



HOE BRIDGE SCHOOL

Anti –Bullying Policy

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Statement

Hoe Bridge School is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe and secure environment for all of our children so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere, without anxiety. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. We therefore do all we can to prevent it by developing a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable. This policy aims to

- produce a consistent response to any bullying incidents that may occur
- make clear to children, staff, parents and guardians that bullying is not acceptable
- encourage a climate of openness in which children, staff and parents act immediately if there is any suspicion of bullying
- provide a clear framework for dealing with incidents of bullying
- educate children in resisting bullying
- provide support for those being bullied and a framework within which those bullying others may recognise and reform their behaviour
- instil in all members of the school community, in accordance with the school's ethos, a sense of caring and kindness for one another
- ensure all governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents have an understanding of what bullying is
- ensure all governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents know what the school policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying arises or is reported
- reassure pupils and parents that they will be supported when bullying is reported

The school implements a range of strategies to teach pupils about bullying, to identify bullying when it occurs, and a range of sanctions against offenders. Persistent and severe bullying may ultimately lead to exclusion. The school procedures are as outlined in the subsections below. The key aim of this document is to help members of the school community to deal with bullying when it occurs and, even more importantly, to prevent it.

This policy has regard to relevant legislation and governmental guidance, including DfE guidance 'Preventing and Tracking Bullying' October 2014 and Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff (2014) and it applies to all in the school community, including those within the EYFS setting. Hoe Bridge School seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document, and is fully committed to ensuring that the implementation of the policy is non-discriminatory, in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the school's own Equal Opportunities Policy.

The policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Behaviour Policy
- Code of Conduct – Pupils
- Complaints Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- ICT Online Safety Policy
- PSHE Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

This document is available to all interested parties and is available on request. It is reviewed annually by the Assistant Head (Pastoral) and the Head of the Pre-Prep, or as events or legislation changes require. The next scheduled date for review is April 2019.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is the deliberate hurtful behaviour of someone in circumstances where it is difficult for victims to defend themselves. This can include abuse, in person or by digital media, of one or more pupils against another ie child on child, adult on child, child on adult or adult on adult. Where bullying seems to be serious or persistent, it should be considered as a child protection referral. Procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying are detailed in the Anti-Bullying Policy.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional (indirect bullying) - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting someone (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures), deliberately excluding someone from social groups or an activity, being made the subject of malicious rumours, sending malicious e-mails or text messages.
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
- Physical harm or the threat of physical harm - pushing, kicking, hitting, taking or hiding belongings, punching or any use of violence, deliberately destroying or damaging work or possessions or removing property.
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- Homophobic - because of, or focusing on, the issue of sexuality.
- Cyber bullying – using web sites, mobile phones, social networking, emailing and photography.
- Aimed at disability – deliberately targeting a person with a disability/

Cyber-Bullying can be defined as: 'the deliberate use of Information Communications Technology (ICT) - particularly mobile phones and the internet, including photographs, email and social networking sites - to upset someone else.' Social Network sites, such as Facebook, are now widely used and do provide increased opportunity for cyber bullying through misuse of photographs or methods such as 'fraping' (logging in as somebody else and pretending to be them).

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying which can happen at any time, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click. We are aware of the ease by which children have access to ICT and also the potential for great harm (and great good) that such access allows and so we seek to educate pupils, staff and parents/carers to the possibilities and dangers of cyber-bullying and to show that it will be treated as seriously as any other form of bullying.

Staff and pupils are made aware of both the good and injurious potential of available technologies and reminded of their roles in the protection of the pupils at school and at home. An internet safety briefing alongside our own on-going education provides guidance on sharing personal information online, age-appropriate information on grooming, warnings over the potential content of internet sites, and a what to do guide if you encounter a problem online, while also reinforcing the seriousness of using technologies to tease, threaten or bully others. A suitable filter system operated by INTY is in place on school based internet facilities and clear rules are in place for the use of computer systems at school.

Mobile phones are not permitted in school during the school day but may be taken by pupils on activity weekends.

Kindles are permitted in school for reading only and parents sign an agreement letter with the understanding that if the Kindle is used for internet access the Kindle will be removed permanently.

Signs and Symptoms

Whilst bullying is not, in itself, a criminal offence, the school recognises that there are legal consequences of some types of bullying behaviour. Some forms of harassment or threatening behaviour fall into this category as does electronic communication that seeks to cause distress or anxiety, or which threatens, is offensive or indecent.

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 child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- 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 go "missing"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Procedures

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Bullying is dealt with on a progressive scale starting at whatever level staff, who are confronted by an issue, deem necessary or appropriate. It is therefore important that all staff understand the progressive scale. In Pre-Prep and Prep the class teacher will deal with matters to Stage 2 at which point the Head will become involved. In the Prep school the Assistant Head (Pastoral) will support and or lead this procedure up to Stage 2 and will be fully involved at all stages thereafter.

Bullying	Action
1. low level verbal, physical or emotional exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff to talk problem through with pupils • Separate as appropriate • Discuss with form teacher
2. stronger verbal, physical or emotional exclusion or more persistent low level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff to talk to pupils and separate • Report to Assistant Head Pastoral • All staff to be informed • Incident report completed and saved in shared area • Parents called/informed
3. continued persistent bullying behaviour or violent physical attack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff take pupils to Head or Assistant Head (pastoral) • Investigation of incident in full • Parent to come into school to discuss behaviour and way forward • Victim and perpetrator to discuss behaviour weekly with an appointed member of staff
4. repeated incidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head to investigate, discuss with parent and consider temporary exclusion • Chairman of Governors informed
5. bullying behaviour continues and perpetrator appears unrepentant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head to discuss with other HM • Temporary exclusion – consider permanent exclusion • Chairman of Governors informed

Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying will almost certainly take place outside of school hours and predominantly among the Key Stage 3 (Years 7 & 8 pupils). Children will have the opportunity to discuss cyber bullying in PSHE lessons however, should an issue with cyber bullying come to our attention then the school will act. Parents are encouraged to inform the school if they are aware of any cyber bullying at home.

