



HALLFIELD SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Head Master	Mr K Morrow	
Chairman of Governors	Mr T Venner	
Staff member with responsibilities	Deputy Heads (Head of Prep and Head of Pre-Prep)	
Subcommittee with responsibilities	Education	
ISI Regulatory Policy	Yes	
	Date	Spring 2022
Date for policy review	Spring 2025 (unless new legislation requires amendment)	



HALLFIELD SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Scope

All staff and pupils including those in after school care and in the EYFS.

Aims

It is our aim:

- to create a culture where it is hard for bullying to exist;
- that all members of the community recognise and support the School's stance against bullying
- to respond to all complaints of bullying;
- to investigate reasons for bullying incidents in order to help, support and educate all those concerned and to improve our own responses and strategies.
- to make our school a safe and secure environment where children's right to learn freely and without fear of bullying is promoted as effectively as possible.

Legal requirements

The law requires that the School must:

Ensure that, in so far that it is reasonably practicable, bullying at the school is prevented by drawing up and implementing an effective anti-bullying strategy. In accordance with the non-statutory advice in **Preventing and Tackling Bullying** (DfE, July 2017), Hallfield School will:

- Have regard to the Equality Act (2010) and seek to eliminate any unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between all members of the school community;
- Recognise that, under the Children Act 1989, bullying incidents should be addressed as a safeguarding concern when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer, significant harm.
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education* reinforces that child on child abuse can include bullying (including cyber-bullying), gender-based violence / sexual assaults and sexting (youth produced sexual imagery).

- Such incidents should be referred to the DSL and, where there is evidence of significant harm, would be referred to the appropriate LSCP, in accordance with the School's Safeguarding policy.
- While bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment, threatening behaviour and communications: for example, under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997; the Malicious Communications Act 1988; the Communications Act 2003, the Public Order Act 1986. The age of criminal responsibility in England is 10 years old. If the Head Master feels that an offence may have been committed, we will seek assistance from the Police.

Governors

The governing body supports the Head Master in all attempts to prevent and reduce the likelihood of bullying in our School.

POLICY STATEMENT

At Hallfield we believe that all pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment. We recognise bullying as a serious problem which can result in long-term damage to the emotional welfare of its victims, self-harming or worse. Bullying can arise in any school - we are not immune. Behaviours of various sorts which – left unchallenged – could become bullying will quite naturally occur in a wide range of children as they test and learn social boundaries and principles, and as their maturing brains better allow them to manage impulsive urges. For example, reacting negatively towards others when their self-esteem has suffered a blow. Within the definition of bullying below, however, two notable phrases are: 'usually repeated' and 'intentionally'. There are a number of ways in which a child can upset another; they do not all constitute bullying. They will, however, all be taken seriously.

We make it clear to everyone in our community that bullying in any form, whether it involves physical or verbal bullying, or bullying by exclusion or by damage to property or theft, is totally unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All adults working with children have a role to play in the whole-school approach to bullying.

In order to protect our pupils from bullying and to promote, change where bullying occurs, we will do the following:

- Strive to create a culture in the School community in which bullying is seen as unacceptable and in which it is hard for it to exist;

- Regularly review our policies and procedures to minimise opportunities for bullying and to deal effectively with the problem whenever it arises;
- Be vigilant for signs of bullying and to ensure that instances of bullying are investigated and dealt with as soon as they are witnessed or reported;
- Record instances of established or suspected bullying and follow a standard procedure in the event of bullying taking place;
- Written records should be looked at carefully to identify any patterns that might emerge looking in terms of victims, perpetrators, location and nature of incidents of bullying;
- Whenever appropriate involve parents in disciplinary procedures and in seeking solutions;
- Ensure that the School's policies on bullying are made clear to the pupils through a wide range of measures, including assemblies, PSHE lessons, circle time, posters, leaflets and sensitive and caring pastoral care.
- Raise and maintain staff awareness of the issues surrounding bullying through staff training and effective internal communication;
- Involve parents in the School's anti-bullying measures and make them aware of the School's policies and procedures.
- The School is particularly aware of the potential for bullying to relate to those characteristics protected under the Equality Act (2010): age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion/belief, gender and sexual orientation. Respect, tolerance and understanding of these characteristics are promoted in an age-appropriate manner through the comprehensive PSHE/RSE schemes, assemblies and informal and ongoing pastoral dialogues between staff and pupils. Any instances of bullying that do relate to the protected characteristics will be dealt with swiftly and appropriately using the procedures within this policy. As part of the educational restorative process children involved will be explicitly engaged in conversations addressing the appropriate characteristic.

