



HEATHSIDE SCHOOL
HAMPSTEAD

**COUNTERING BULLYING
POLICY**
(Including Cyberbullying)

Aims of Policy

This policy has been written with regard to the non-statutory DfE advice: Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies (July 2017); Cyberbullying: Advice for Headteachers and school staff (November 2014); KCSIE (Sept 2024) which highlights child on child abuse and Honour-Based violence; The Children Act (2004); Equality Act (2010)

It should also be followed in conjunction with our Behaviour Management Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, E-safety Policy and Acceptable Computer Use Policy.

Purpose

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn and be taught in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Heathside. If bullying does occur, all pupils should know they can tell staff immediately in the secure knowledge that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

In turn, all our staff know that incidents of bullying against pupils and themselves are unacceptable. Up to date information ensures they understand what bullying is, what behaviours victims might exhibit, and what procedures they should follow should bullying occur.

Preventing and responding to bullying as outlined in this document dovetails with the Heathside Behaviour Management policy. Behaviour management and sanctions have been developed in line with pupils' ages, and shown in detail in appendices to the behaviour management policy.

Equal Opportunities

In line with our Behaviour Management policy, all pupils are expected to meet the high expectations of behaviour set.

We aim:

- to create an environment where every child and adult feels safe and secure
- to ensure that everyone in the school understands what bullying is, and is not
- to ensure that everyone in the school is aware of how to deal with bullying, if it occurs
- to promote a culture where every child understands it is their responsibility to report bullying if they see or experience it.

What is Bullying?

Heathside recognises that learning to understand and manage conflict is an important part of growing up. Bullying is not simply a 'falling out'. Research shows that experiencing bullying can have a significant impact on a child's life well into adulthood. To ensure we are able to prevent bullying, act quickly when

it takes place and avoid misidentifying bullying, it is vital that schools and other settings have a shared definition of bullying. Which the school believes to be:

“Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online.” ANTI-BULLYING ALLIANCE -Definition of bullying

This definition should be understood by the whole school or setting including parents, young people and all staff.

Bullying leads its victims to feeling vulnerable, frightened, intimidated, isolated and distressed. It can include incidents away from the school premises which are school-related, but excludes injury through accident. It is recognised that some bullying might be through individual incidents of a relatively minor nature but which assume greater significance when viewed in context, perhaps through frequency or reason. Bullying can take place towards peers and/or towards adults.

What forms does bullying take?

Bullying can take many forms and can be short- or long-term. Bullying can be:

- Physical – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc.
- Verbal - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling.
- Emotional – isolating others, tormenting, hiding books, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation and coercion.
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc.
- Online /cyber – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion
- Indirect - Can include the exploitation of individuals.

Differences are celebrated at Heathside; anything which negatively focuses on differences is bullying and is wrong. Some examples are:

- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures. Including nationality-based comments
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive or inappropriate comments
- Homophobic - because of, or focussing on, the issue of sexuality. Including biphobic and transphobic comments.

As per the Department of Education guidance, Bullying “is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, 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 children or perceived differences.”

Tackling bullying in school matters because:

- bullying make pupils unhappy and affects their self-esteem and confidence
- pupils who are being bullied are unlikely to concentrate fully on their school work and will fall behind
- some pupils avoid being bullied by not going to school
- pupils who observe unchallenged bullying behaviour might copy this anti-social behaviour
- bullying can have negative life-long effects on a child
- the school is responsible for providing a safe learning environment for all pupils.

Bullying and the law

There is no one strict legal definition of bullying, however, some forms of bullying are illegal and it may be necessary for the school to report the incident to the police. These include:

- violence or assault
- theft
- repeated harassment or intimidation, for example name calling, threats and abusive phone calls, emails or text messages
- hate crimes

Possible Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

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

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school/public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or 'go missing'
- asks for money and starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has money continually 'lost'

- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what is wrong
- gives improbable excuses to any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated and reported via the CPOMS portal to the Designated Safeguarding Lead..

The Heathside Countering Bullying Strategy

Throughout its everyday work, Heathside promotes values which promote co-operative, caring behaviour and reject bullying behaviour. Staff should reinforce these values regularly, and at specific times after any incident, if required.

In addition, specific curriculum topics and activities promote our anti-bullying strategy.

Bullying is discussed and prevented:

- by being part of the PSHE curriculum, and through the promotion of children's personal, social and emotional development in the EYFS
- during specific activities, such as Anti-Bullying week
- at assemblies focused on bullying
- during Circle time, e.g. friendships, conflict resolution, assertiveness, trust.
- through Student Council/Student voice the school aims to create an open culture in which bullying is openly addressed and reported, never tolerated.

Dealing with bullying

Staff

Staff agree that they:

- will follow the procedures laid down in the Behaviour Management policy, including implementing the various sanctions
- will never ignore suspected bullying

- will not make premature assumptions but will listen carefully to all accounts – several pupils saying the same does not necessary mean they are telling it like it is
- will aim to adopt a problem-solving approach
- will follow up incidents of bullying to ensure that it has not resumed
- will be vigilant at all times, but particularly at unstructured times such as Heath time, breaks, lunch-time and lesson changes.

In addition, staff can support pupils – both the victims and the bullies by:

- responding to the inappropriate behaviour
- stressing the class and school rules, and individuals’ rights and responsibilities
- awarding rewards, certificates and stickers etc to make pupils feel more confident
- public praise to make pupils feel more confident
- teaching pupils how being passive about bullying behaviour not only colludes with it but sometimes encourages it
- teaching pupils strategies to encourage positive behaviour in others.

