



M2 May 2018

## HIGHFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL

### POLICY ON COMBATING BULLYING IN SCHOOL

#### BACKGROUND

Schools clearly have a duty to take firm action to deal with all reported instances of physical or verbal bullying and to combat the spread of bullying. If allowed to go undetected, bullying can have a corrosive effect on the well-being of the pupils directly concerned, with potentially extremely serious consequences throughout the school. Bullying can create tensions that pose a threat to the maintenance of good order, behaviour and discipline amongst pupils and can undermine the authority of staff. It can put at risk the education of the majority of pupils who are in school to learn, and the values that a school seeks to instil in its pupils.

It is essential that all staff should be aware of how bullying manifests itself, and the positive steps that need to be taken in responding to bullying. Bullying does not just affect the bullies and victims. Other children who see it happening and so witness the distress of the victim could also suffer mental anguish. Bullying sours the atmosphere of a class and the climate of the school. Above all, pupils who are not aggressive by nature may be drawn into the taunting and tormenting of victims by group pressure of psychological factors.

#### MANIFESTATIONS OF BULLYING

Bullying is defined as '*deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated forms over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms but the three main types are physical, verbal and emotional*'.

Bullying can include name-calling, teasing, jostling, punching, intimidation, extortion and assault. The victims suffer the physical and psychological abuse of their persons, isolation, loneliness, insecurity, anxiety and fear arising from a threatening atmosphere which surrounds them.

#### Definition of Cyberbullying

Children can be bullied electronically. This is known as '*cyberbullying*'. In these cases children are tormented, harassed, threatened, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones.

The actions of the bully are such as:

- To exert power, overt or covert, over the bully's victims;
- To frighten or even terrorise, either through physical aggression or through psychological intimidation;
- To create an atmosphere in which the victim feels a constant sense of foreboding at the thought of being subjected to taunts, or threatened with violent behaviour, or actually attacked and humiliated, often in secret;
- To treat bullying almost as a tribal rite, with onlookers, often members of bully gangs, placed in the role of conspirators sworn not to expose the bully.

It is difficult to recognise bullies, in that they do not conform to stereotype, based on a popular misconception, about the category of pupil (eg. inadequate, non-achievers, insecure) into which the bully falls.

The likely victims of bullying are often those who are vulnerable because they too easily become agitated, and in a state of extreme anxiety can be treated as figures of fun. Members of a school's ethnic minority groups are also exposed to bullying based on racist abuse.

## **AN ETHOS TO COMBATING BULLYING**

A whole school response aimed at implementing effective anti-bullying procedures must take account of the need for preventative measures through:

- the promotion of good discipline and of acceptable pattern of behaviour amongst pupils, based on a proper respect for authority and the fostering of good relations between pupils & staff.
- the development of a school policy and a strategic plan to help reduce the incidence of bullying, linked to a school's pastoral system, involving all teaching and non-teaching staff, with a Year Leader responsible for co-ordinating the steps taken after cases of bullying have been reported by pupils to any member of the staff;
- encouraging staff to look for signs of potential problems before they arise.

## **ACTION AGAINST BULLYING**

- (i) All staff should be aware of the school's anti-bullying policy they should also be aware of the policies and procedures for all forms of bullying incidents and the procedures and mechanisms for its implementation.
- (ii) Each case of bullying which is reported must be **immediately** recorded and investigated and appropriate action taken, in accordance with the school's discipline policy.
- (iii) Victims need to be given help, advice and support.

- (iv) The playground, toilets, and other buildings must be visited regularly by staff and prefects on duty at breaktimes.
- (v) Parents/guardians of victims and bullies must be kept informed of the actions taken by the school, and encouraged to help the school make sure that the bullying does not recur.
- (vi) The consequences of bullying must be made clear to all pupils and their parents/guardians. In most instances the schools Behaviour Policy will be invoked. In serious concerns external agencies including the police may be consulted or become involved.
- (vii) All adults should watch for early signs of distress in pupils – deterioration of work, spurious illness, isolation, the desire to remain with adults, erratic attendance, which may be the outward signs of bullying. This applies particularly to pupils who have recently moved to the school.
- (viii) Pupils should be encouraged to inform an adult immediately if they are witness to any form of bullying and convinced that telling on someone for bullying is not ‘grassing’ or ‘snitching’.
- (ix) Parents/guardians must be encouraged to contact the school at once if they think their child is being bullied.

## **PROCEDURE**

As soon as a case of bullying has been investigated and confirmed, the school’s discipline policy and procedures must then take over. The victim must be reassured and convinced that they are safe and that everyone is working together to make sure it does not happen again. Culprits must be confronted with their acts and encouraged to admit their role. In the vast majority of cases parents of both will be informed by the Year Leader of the circumstances and the action to be taken by the school. Both the Form Teacher and Year Leader will be involved and sanctions will be applied to those guilty of bullying.

Reviewed and updated                      May 2018

Next review date                              Feb 2020

Signatures                                      Chair of Governors                      \_\_\_\_\_

Head Teachers                                      \_\_\_\_\_

Other policies related to M2

- Anti Racism
- Behaviour
- E Safety and Internet Acceptable Use
- Social Media Policy
- Equality and Diversity
- Anti radicalisation Policy
- Inclusion Policy