When reading this policy, it is important to refer to the School's:

- Behaviour Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

which deal with a number of related aspects.



HALLFIELD SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING PROCEDURES

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1. DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying may be defined as any deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over time that intentionally hurts another pupil or group physically or emotionally. Bullying is often pre-meditated and persistent, and may involve one or more individuals systematically undermining the confidence and self-esteem of others.

Bullying can take many different forms. These include verbal intimidation, deliberate ostracism, sexist or racist behaviour as well as threats and physical attacks.

Cyber bullying is when forms of technology such as mobile phones, messaging, social media and the internet are used to target others, often anonymously. The use of technology can mean otherwise 'safe spaces' in a child's life are breeched, which can heighten the impact of the bullying.

Bullying can focus on the cultural or religious identities of other people, may be homophobic in character and reflect negative attitudes to others' sexuality, physical appearance, home circumstances, special educational need, disability or because a child is adopted or is a carer.

The seriousness of bullying cannot be emphasised enough. Bullying can and does result in serious long-term damage to the emotional welfare of its victims; it undermines their confidence and self-esteem and destroys their sense of personal security.

It can have a long-term negative effect on young people's lives and in worst case scenarios can even result in children harming themselves and becoming a risk to their own wellbeing.

2. LOOKING OUT FOR THE SIGNS OF BULLYING

It is important to be aware that children who are being bullied will potentially exhibit symptoms in many different ways. Staff should always be vigilant and look out for the following:

- Unwillingness to return to school;
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet;
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others;
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly going missing, or being damaged;
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to the way they speak or their vocabulary)
- Diminished levels of self-confidence;
- Frequent visits to the medical room with generic symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches;
- Unexplained cuts and bruises;
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class;
- Choosing the company of adults;
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact;
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiencing nightmares;
- Talking of harming themselves or running away.

3. CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE IT IS HARD FOR BULLYING TO EXIST

The School's response to bullying does not start at the point at which a child has been bullied.

Staff will be proactive regarding issues between pupils which might provoke problems, being alert to early signs and acting appropriately. This might involve talking to pupils about issues of difference and/or upset, perhaps in lessons or through assemblies or informal pastoral conversations. Staff themselves will usually be able to determine what will work best for their pupils, depending on the particular issues they need to address.

The School will raise the awareness of staff through training and take action to reduce the risk of bullying at the times and places where it is most likely to occur. The School's anti-bullying stance will be prominently displayed in posters on notice boards and in pupil planners and will be discussed with pupils regularly, including at the start of the school year.

It will also be revisited as necessary during PSHE sessions to all years and reinforced in other areas of the curriculum as the opportunities present themselves. Opportunities will also be sought to allow parents to contribute to the School's actions to prevent bullying.

The following are key areas of the School's actions to create an anti-bullying culture:

- Staff and teachers are trained to recognise the symptoms of bullying and to be aware of how they might affect victims.
- Staff are made aware that bullying often occurs away from the view of teachers and outside of lesson times.
- New members of staff are given copies of this policy and its contents are discussed at induction.
- The School takes part in national initiatives such as Anti-Bullying Week to promote tolerance and mutual respect during assemblies, and in displays around the School.
- In the Pre-Prep, circle time is used to praise, reward and celebrate the success of all children and to create a positive atmosphere.
- In Prep, timetabled PSHE lessons are used to tackle directly bullying and the issues it raises, as well to promote considerate and tolerant behaviour in general.
- All pupils are encouraged to report any bullying worries immediately to a member of staff.
- When a report of bullying is made children should be assured that the member of staff will undertake a full and fair investigation into the allegations. (When appropriate, it should be made clear that it might be necessary to pass on the information that is disclosed in accordance with School policies and procedures on confidentiality and safeguarding, whilst making it clear the School's actions will always be in the child's best interests.)
- Staff should at all times, but particularly outside the classroom, watch out for children who are potential or known victims of bullying and try to ensure that they are protected from further distress.
- Friends of the victims of bullying will be encouraged, as appropriate, to offer support and to ensure that the victim is included in group activities.

