



## Highfields Independent School and Day Nursery

### Anti-Bullying Policy

Last Reviewed:	June 2017	Approved on:	7.06.17
Committee Responsible:	Pupil and Personnel	Next Review:	30.06.19
Approved by:	Full Govs		

## Statement on Bullying

Highfields School rarely finds instances of bullying, but we are aware bullying exists and we make it clear that it will not be tolerated. The caring, family ethos of the school provides opportunities in the class or in assembly to discuss behaviour and consideration of others. Highfields School will not allow bullying in any form. We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils to learn within. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Behaviour which could be considered bullying will be promptly and fairly tackled. Where possible, signs of potential bullying should be identified and recorded early, so that action may be taken before the situation gets more serious.

Bullying is an action taken by one or more children with deliberate intention of hurting another child, either physically or emotionally. A clear distinction should be made between thoughtless words or actions, and actual pre-meditated bullying which is usually repeated over time in the same form. Bullying involves the willful misuse of power, it is something which relates to an individual child and is personal to them. Bullying is NOT a one-off event.

The three main types of bullying are:

- Physical
- Verbal
- Indirect

Bullying can take many forms: physical, emotional, religious, cultural, racist, sexual, sexist, homophobic, disability, verbal, electronic (cyber-bullying) or a combination of these. Common forms of bullying include:

- Verbal such as name-calling, teasing, sarcasm and spreading rumours.
- Emotional abuse such as excluding a child from a social group, tormenting, threatening looks and gestures.
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, punching, pinching, pushing or any other violence.
- Intimidation that mental or physical retribution may happen.
- Blacken someone's name to adults or peers (e.g. telling tales).
- Persistent minor physical mistreatment.
- **Sexual** - abusive sexualised name calling, inappropriate and uninvited touching, inappropriate sexual innuendo and/or proposition.
- Electronic (cyber). All areas of internet such as e-mail and chat room misuse. Mobile phone threats by text messaging and calls. Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities.

The seriousness of bullying is noted in that it can cause psychological damage and even suicide (although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.)

## **Aims and Objectives**

- All teaching, non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises to ensure a consistent school response.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying is wrong; therefore, we do all we can to prevent it by developing a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- \*The school will devote time to the National Anti-Bullying Campaign usually in November.
- \*The school participates in the D.A.R.E program.
- The school will invite the N.S.P.C.C in every two years to deliver their Childline Assembly.

## **Signs and symptoms**

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

- Not wanting to come to school
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- A marked deterioration in classroom performances or effort
- Not wanting to join in with playground games, spending an unusual amount of time on their own
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions which are damaged or “go missing”
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Disruptive and/or uncooperative behaviour
- Being short or bad tempered with other children
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what is wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile telephone
- Is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviour could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated. Please remember that children may display these behaviours without being bullied.

## **Technology and Bullying**

The use of social media as a tool for bullying is an area that is increasingly being used by children at primary age. Highfields School has a zero tolerance to cyber-bullying and built in to our PSHEE and computing lessons, alongside assemblies where the expectations and laws of cyber use are explored.

We also talk to the pupils about how to report cyber bullying if it happens to them. They are offered the opportunity to use our Worry Box should they not want to disclose information directly to a teacher. We have filters on our computer system to prevent pupils accessing websites and social media that has been deemed unsuitable for their age groups. We constantly monitor this with our computing services partner – ARK. If pupils are found to have technology that is breaching these rules, then they are removed from the pupil and the parents are immediately informed by the Headmaster. This would be followed up by a meeting with the parents to discuss the action taken. If a pupil is proved to have used technology for bullying purposes, the sanctions follow the same process as stated in the **Procedures** section of this policy.

### **The role of the Governing Body**

The Governing Body supports the Headmaster in all attempts to eliminate bullying from our school. This policy statement makes it very clear that the Governing Body does not allow bullying to take place in our school, and that any incidents of bullying that do occur are taken very seriously and dealt with appropriately.

