

HEATHLAND SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Policy Reviewed – Sept 2020

Policy presented to Directors – Sept 2020

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Introduction

Heathland School understands the seriousness of bullying in causing psychological damage, and, in extreme cases, suicide. Bullying on the basis of the protected characteristics is taken particularly seriously. The School believes that all pupils are entitled to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment, without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. This policy is designed to ensure that our school community is alert to signs of bullying and that we act promptly, consistently and firmly against it. Further advice can be obtained from the DfE guidance document *Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017)*.

The Aim of the anti-bullying policy

- To create an environment where all members of the school community feel safe and valued
- To foster a climate of openness where victims are able to ask for help and all members of the community act as ‘alerters’ for each other.
- To enable staff, parents and pupils to work together to identify and resolve problems, consistently and firmly.

Definitions of bullying

Bullying is defined as behaviour that intentionally hurts another pupil or group physically or emotionally and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted or is a carer – it may occur directly or through cyber-technology (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email);

Bullying can be:

- Emotional
- Physical
- Racist
- Sexual
- Homophobic
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT)
- Verbal
- Cyber-bullying e.g. Social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs, tablet computers and emails.
- Special Education Needs
- Disability
- An adopted child
- A child carer

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 they should investigate if a child:

- Is frightened of walking to or from school
- Doesn't want to travel on the school bus
- Begs to be driven to school
- Changes their usual routine
- Is unwilling to go to school
- 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- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence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 their school work
- Comes home with torn or dirtied clothes
- Has possessions which are 'damaged' or go missing
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- Has dinner money or other money continually lost
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Comes home unusually hungry (money for lunch or lunch may have been taken)
- 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
- Is afraid to use the Internet or the mobile phone

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

Prevention of Bullying

Heathland School operates a climate of openness and communication. Students are encouraged to believe that they are able to speak to any adult in the school community and that their concerns are taken seriously and will be acted upon. The school operates, as far as is possible, an 'open-door' policy to deal with parental concerns as soon as possible. The Anti-Bullying Policy will be available to parents through the web site and upon request from the School Office. Parents will be encouraged to play their part in preventing cases of bullying. Making sure that parents and pupils are clear about the part they can play in preventing bullying. The School Councils provide a forum where students can help each other to find solutions and older students act as 'buddies' and role models.

In the Senior School, a formal system of mentoring for students in Senior 1 plays its part in encouraging children to confide in each other. Each form in the Senior School has its own form prefect.

A climate of tolerance for others is encouraged and built up by the work done in assemblies, PHSE and SEAL work done across the school.

Staff Responsibilities

- All staff will be kept abreast of current thinking with regard to anti-bullying and, if required, support will be given to implement this policy
- All staff will be made aware of the implications of the school policy on racism and bullying
- Staff will be offered training on tackling bullying throughout the year or through CPD courses
- Staff must be vigilant in their own lessons and never appear to condone unkindness, taking care to monitor and avoid and challenge any prejudice-based language
- Staff must always be prompt to lessons and to registration and pupils must never be left unsupervised, except where this is absolutely unavoidable. Instances of bullying frequently happen when pupils are waiting outside a classroom
- Staff in lessons where pupils legitimately walk about must be particularly vigilant. These classes can often give a bully extra opportunities
- Staff must be aware of quiet corners where problems might arise. Staff on duty must patrol actively
- Playground assistants and kitchen staff must be aware and report any incident to the member of staff on duty, who will deal with the incident in the appropriate way and alert other staff if further action is needed
- Incidents on the school bus must be reported to the school office and the drivers who will alert the form teachers of those concerned

Further guidance - If a pupil is being bullied by one or more pupils, and there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm' we must ensure that it is easy to report such bullying, including cyber-bullying and bullying outside school, to external agencies such as police/children's social care. Records are kept to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted or to enable patterns to be identified. Remember a bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

See Safeguarding Policy

The E-Safety Policy

All members of staff, parents and pupils agree to and sign the E-Safety Policy, which clearly states the rules for the responsible use of technology.

The issue of cyber bullying and the dangers of the Internet are dealt with in PHSE across the school. Parents are regularly reminded and warned by letter to be aware of Internet use and to monitor such technology at home.

Specific mention of cyber bullying is included in the school's Behaviour Policy.

The PHSE Programme

Throughout all departments of the school, the PHSE programme reflects the determination of Heathland School to fight bullying at every opportunity and the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language. Specific units of work are covered by PHSE to encourage strategies to deal with bullying and to give guidance as to what to do in the event of bullying taking place. This is reinforced in pastoral time with forms and in assemblies.

Procedures

- All incidents must be fully investigated, whether they are later substantiated or not. All incidents must be recorded and a copy of the record placed in the student's file in the school office. A copy should also be passed to the Director of Studies. It will then be easier to identify any emerging patterns and then have documentary evidence.
- Each incident should be investigated using the guidelines given in Appendix 1. A second adult should be present at every interview and the student should be given the opportunity to have a friend present, if they are the only student being interviewed at that time.
- If the form teacher is satisfied that there is truth in the allegation, then the Director of Studies will speak with the student(s) concerned and proceed accordingly.
- If this is not the first incident involving the student, then the parents will be contacted and an urgent meeting arranged to discuss the situation.
- If the incident is a serious one which, in the opinion of the Director of Studies, merits immediate parental involvement, then a meeting will be arranged.
- If necessary and appropriate, outside agencies may be involved.

Outcomes

The Victim

Support for the victim is essential, both immediately after the incident(s) and during an agreed period of review.

Peer support, staff and parental support may be essential to ensure that the victim does not suffer any long-term effects. It may be that external agency support is also sought.

After an agreed period of review, staff will meet with the victim to reassess the situation and the relationships of those involved. Children who have been bullied will be supported by

- An immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff of their choice
- Reassurance
- Continuous support

These strategies aim to restore self-esteem and confidence

Witnesses

To support witness in informing staff of incidents of bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders

The Perpetrator(s)

The aim of the actions followed must be to change their attitude and to re-establish positive patterns of behaviour. The members of staff dealing with the situation will allow those involved to

- Discuss what happened
- Discover why the student became involved
- Establish the wrong-doing and the need to change

The bully (bullies) may be asked to give a genuine apology to their victim.

The problem will be discussed at the weekly staff meetings and there will be continued monitoring by the teaching staff to ensure that there are not repeated incidents of the same kind of behaviour.

The perpetrator will also be offered support to help establish positive patterns of behaviour.

Other disciplinary steps may be taken.

- The bully (bullies) will be officially warned by the Directors
- Pupils may be given lunchtime exclusion where they are restricted from mixing with other students in certain areas of the school
- They may be asked to work in the dining room for a fixed period of time
- Minor fixed term exclusion- parents may be asked to keep the student at home for a fixed number of days, not to exceed two in this instance
- Major fixed term exclusion- only enforced with the consent of the Directors.
- Permanent exclusion- only with the consent of the Directors.

APPENDIX 1

CHECK LIST OF DETAILS FOR ANY INTERVIEW

1. Who was involved?
2. Who were the apparent victims?
3. In what way did the victims suffer?
4. How did the incident begin?
5. Did it seem to be spontaneous or premeditated?
6. What is alleged to have happened according to those involved?
7. When did the incident take place?
8. Where did the incident take place?
9. Were there witnesses?
10. Who reported it? Who to? When?
11. Was there any background to the incident?
12. Is there any reason to consider this to be an incident of bullying?
13. Why does the person who reported it consider it to be bullying?
14. To what extent did the incident affect others?
15. What was the response of the victim, if such existed?
16. What does the victim wish to see resulting from this investigation?