- Internet access within the School is closely monitored to reduce the likelihood of cyber bullying.
- Involving parents: parents have an important part to play in recognising the signs of bullying and keeping the School informed of any concerns, they may have. This may apply particularly to inappropriate or abusive use of electronic communication from home. Parents will be kept informed of school policies and initiatives in information meetings, newsletters, the school website, children's planners and workshops when appropriate.

4. DEALING WITH THE THREAT OF CYBER BULLYING

As mentioned in the definition above, cyber bullying is when forms of technology such as mobile phones, messaging, social media and the internet are used to target others, often anonymously. The use of technology can mean otherwise 'safe spaces' in a child's life are breached, which can heighten the impact of the bullying.

The Online Safety Policy highlights the need for appropriate use of ICT in school. Internet usage is monitored and any inappropriate usage that potentially involves cyber bullying, radicalisation or safeguarding issues is immediately brought to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Lead Deputy DSL. Any evidence such as computers used or records of usage will be preserved in case of the need for further investigation, potentially involving the Police. The School has managed filtering systems in place to make sure that inappropriate materials are not viewed or accessed by the pupils. Guidance is also offered to children to reduce the risk of cyber bullying outside of school, including advice on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe and secure.

Each year the older children in the school are given more extensive guidance and advice on how to stay safe online, including when they are outside of school. This is built into our PSHE scheme of work and forms part of our Anti-Bullying awareness week in November.

5. PROCEDURES FOR STAFF DEALING WITH AN INCIDENT OR ACCUSATION OF BULLYING

In some cases, behaviour that is potentially bullying is witnessed at first hand by a member of staff. In this case, the background to the bullying should be looked into at the time and appropriate action taken. It may be that the incident witnessed is an example of something more systematic going on, and a close eye should be kept on the children concerned.

If a member of staff receives a complaint of bullying from a child or child's parent, the member of staff should investigate the accusation carefully before responding.

Generally, such matters would be referred to the Head of Year in the first instance, and to the Deputy Head: Head of Pre-Prep, or the Deputy Head: Head of Prep if the matter remains unresolved after an initial investigation and response.

It is always important to get as many different insights into an allegation of bullying as possible and the initial investigation might involve talking informally with the victim, as well as any possible independent witnesses. It will usually be appropriate to interview the accused as well. At all times, children should understand that they may have to be spoken with again to help promote a better understanding in light of contributions from others.

When making these enquiries it is important to allow the children to talk openly and without giving closed prompts. It is easy to jump to conclusions and for investigating staff to put their own pre-judgments into the minds of the children. The children are often confused when this happens and subsequently find it difficult to separate fact from fiction. Staff must take care to keep neutral and fair at all times, trying to gain precise detail whenever possible. At this stage staff should do all that they can to support the victim of bullying.

When a child makes an accusation of bullying it is important that the child is informed that it might be necessary to pass the information on to other members of staff in accordance with school policies on confidentiality and safeguarding. It is not appropriate to offer unconditional confidentiality at any stage.

It is often a good idea to arrange a meeting with both the bully and the victim present to discuss what has happened and to put all of the information on the table. It can often be appropriate for both parties to share their feelings on the matter, being allowed to respond and coached to use 'I' rather than 'you' statements. This meeting needs careful management and thought but can often prove to be very constructive in restoring relations while ensuring a fair outcome for both parties.

After this initial investigation, the member of staff might come to one of four conclusions:

a. Bullying not proved

An argument or disagreement, or even a physical fight, is not always bullying. If bullying is not proved, all pupils concerned should be reminded of our attitudes to bullying and should be reassured that concerns will always be followed up.

b. Bullying is suspected

If, after allowing all parties to put forward their views, staff suspect there is substance to the allegation although there is not definitive proof, they should endeavour to identify the reasons for the bullying and to help the children (both suspected bully and victims) deal with the underlying problems causing the bullying behaviour.

At this stage the matter should be reported to the appropriate members of staff, in particular the child's form teacher, Head of Year, Deputy Head: Head of Pre-Prep or Deputy Head: Head of Prep.