The school must ensure that the pupil(s) who have been subject to the cyber bullying are part of the discussion. It will also be at the discretion of the parents about how to proceed. Should they wish the school to deal with the bullying then the school will speak with all parties involved.

It will be the job of the Assistant Head (Pastoral)/Headmaster to investigate the incident and to determine the level of severity. The parents will be contacted and asked to speak with the Assistant Head (Pastoral)/Headteacher. Once both parties have been spoken to, the school will work with the pupils and endeavor to resolve the situation.

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It is paramount for the school to address any issues arising from the cyber-bullying incident. The best way to prevent and resolve the issue is to educate the pupils on the impact and severity of cyber bullying.

It will also be the job of the school to respond to any bullying that takes place. The education and discussion that follows will be a chance for all parties involved to learn and to learn from the past experiences.

It is important to ensure that openness and a no blame culture is fostered. Parents, pupils and staff must be encouraged to report incidents however small or large they feel they are, confident that the school will respond appropriately and immediately – neither over reacting nor ignoring. It is this response that is vital in securing openness and fostering a caring, safe and secure environment.

If anyone is unhappy with the action taken by the school they must follow the formal Complaints Procedure. Any discussion with pupils/parents/staff must be recorded and filed in Head's office.

What the school does to prevent bullying

Hoe Bridge School will use the following methods for helping children to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- signing a behaviour contract
- writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying
- reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly
- making up role-plays
- having discussions about bullying and why it matters
- both sides may keep a diary of events to be reviewed on a weekly basis by a member of staff

Hoe Bridge School works hard to create a climate of openness and a no-blame culture to promote a bullying free environment.

- The Headmaster/ Head Pre-Prep 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.
- Staff should use constructive ways to help those who are bullying change their behaviour. Punishing bullies doesn't end bullying. It is important to stress that it is the bullying behaviour that is not liked, rather than the person. Those thought to be responsible need just as much help as the victim if the cycle of bullying is to be removed and behaviour changed.
- Bullying often takes place in groups. Children have a choice of watching from the margins, joining in, trying to remain uninvolved or trying to help those being bullied. Acknowledge and reward children who help prevent bullying.
- All teachers should be alert to possible warning signs in children such as distress, work difficulties, illness and irregular attendance.
- 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. We spend time talking to the child who has bullied: we explain why the action of the child was wrong and we endeavour to help the child change their behaviour in future.
- If parents themselves report a concern to you that their child (or another) is being bullied then this should be dealt with immediately, as above.
- If a child informs a teacher that he/she is being bullied or a member of staff hears that bullying has taken place, he/she should take careful notes of time, place etc. and satisfy him/herself that there is a case to answer. All reports of bullying must be taken seriously.
- Bullying behaviour should be seen and dealt with in the context of our overall School Behaviour Policy document. Any such behaviour which betrays the quality of the relationships in our community must be seen for what it is – destructive and totally unacceptable.

- Establish support mechanisms to help children who are being bullied. This could be an assigned group of staff or a group of pupils formed through a peer support scheme. Peer support schemes such as buddying, peer listening or peer mediation can create a happier, friendlier environment and offer much needed support to children who have problems.
- Involve the children in anti-bullying work, as this is far more likely to succeed than if ideas are imposed on them. Children and young people often have the best approaches to solving problems within their peer groups.
- Support schemes that encourage children to make friends. Having friends is one of the best defences against bullying but not everyone has the right social skills to make friends easily. Teaching assertiveness skills and confidence-building to the class may be a way to make more children make friends.
- Use time during PSHE classes to talk about bullying/intimidation in general. There is much information on this in the PSHE files.
- Ensure safe induction for introducing new children to Hoe Bridge School.
- Establish a climate of trust and respect for all in each class.
- The adults in our community must set the appropriate example when dealing with each other and the pupils.
- Staff training and leadership.

The role of the Governors and Heads

- The Governors support the Heads in their attempts to eliminate bullying from our school. The Governors do not condone bullying in our school and any incidents of bullying that do occur are taken very seriously and dealt with appropriately.
- The Governors monitor incidents of bullying and review the effectiveness of the school policy regularly. An annual report is presented to the Education and Welfare Committee and then onto the Full Board.
- The Governors require the Heads to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying.
- The Governors will respond within ten term time days to any request from a parent to investigate incidents of bullying. In all cases, the Governors notify the Head who conducts an investigation into the case and reports back to the Governors.
- It is the responsibility of the Heads 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 Heads ensure that all children know that bullying is wrong and that it is unacceptable behaviour in this school.

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.

Further Information

The Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.ncb.org.uk/aba/

Teachernet: www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/

ChildLine in Partnership with Schools (CHIPS): - 020 7239 1000

ChildLine: www.childline.org.uk/schools.asp

Beat bullying: www.beatbullying.org

Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk/professionals/professionalsindex.shtml

Pertinent Legislation

Next Scheduled Review (Assistant Head (Pastoral) & Head Pre Prep): April 2019

Education and Inspectors Act 2008, Childrens Act 1989, The Equality Act 2010, The Communications Act 2003

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