Banter

Many people will attempt to dismiss bullying behaviours as “banter” - this is never acceptable. However, where do we draw the line between acceptable language and unacceptable language?

According to the dictionary: “Banter is the playful and friendly exchange of teasing remarks.”

Distinguishing between friendly discourse and bullying behaviour can be challenging, below are some tips for professionals (adapted with Chris Gibbons, Director of Inside Inclusion):

- Understanding the four elements of bullying is vital to knowing whether something is bullying: intentional, hurtful, repetitive, involves a power imbalance
- Just because ‘banter’ doesn’t constitute all the elements of bullying doesn’t mean it’s acceptable.
- All offensive, threatening, violent and abusive language and behaviour is always unacceptable, whatever your role
- This includes any negative language or behavior in relation to / referring to a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender), sexual orientation
- Language and behaviour can have different meanings, in different contexts. If you’re unsure, ask what was meant
- Just because someone uses certain language to refer to themselves it doesn’t necessarily means it’s acceptable, nor does it make it ok for you to use it
- Just because you think something is banter or a joke doesn’t mean other people will
- People won’t always feel confident to speak up if they are offended by something. They might even go along with it so as not to draw attention to themselves

- Third parties might be offended, even if they're not part of your conversation

Pupils

Pupils need to be taught to refuse to comply with bullying pupils' demands, and to stand up for their friends against the bullies. Peer pressure can have great positive benefits.

Victims should be taught to:

- be firm and clear – look the bully/bullies in the eye and tell them to stop; role play can help pupils develop suitable strategies
- get away from the situation as quickly as possible
- tell an adult what has happened straight away.

Observers/friends of the victim or bully should be taught to take an active stand against bullying behaviour by:

- not allowing someone to be deliberately left out of a group
- not smiling or laughing when someone is being bullied
- telling a member of staff what is happening
- telling the bullying pupil to stop what they are doing
- showing the bullying pupil that they disapprove of their actions
- encouraging the bullied pupil to join in with their activities or groups.

On being bullied, pupils should be taught to:

- tell a teacher or another adult
- ask a friend to go with them if they are scared to tell an adult on their own
- tell their parents
- keep on speaking until someone listens
- not to blame themselves for what has happened.

Emotional wellbeing and mental health of both the victim and the 'bully' will be taken into account throughout all investigations. The school recognises that bullying of any kind can have a serious impact on the victim's wellbeing, and therefore support will be offered to the child through various forms such as, meeting with the school counsellor, a safe place, a change of class etc. We will always ask the pupil and their parents how we can offer support and if necessary, a support plan will be put in place

Baiting and bullying

Baiting can be used in bullying both on and offline. It can be used to bully someone to get 'a rise' out of them and it can be used to antagonise those who might be bullying others to get them to bully. Sometimes baiting is used secretly to try and get a person to explode in a rage or react negatively/loudly so that they get into trouble.

If someone is baiting you, here are some examples of what you should and should not do developed from an article by Out of the Fog.

- Don't take the bait!
- Don't argue with a person or appeal to their sense of reason or logic while they are baiting you. They want you to rise to it!
- Don't retaliate and fall into a trap.

What TO do:

- Learn to recognise baiting for what it is. If you know what they are trying to do it is easier to understand and deal with it.
- Remember that the bait you can see often has nothing to do with what the other person really wants.
- Remember that what the person is feeling is temporary and they will probably feel different in a few days or a few hours.
- Talk to an adult you trust such as a teacher or parent and explain what they are doing and why you think they are doing it.
- If falsely accused, politely, briefly and calmly state the truth one time only.
- Try to remove yourself from the situation calmly. End the conversation and exit the space/room.
- Get support - describe what has happened to someone who understands your situation and can help you come up with a reasoned, effective plan of how to deal with it.
- Talk to a teacher
- Talk to your form/class teacher
- Fill in a Place2Talk slip and put it in one of the boxes

Parents

Parents of both victims and their bullies will be informed of the incident as soon as possible after the incident if staff know about it. There may be occasions, however, that parents are the first to find out that a child has been bullied or is bullying others.

If their child has been bullied, we advise parents to:

- talk calmly with their child about his/her experience
- make a note of what their child says, who was involved, how often it has happened, where it happened and what happened
- reassure their child that he/she has done the right thing to tell them about the bullying
- inform their child's teacher and make an appointment to meet them
- explain to their child that should any further incidents occur he/she should report them to a staff member immediately
- not to approach the child doing the bullying or his/her family directly.

If their child is bullying others, we advise parents to:

- talk to their child and explain what he/she is doing is unacceptable and makes other children unhappy
- discourage other members of the family from bullying behaviour or from using aggression or force to get what they want
- show their child how he/she can join in with other children without bullying
- make an appointment to see their child's teacher to talk about the problems your child is experiencing
- give their child a lot of praise and encouragement when she/he is co-operative or kind to other people.

If parents discover that their child has been bullied or is bullying others, they should speak to the class teacher in the first instance. The teacher will implement the procedures in the Behaviour Management policy. This includes full discussions with staff, parents, child and professionals if appropriate; support for the victim and the bully, and relevant sanctions.

Governing Body

Regular reports are made to the governing body about safeguarding within the school. These reports include the number and types of recorded bullying incidents.