

**Name of policy: ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

Version	Date	Approved by governors	Description
1	January 2024	2/12/24	New policy



Aims and principles

The anti-bullying policy is designed to ensure that all children learn in a safe and happy environment, where they feel safe and secure, and therefore ready to learn. Highwood's school ethos and behaviour policy facilitates a culture of safe, inclusive and therapeutic practices, where children are taught how to solve differences and conflict restoratively. We teach the children strategies for managing all kinds of social situations, which will carry them through to adult life.

We value everyone in our school irrespective of race, gender, religion, faith, culture, appearance, background or ability. This is modelled and taught through our school values, assemblies, PSHE lessons, collective discussions and whole school projects. Our aim, where possible, is to prevent situations in which bullying can occur. Any incidents of bullying are dealt with in accordance with our behaviour policy.

Definition

At Highwood, we define bullying as "behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally". (DfE "Preventing and Tackling Bullying", July 2017).

Bullying can include both anti-social and dangerous behaviours, such as: name-calling, mocking, taunting, making offensive comments, excluding individuals from a group, spreading rumours, kicking, hitting, pushing, spitting, stealing (see Behaviour policy.) Bullying also includes the same unacceptable behaviours online, often referred to as online bullying or cyberbullying, including: sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos.

We recognise bullying as a form of child-on-child abuse; children can abuse other children and at Highwood, we recognise and believe that:

- Abuse is abuse and it should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up".
- Even if there are no reports of bullying, it does not mean it is not happening and it may be the case that it is just not being reported.
- All victims will be taken seriously and offered appropriate support, regardless of where the abuse takes place.

Ethos

Our school community recognises that all forms of bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals; it can create a barrier to learning and have serious consequences for mental wellbeing. We know that bullying can be emotionally abusive and can cause severe and adverse effects on children's emotional development. By effectively preventing and tackling bullying, our school can help to create a safe and secure environment, where pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

Our school community:

- Supports all children and adults to form positive, healthy and trusting relationships to help prevent bullying.
- Recognises that some members of our community may be more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others; this may include children with SEND. Being aware of this will help us to develop effective strategies to prevent bullying from happening and provide appropriate support, if required.
- If bullying is identified, any adult will intervene and tackle the bullying behaviour appropriately and promptly.
- Ensures our pupils are aware that bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively.
- Promote our Highwood values and create a culture where everyone should feel safe to learn.
- All members of the community will work with the school to uphold the anti-bullying policy.
- Recognises the potential impact of bullying on the wider family network of those affected so we will work in partnership with parents/carers, regarding all reported bullying concerns and will seek to keep them informed at all stages.
- Utilises support from the Local Authority and other relevant external organisations when appropriate.

Prevention

The school has a zero-tolerance attitude to bullying. Any incidents of bullying are automatically escalated to stage 5 of our behaviour stages (see Behaviour policy). All staff have a responsibility for dealing with bullying. Pupil awareness of bullying will be taught through the PSHE curriculum as well as assemblies and any whole school projects. Children are taught the school expectation about bullying and what to do if they experience or are aware of bullying by others.

Parents who suspect their child is a victim of bullying should raise their concerns with school at the earliest opportunity to enable staff to keep their children safe. School is firmly committed to working in partnership with parents.

Environment

The school community will:

- Adhere to our school values and support an inclusive environment, which promotes a culture of mutual respect, consideration and care for others.
- Recognise that bullying can be perpetrated or experienced by any member of the community, including adults and children (child on child abuse).
- Recognises the potential for children with SEN and disabilities to be disproportionately impacted by bullying and will implement additional pastoral support as required.
- Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as: children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities, religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference.



- Challenge practice and language (including ‘banter’) which does not uphold the school values of respect, happiness and celebrating diversity.
- Teach and encourage children how to use technology, especially mobile phones and social media, positively and responsibly.
- Work with staff, the wider community and outside agencies to prevent and tackle concerns including all forms of prejudice-driven bullying.
- Actively create “safe spaces” and identify “trusted adults” for vulnerable children and young people.
- Celebrate success and achievements to promote and build a positive school ethos.

