). It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups or because of a protected characteristic, for example on grounds of race, religion, culture, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between pupils or perceived differences. Bullying can be direct (either physical or verbal) or indirect (for example, being ignored, rumour spreading, being excluded deliberately or not spoken to, or through cyber-technology - social media, gaming, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email).

Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve everyone – students and parents. Bullying can cause psychological damage, eating disorders and even suicide. Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence, some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be deemed a criminal offence.

Bullying is likely to involve an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim (whether actual or perceived) and can be Child on Child Abuse. This can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance or by having access to the support of a group. It can result in the intimidation of a person through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online. (Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies July 2017).

Bullying means consistent problems with:

- Any physical violence, e.g. kicking or punching.
- Name calling, spreading rumours, hurtful teasing.
- Excluding anyone from any activity or group work.
- Ignoring or not talking to someone.
- Frightening someone into doing something they do not want to do, e.g. 'initiation ceremonies'.
- Intimidation to prevent someone from doing something they want.
- Invading someone's personal space to make them feel uncomfortable or unhappy.
- Laughing at someone – Banter that is hurtful or derogatory is not acceptable at Oakwood. It is considered a form of bullying if done over a period of time.
- Taking or damaging someone's property.
- Cyberbullying, for example: sending unpleasant e-mails and/or text messages, sexting and inappropriate use of social networking sites, gaming, webcams, etc.
- Radicalisation - using the internet or other means to encourage young people to have extremist religious, social or political views which may support terrorism.
- Attacks or abuse because of religion, gender, sexuality, disability, appearance, ethnic or racial origin, culture, special educational needs, health conditions or circumstances related to home life such as being adopted or being a carer.

Bullying is not confined solely to relationships between young people. Verbal and emotional bullying in particular may occur between staff or staff and parents, staff and pupils, or parents and children. All members of our school community have a responsibility to prevent such occurrences of bullying.

Bullying affects the whole school community: pupils, their families, teachers, support staff and governors. Primarily it threatens the safety and happiness of the pupils and may undermine their educational achievement.

Bullying is specific unacceptable behaviour, and as such is totally alien to our school ethos and aims. By raising awareness and working together, according to the guidelines laid down in this policy, we can hope to deal with bullying effectively and send a clear message to all concerned that bullying of any kind will not be tolerated at Oakwood School.

Our success will be tested not by the absence of problems but by the way we deal with them when they arise.

## **Signs of bullying**

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. If you are concerned and become aware of any of the following, you should ask if someone is threatening or bullying your child.

Signs and behaviours may include:

- Unwillingness to go to school or doing poorly in their schoolwork.
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet.
- Diminished levels of self-confidence.
- Becoming distressed or aggressive
- Loss of appetite
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival in class.
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact.
- Talking of suicide or running away.
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing or are damaged.
- Frequent symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches.
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Changes to established habits (e.g., giving up co-curricular activities, changes to accent or vocabulary).
- Cry themselves to sleep or have nightmares and call out 'leave me alone.'
- Spends a disproportionate amount of time on the internet.
- Choosing the company of adults.
- Refusing to say what's wrong and giving improbable excuses to explain any of the above

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of, these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers.

**All staff should be aware of the signs and report promptly any suspicions of bullying to the DSL – Vicky Sumner.**

## **Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying may be defined as 'the use of electronic communication, particularly mobile phones and the internet, to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature: children and adults may be reluctant to admit to being the victims of cyberbullying'. It can take a number of different forms : threats and intimidation, harassment or 'cyber-stalking' (e.g. repeatedly sending unwanted texts or instant messages), vilification/defamation, exclusion/peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorised publication of private information/images and 'trolling' (abusing the internet to provoke or offend others online) and radicalisation. It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing the bully with another route to harass their target.

However, it differs from other forms of bullying in several significant ways:

- By facilitating a far more extreme invasion of personal space. Cyberbullying can take place at any time and intrude into spaces that have previously been regarded as safe and personal.
- The potential for anonymity on the part of the bully. This can be extremely distressing for the victim.

- The potential for the bully to play very rapidly to a larger audience so the scale and scope of cyberbullying can be greater than for other forms of bullying.
- Through the knowledge that the data is in the world-wide domain, disproportionately amplifying the negative effect on the victim, even though the bully may feel his / her actual actions had been no worse than conventional forms of bullying.
- The difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages as more people get drawn in as accessories. By passing on a humiliating picture or message a bystander becomes an accessory to the bullying.
- The profile of the bully and target can be different to other forms of bullying as cyberbullying can take place between peers and across generations. Teachers can be victims and age and size are not important.
- Many cyberbullying incidents can themselves act as evidence, so it is important the victim saves the information.

More information on Cyberbullying can be found in the school's *Cyberbullying Policy*.

### **Bullying Outside the School Premises**

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises 'to such an extent as is reasonable'. This can relate to bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport or outside the local shops. Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on.

### **Why do we have an Anti-Bullying Policy ?**

National studies show that bullying occurs more than everyone might think and can cause serious psychological damage and even suicide. The aim of the Anti-Bullying Policy is to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and their victims. It also affects those children who watch, and who can get drawn in by group pressure. If children are part of a group that makes anybody feel ashamed, unhappy or afraid, they are involved in bullying. Bullying is not tolerated at Oakwood. To counteract bullying behaviours, we promote a safe environment in which the children are encouraged to discuss their feelings openly, without fear of judgment. We endeavour to give the children the skills to identify and deal with their worries.

### **Supporting victims of bullying**

We are pro-active in our approach to educating our pupils and staff about bullying and cyber-bullying and our aim is to create a pervasive anti-bullying culture and to build resilience in pupils to protect themselves and others by:

- Speaking openly about bullying and cyberbullying.
- Having comprehensive internet security with the appropriate levels of filtering and by teaching the children explicitly how to stay safe in the online world.
- Acknowledging that bullying might occur outside school and that we have a duty of care to investigate any such incidents.
- Having positive staff role models in terms of communication and respect. Staff need to avoid the use of prejudice-based language and use all available opportunities to promote the understanding of differences between people.
- Promoting and expecting positive respectful relationships between staff and pupils and older and younger pupils based on mutual respect and trust.

- Creating an inclusive environment and a school which builds on positive self-image and commends appropriate behaviour in all areas.
- Ensuring staff are trained on how to watch for signs, react to and deal with instances of bullying or suspected bullying. Staff need to be particularly alert to pupils who may be vulnerable or at risk from bullying. Training will be given to staff on the needs of our pupils including those with special educational needs or disabilities.
- Understanding that although bullying is defined as repeated unkindness, the school will follow up ALL incidents of unkindness, since we recognise the importance of spotting behaviour patterns and ensuring that the 'single' incident does not become the first of a 'series'.
- Educating the children about bullying and cyberbullying through the assemblies, the PSHE curriculum and the Computing curriculum, drama and stories, with discussion of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language.
- Giving the children easy access to information about bullying and cyberbullying and what to do with a worry. This includes Childline posters being on display around the school, anti-bullying and cyberbullying leaflets and easy access to adults at school to whom they can talk.
- Educating the children about their rights and responsibilities as members of the school community throughout their learning and discussing this at regular tutor/tutee meetings
- Teaching the children that bullying and cyberbullying are intolerable and teaching them how to report bullying and cyberbullying.
- Teaching children that seeing bullying happening and doing nothing (being a bystander) is effectively taking part in the bullying behaviours themselves as they are aware of it and do nothing.
- Taking advantage of any opportunities to consider and discuss issues of difference and tolerance in lessons, projects, charity events and assemblies.

We have a responsibility to support victims of bullying and make appropriate provision for their needs. The nature and level of support will depend on the individual circumstances and the level of need. These can include a quiet word from a teacher that knows the pupil well, asking their tutor to provide support, seeking guidance from counsellors, engaging with parents, referring to local authority children's services or to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) – 020 3228 0000.

Pupils who are being bullied are often too frightened to tell others. However, they are encouraged to inform their parents, class teacher, tutor, a peer mediator in Year 6 or the DSL (Vicky Sumner ) or the DDSLs (Sylvia Boyle or Candela Marquez) if they feel that they are being victimised or bullied in any way.

Pupils should be encouraged to speak openly by our showing that we are concerned and want to help and support them. Promises should not be made to keep anything secret, but the child should be reassured that we will help them sort out the problem.

If a pupil is a perpetual 'victim' of bullying by different groups or individuals, we will try to observe the pupil's reactions to others when talking or playing to see if they are being bullied for any perceived 'bad' habits. We will help them to change this behaviour, if appropriate, and develop better social skills and confidence.



Other ways our school community helps include encouraging a pupil's self-esteem, giving them responsibilities to help them feel valued and important, encouraging them to do things they are good at and by praising their achievements.

Removing bullied pupils from school, even for a short time, disrupts their education and can make it difficult for them to reintegrate. We will therefore do all we can to ensure that bullied pupils feel safe and continue to attend school.

### **Raising awareness of bullying**

We ensure that pupils are given the opportunities to gain awareness of the forms, consequences and solutions to bullying.

We do this in several ways:

- The Character Education Programme & the RHE (includes PSHE) curriculum, is structured to give pupils an awareness of values, such as respect and moral responsibility. They will learn that bullying is always unacceptable and is harmful both to the victim and the perpetrator.
- Assemblies regularly address issues of friendship and personal relationships – including a special themed assembly for the Anti- Bullying Alliance / Autumn Anti-Bullying Week. This includes the role and nature of bystanders.
- Through the curriculum pupils are encouraged to work well with one another, to be understanding of different characters and to resolve conflict in a constructive way. Bullying is addressed through their study of literature, history and the performing arts.
- Raising awareness of bullying and behaviour as an issue through brain-storming, role-play, drama, stories, assemblies, projects, songs and historical events
- Character Education & RHE/PSHE is reserved for general discussions about bullying, including the differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language. Computing lessons are used to talk about online safety, cyber-bullying and reinforcing the school's E-Safety/Acceptable Use of Technology Policy.
- Personal tutors regularly talk with their tutees about their relationships with their peers, offering a 'sounding board' when difficulties arise and helping to mediate where required. This may include introducing pupils to strategies they can use to protect themselves from bullying (e.g., by staying calm, being firm and walking away from a situation, and encouraging pupils to tell an adult or a friend what has happened).
- All staff are given, as part of their ongoing CPD, formation on how to detect signs of bullying or distress in pupil and how to deal with it. They complete the EduCare Online Bullying module in their first year in the school.
- Any disciplinary sanctions will reflect the seriousness of an incident and convey a deterrent effect.
- Our staff have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaviour outside our school premises 'to such an extent as is reasonable'. Any such reported incidents of bullying will be investigated and acted on according to the procedures below.

### **School Procedure for dealing with reports of Bullying**

- Periodic training is provided to our staff to ensure that the principles and purpose of this policy are understood, legal responsibilities regarding bullying are known, action is defined to resolve and prevent problems and where sources of support are available. Where

appropriate, specialised skills may be needed to understand the needs of particular pupils (for example those with special educational needs and/or disabilities).

- Our staff will immediately inform the Head or another member of the SLT or DSL's of any bullying concerns. Similarly, parents are advised to inform their child's class teacher and/or Head immediately if they have any concerns. The pupil will then be placed on the Concerns List, with appropriate records made on the type of bullying incident that has occurred, such as one based on protected characteristics. (This will enable us to monitor how values of tolerance and respect are being instilled in pupils).
- Once a pupil has been put on the Concerns List, the class teacher will email all staff with the reasons. From that point onwards, any member of staff dealing with an incident involving that child (in relation to the particular area of concern) will make a note on the MIS (iSAMS), so that everyone is aware of any updates relating to the case. All staff should be extra vigilant, particularly at break times, and report back to the class teacher or member of the SLT if further conflict occurs. Periodically, all members of staff should check the MIS for any new updates. Once a pupil is ready to come off the Concerns List, the class teacher will send an email to all staff explaining why.
- Any additional information (eg. an email from parents) relating to a pupil on the Concerns List, including records of incidents involving sensitive issues, are kept in the Incidents File and recorded by a member of the SLT.
- The SLT monitor pupils on the Concerns List on a weekly basis, via a report created on our MIS. This will help to ensure that adequate monitoring measures and strategies are in place.
- Depending on the nature of the incident, our class teachers or member of the SLT will talk to all pupils involved. These pupils may then be interviewed separately and witness accounts obtained. Pupils may be asked to record their own account of events.
- Pupils will be told that the matter will be taken seriously and will be dealt with as soon as possible. Depending on the nature of the incident, parents may be informed on an informal or formal basis. An apology will be obtained from the bully/ies to the victim.
- Depending on the nature of the incident, the perpetrator may go on report using our system of rewards and sanctions in line with behaviour targets. Any disciplinary measures will be applied fairly, consistently and reasonably. Exclusion will only be considered in extreme cases of severe and persistent bullying. Should our Head or SLT require additional support or advice, they will contact external agencies as required (such as the police, local authority or children's social care).
- Records contained on our MIS and within the Incidents file will be reviewed periodically by our Head and SLT to evaluate the effectiveness of our school's approach to bullying, enable any patterns to be identified, consider motivations behind bullying behaviour and to address underlying issues. Our Head will agree a strategy with relevant staff to remedy these.

**It is important to note that, where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, a bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern.**

*In each case the following principles should be borne in mind:*

- It is important that pupil who experience bullying can be heard.
- It is important to note that people react differently to bullying and it is often very difficult to tell if someone is upset or hurt.

- If students feel upset, they are encouraged to speak to their teacher or a responsible adult at an appropriate time.
- It must be emphasised to pupils that they should not take the law into their own hands.
- They should be reassured that the adult will try to sort out the problem as calmly as possible.
- Parents should be invited into school to discuss matters.
- Each incident should be recorded on ISAMS and linked to the students concerned. Three separate records are needed: an incident note on ISAMS; a full file with statements to be stored in the **Incident File in the Head's office**; and an entry in the Bullying Register.
- Pupils will be told to always report incidents of bullying.

### **The role of staff**

- All our staff take every form of bullying seriously, and seek to prevent it from taking place.
- If any of our teachers witness an act of bullying, they will usually investigate it themselves first. Our teachers and support staff do all they can to support the child who is being bullied. If a child continues to be bullied then, after consultation with our Head or another member of the SLT, our teacher will inform the child's parents. A written record will be started to monitor events as described above.
- When any bullying incident is seen or reported taking place between members of a class, our teachers will deal with the issue immediately. This may involve counselling and support for the victim of the bullying, and punishment for the child who has carried out the bullying. Time is spent talking to the child who has bullied: explaining why their action was wrong, and that child is encouraged to change their behaviour in future. Tutors are encouraged to be actively involved in this. If a pupil is repeatedly involved in bullying other pupils, or depending on the seriousness of the offence, our Head or another member of the SLT will be informed.
- It is our Head's responsibility to implement our school anti-bullying strategy, and to ensure that all our staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of our school policy, know how to identify and deal with incidents of bullying, and know what sanctions can be adopted. Suitable training is provided so that our staff are aware of what action should be taken in order to reduce the risk of bullying.
- Our Head and SLT ensure that all our pupils understand the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders. They know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour in our school. Our teachers draw the attention of pupils to this fact at suitable moments. For example, if an incident occurs, they may decide to use an assembly as the forum in which to discuss with other pupils why this behaviour was wrong, and why a pupil is being punished. PSHE lessons also help to raise awareness of bullying.
- Our Head and SLT foster a climate of mutual support and praise for success, making bullying less likely. When pupils feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour.

### **How parents may help**

- If your child tells you about bullying, talk with them about ways in which together you can tell the school how they are feeling and what has happened. At school we do not tolerate bullying. We will listen to them and do everything we can to remedy the situation.

- The first and most important step is to listen. Allow them to tell their story in their own words. Don't respond by dismissing their experience as part of 'growing up'.
- If your child refuses to talk to you, suggest that they talk to another adult, in their safety network or safety circle. Before they speak to their parents or teachers about being bullied, some children may phone Childline.
- If you suspect your child is being bullied or is feeling unhappy about something, please contact the Class Teacher/Tutor, the Deputy Heads or Head, and do encourage your child to do likewise. It is important to 'tell' and talk about the problem.
- Talk to your child about what they are doing on the internet and try to keep the lines of communication open. Learn about the sites they are using and talk to your child about being safe online.

## Complaints Procedure

Parents and pupils are encouraged to use our Complaints Procedure if they feel that their concerns about bullying, or any other matter, are not being addressed properly.

## Useful Publications/Contacts for Parents

- The Anti-Bullying Alliance: [www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)
- Kidscape: [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)
- ParentZone – Keeping Children Safe Online Cyberbullying: [www.parentzone.org.uk](http://www.parentzone.org.uk)
- ChildNet International: [www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com)
- Think U Know: [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)
- Digizen [www.digizen.org](http://www.digizen.org)
- UK Council for Child Internet Safety: Advice on Child Internet Safety  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-on-child-internet-safety-10-universal-guidelines-for-providers](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-on-child-internet-safety-10-universal-guidelines-for-providers)
- The UK Safer Internet Centre [www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk)
- DfE The use of social media for on-line radicalisation :  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-use-of-social-media-for-online-radicalisation](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-use-of-social-media-for-online-radicalisation)

## Monitoring and review

Our Governors acknowledge their responsibility to ensure that this policy is effectively implemented and meets all current regulatory requirements.

This policy is reviewed annually, however it may be amended earlier if legislation or our school procedures change.

This policy is monitored on a day-to-day basis by our Head and SLT. In order to readily have a clear picture of bullying incidents throughout our school and to ensure that our policy is being effectively implemented, the number and nature of concerns are discussed and monitored regularly.

**Signed: Linda Sanders**

This policy is reviewed annually	
Title	Anti-Bullying Policy

Version	3
Review Date	Summer 2023
Author	Linda Sanders
Approved by SLT	Yes
Approval/Review required by PACT or sub-committee	Yes
Latest Review (state whether changes were made)	Yes
Next Review Date	Summer 2025