The Governing Body monitors the incidents of bullying that occur, and reviews the effectiveness of the school policy regularly. The governors require the Headmaster to report to the governors on request about the effectiveness of school anti-bullying strategies.

The governing body responds within ten days to any request from a parent to investigate incidents of bullying. In all cases, the governing body notifies the Headmaster and asks him/her to conduct an investigation into the case and to report back to a representative of the governing body.

### **The role of the Headmaster**

It is the responsibility of the Headmaster to implement the school anti-bullying strategy and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy and know how to deal with incidents of bullying. The Headmaster reports to the governing body about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy on request.

The Headmaster ensures that all children know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour in this school. The Headmaster draws the attention of children to this fact at suitable moments. For example, if an incident occurs, the Headmaster may decide to use an assembly as a forum in which to discuss with other children why this behaviour was wrong.

The Headmaster sets the school climate of mutual support and praise for success, so making bullying less likely. When children feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour.

### **The role of the teacher**

Teachers in our school take all forms of bullying seriously, and intervene to prevent incidents from taking place. They keep their own records of all incidents that happen in their class and that they are aware of in the school, as well as recording these in the Central Incident Log.

If teachers witness an act of bullying, they do all they can to support the child who is being bullied and the bully. If a child is being bullied over a period of time, then both the children's parents will be informed.

We aim to raise staff awareness through training, taking action to reduce the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely.

If, as teachers, we become aware of any bullying taking place between members of a class, we 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. The sanctions that will be applied are covered within the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy.

We spend time talking to the child who has been bullied: we explain why the action of the child was wrong, and we endeavour to help the child change their behaviour in future. If a child is repeatedly involved in bullying other children, we inform the Headmaster and the special needs co-ordinator. We then invite the child's parents into the school to discuss the situation. In more extreme cases, for example where these initial discussions have proven ineffective, the Headmaster may contact external support agencies such as the social services.

Teachers attempt to support all children in their class and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. By praising, rewarding and celebrating the success of all children, we aim to prevent incidents of bullying.

We use educational elements such as personal, social and health education (PSHE), assemblies, projects, drama, stories, literature, historical events, current affairs to explore appropriate issues.

### **The role of parents**

Parents who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's class teacher immediately.

Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school.

### **The role of the pupil**

Pupils are always encouraged to come forward with any information that relates to them or another child being bullied.

### **Procedures**

No matter how good the ethos of the school and the general atmosphere, there will be incidents that require action. The school's behaviour and discipline policy should be followed in an attempt to stop bullying; the following action will be taken:

- A member of staff will be appointed to deal specifically with the reported bullying. This may be the Form teacher or it may be a member of the Senior Leadership team or another member of staff, but it must be someone with whom the child feels comfortable.
- The member of staff will gather information by talking one-to-one with the bullied child and bully. If there is more than one bully, each of them must be seen individually.
- The school will inform the parents of all children involved if it is decided that bullying has taken place.
- Having clarified the facts of the matter by talking to them individually, the member of staff will then talk to both/all parties together, ask them to express their own views to each other and to agree an appropriate plan of action which will be communicated to all concerned parties, including parents.
- Follow-up meetings (individual and together, in case of the children) will take place with the same parties within two weeks to monitor progress.
- Additional meetings will take place as necessary. The member of staff is responsible for keeping a “watching brief” on the situation thereafter.
- The Headmaster is to be kept informed from the very first instance and throughout the procedure. This is recorded in the Central Log to enable patterns to be identified.
- A written record of all of the above should be kept by the member of staff designated to oversee the matter under discussion. Copies are to be made available to the parents concerned. The record should include personal accounts from children old enough to express themselves in writing.

### **Sanctions for bullying**

The school’s behaviour, discipline, rewards and sanctions policy must be followed in all disciplinary matters. Sanctions must be considered appropriate to the individual situation.