Policy and support:

The school community will:

- Offer and provide a range of communication and approaches in reporting bullying concerns for children, staff and parents.
- Regularly update and evaluate our practice to consider the developments of technology and provide up-to-date advice and education to all members of the community regarding positive online behaviour.
- Take appropriate, proportionate and reasonable action, in line with existing school policies, for any bullying brought to the schools’ attention, which involves or effects pupils, even when they are not on school premises; for example, on their travels to and from school or online, etc.
- Implement appropriate disciplinary sanctions; the consequences of bullying will reflect the seriousness of the incident, so that others see that bullying is unacceptable. Any incidents of bullying are automatically escalated to at least stage 5 of our behaviour policy.
- Use a variety of educational and protective techniques to resolve the issues between those who bully, and those who have been bullied.

Education and training:

- Provide at least annual training to all staff, including: teaching staff, support staff (e.g. administration staff, lunchtime support staff and site support staff) and pastoral staff, to identify all forms of bullying and take appropriate action, following the school’s policy and procedures, including recording and reporting incidents on CPOMS.
- Consider a range of opportunities and approaches for addressing bullying throughout the curriculum, specifically PSHE and computing, and teaching opportunities, such as: through displays, assemblies, peer support, the school/student council, anti-bullying campaigns.
- Collaborate with other local educational settings as appropriate, and during key times of the year, for example during transition.
- Provide systematic opportunities to develop pupils’ social and emotional skills, including building their resilience and self-esteem.

Responding to bullying concerns

The following steps will be taken when dealing with any incidents of bullying reported to the school:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be recorded immediately by the member of staff who has been approached or witnessed the concern.
- The school will provide appropriate support for the person being bullied – making sure they are not at risk of immediate harm and will involve them in any decision-making, as appropriate.
- The incidents will be investigated by an appropriate adult (a member of the DSL or SLT team) by taking accounts of the pupils, staff, witnesses and, where appropriate, parents.
- The appropriate adult will then assess the facts, information and accounts and deem whether it fits a combination of the bullying definition, as set out above.
- The DSL team will be informed of all bullying concerns, especially where there may be safeguarding issues.
- The school will speak with and inform other staff members, where appropriate.
- The school will ensure parents/carers are kept informed about the concern and action taken, as appropriate and in line with child protection and confidentiality policies.
- Restorative and/or protective consequences implemented, as identified within the school behaviour policy, and support will be given in consultation with all parties concerned.
- If necessary, other agencies may be consulted or involved, such as the police, if a criminal offence has been committed, or other local services including early help or children's social care, if a child is felt to be at risk of significant harm.
- Where the bullying of or by pupils takes place off school site or outside of normal school hours (including cyberbullying), the school will ensure that the concern is fully investigated. If required, the DSL will collaborate with external agencies (e.g. Wokingham Children's Services or police). Appropriate action will be taken, including providing support and implementing sanctions in school in accordance with this policy and the school's behaviour policy.
- A clear and precise account of bullying incidents will be recorded by the school in accordance with existing procedures. This will include recording appropriate details regarding decisions and action taken.

Supporting pupils

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Reassuring the pupil and providing immediate pastoral support.
- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their teacher, the DSL, or a member of staff of their choice.
- Being advised to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to any further concerns.
- Working towards restoring self-esteem and confidence.
- Providing ongoing support. This may include working and speaking with staff, offering formal counselling, engaging with parents and carers.

- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this could include support through Early Help, Children's Services, the Emotional Well-Being Hub or support through the Children and Young People's Mental Health Service (CYPMHS).
- Restoring and rebuilding the relationship with the offender, where appropriate, and in consultation with themselves and the parents/carers.

Pupils who have perpetrated bullying will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened, establishing the concern and the need to change.
- Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude and behaviour of the child.
- Providing appropriate education and support regarding their behaviour or actions.
- If online, requesting that content be removed and reporting accounts/content to service provider.
- Sanctioning, in line with school behaviour/discipline policy.
- This may include:

An educational or a protective consequence, measured in relation to severity of incidents. These can include:

- Restorative conversations
- Repairing of relationships
- Supported social times
- Removal of privileges
- Internal exclusion
- Fixed term exclusion