Depending on the nature of the particular case and its severity the senior member of staff may become directly involved and talk to the children concerned. A written report should be made.

c. Bullying proved

If bullying is proved, the culprit should be told clearly of our attitudes to bullying and that bullying is totally unacceptable. He/she should be told that they must stop and that a final warning is being given. The School's policies on bullying should be explained clearly, and that repeated offences could ultimately result in suspension or expulsion. The culprit should also be warned to provide suitable space from his/her victims until any restorative processes have been undertaken as appropriate with staff. The Head Master and the parents of both the bully and the victim should be informed of the outcome status.

Every effort should be made to find out why a child is bullying and to seek ways of helping with any problems that might lie behind the behaviour. Children who bully should understand that whilst we cannot tolerate bullying in school, we will do everything we can to support the child in his/her efforts to reform and to involve parents in this process as appropriate. A written record should be kept of what has occurred and of any meetings with parents.

All staff, as well as the parents of "bully" and "bullied", should be notified that there has been a problem and should be asked to keep a close watch on the children concerned.

d. Continued bullying

If bullying is proved and it is clear that this is a recurring problem and that the bully has not heeded previous warnings the Head Master and the Deputy Head: Head of Pre-Prep or Deputy Head: Head of Prep will take appropriate measures, as outlined below.

e. Bullying and safeguarding

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 safeguarding concern under the Children Act 1989. Where they believe this could be the case, the School staff should discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Tim Butcher, Deputy Head: Head of Prep) or the Lead Deputy DSL (Lizzie Sanderson, Deputy Head: Head of Pre-Prep) as appropriate, who will consider those concerns and whether a referral to the appropriate LSCP is required.

6. RECORD KEEPING AND SANCTIONS

When a case of bullying is suspected or proven, records must be kept. These records may be informal notes taken as well as written reports on incidents or interviews with children involved. These records will be kept as pastoral records on iSAMS.

Such records will be subject to the School's policies on confidentiality. More serious cases, where there are lengthy records kept, may be stored between iSAMS and the appropriate Deputy Head's office. A log of case summaries where an allegation of bullying has been investigated is maintained on the central Bullying Log, maintained by the Deputy Heads, Heads of Prep and Pre-Prep. This log identifies the outcome of investigations as per the categories above and also identifies where any incidents of bullying had associated areas of concern (for example, protected characteristics, child-on-child abuse or sexual harassment). The log, along with any supporting material detail kept filed, enables the School to keep track of bullying cases, to judge the effectiveness of its approach, and to guard against certain children offending repeatedly and the offences being treated in isolation.

Broadly speaking, cases of bullying will be formally responded to according to the stages described below. (In cases of severe or sustained bullying being clearly identified it is possible that it will be treated as a more advanced case directly from the outset.)

When dealing with parents it is essential that they realise the serious nature of the offence, and are aware that repeated bullying behaviour by their child can result in suspension or expulsion.

a. Warning Stage

When bullying is suspected but not proved, the child suspected should be told clearly about the accusation and its seriousness. They should be reminded about the School's policy on bullying and warned not to put themselves at risk of further accusations by unkind or inconsiderate behaviour. At this stage parents may or may not be consulted depending on the discretion of the staff involved.

b. Stage One:

The culprit is given a warning that if he/she continues to bully, further steps will be taken. At this stage, it should be made clear that repeated bullying could result in suspension or expulsion. Again, all efforts should be made to find the causes of the bullying behaviour and to address these in cooperation with parents. Parents will be invited to a meeting to discuss the problem and seek solutions.

c. Stage Two

If there is a further incident involving that pupil, the Head Master must be informed. He, or the appropriate Deputy Head, will ask the parents to come into School again and the problem and solutions will be discussed. If necessary, and with the parents' agreement, professional help or in-house counselling may be sought for the bully and/or the victim. At this meeting, parents and pupil will be informed clearly of the next stage of our bullying procedure.

d. Stage Three

If the problem continues, then the Head Master will decide what further action to take. That may be a formal warning letter, suspension or permanent exclusion (expulsion). Parents who are not satisfied with decisions made at this stage will be referred to the Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure.

Notes

- Any requests to view records kept by the School will be treated on a case-by-case basis, taking into account constraints placed on the School by the need for confidentiality of other parties involved.

These are minimum sanctions. As above, in serious cases it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or Social Services.

7. PROCEDURES FOR STAFF

In the School situation, bullying is most likely to affect pupils. However, we are also aware that adults themselves can be bullied in the workplace. In cases of alleged bullying, the member of staff should refer to the appropriate grievance procedure and, in the first instance, can take advice from the HR Manager.