The sanctions for bullying include strong sanctions such as exclusion which may be necessary in cases of severe and persistent bullying.

If pupils do not respond to preventative strategies to combat bullying, we will take formal action to stop bullying behaviour. These sanctions are in line with the school’s discipline policy.

A member of staff may:

- verbally reprimand a child and discuss appropriate positive behaviour;
- move the child away from others who might be distracted;
- ask the child to complete a meaningful task or activity at playtime or in their own time;
- as appropriate to the Form teacher and the age of the child, deduct house points or not;
- removal from social situations;
- removal from teams;
- communicate informally with parents;
- refer the child to the Deputy Head or Headmaster;
- communicate formally with parents and seek agreement to place the child on daily or weekly report;
- communicate formally with parents and seek agreement to place the child on a behavioural IEP;

- following consultation with the School's Governing Body, require parents, in exceptional cases, to keep their child at home for a specific period of time;
- the School Governing Body in very exceptional cases, will require parents to remove their child from the School.

It is also recognized that the 'bully' will also need support to ensure they understand their actions and the effect this has on the victim. This support will be in the form of a named teacher who will work with the child to help them to understand the actions and the consequences of bullying. We have a trained counsellor within our school team who can provide the pastoral support to help prevent further bullying from occurring. The parents will be invited into School to discuss the behaviour, as we feel parents have a responsibility to support the School's Anti-Bullying Policy, and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the School.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES OUTLINED ABOVE CAN BE ENACTED AT ANY OF THE ABOVE STAGES DEPENDING ON CIRCUMSTANCES AND THE SEVERITY OF THE MISBEHAVIOUR.**

### **Continued Bullying**

Studying the Incident Log Book will highlight any acts of on-going bullying. The 'Incident Book' is kept in the Headmaster's Office, and is also used to record all incidents of bullying occurring outside lesson time and outside school time. All members of Staff are also made aware of the situation at the morning communication briefing.

If an individual is repeatedly involved in bullying other children, then the Headmaster/Deputy Head Teacher will be consulted regarding informing the individual's parents. The SENCO would also be informed of the situation. In extreme cases, where initial discussions have proven ineffective, the Headteacher may utilise the Schools Family Support Advisor or other external support agencies.

Actions for repeated bullying may include:

- Team Around the Child (TAC) Procedures adopted.
- Further support and counselling to all individuals involved.
- Developing strategies to tackle the behaviour alongside parents, the Headmaster and other agencies where applicable.
- Various withdrawals of privileges.
- Fixed term exclusion from School.
- Permanent exclusion from School, though only in extreme cases and as a last resort.

At any stage of the procedure, if a parent has reason to complain about the way in which a case of bullying is being addressed, they should follow the complaints procedure, as set out in the 'School Complaints Policy'.

## **TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT EXCLUSION**

The following are given as examples of offences that lead to temporary or permanent exclusion. Common sense will be applied, according to the age of the child and the circumstances that have led to the offence.

- Being a continued danger to children and staff, through their actions and / or antisocial behaviour
- Stealing
- Deliberate vandalism / damage to school property
- Punching or swearing at a member of staff
- Bullying, that is malicious and continued.
- Possession of an offensive or dangerous weapon, such as a knife. In this instance the Headmaster will consider reporting this to the police as it is potentially a criminal offence.

This list is not exhaustive and sanctions will be applied as appropriate following a thorough investigation and discussion with the Chairman of Governors.

### **Monitoring and review**

This policy is monitored on a day-to-day basis by the **Headmaster**, who reports to governors about the effectiveness of the policy on request. Bullying or the concern that bullying may be happening is raised at staff meetings under a fixed item agenda – ‘Safeguarding’. Staff regularly discuss how to be aware of instances as continual professional development during these times.

This anti-bullying policy is the Governors’ responsibility and they review its effectiveness every three years.

### **Links to other policies**

This policy relates to the following policies:

- Inclusion
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Anti-racism

Headmaster’s signature: