



Hexham First School

Anti Bullying Policy

Revision Record of published versions			
Author:	Creation date:	Version:	Status:
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Revision date:	Version:	Status:	

Head Teachers must by law have a policy to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. This policy must comply with the Human Rights Act 2000/Equalities Act 2010.

Pupil Anti-Bullying Policy Hexham First School First School Contents:

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Statement of intent

All children and young people at Hexham First School are entitled to learn in a safe and supportive environment. This means they should be free from all forms of bullying behaviour. Our anti-bullying policy outlines how instances of bullying will be dealt with by the school and strategies put in place to prevent occurrences of bullying. These strategies, such as learning about tolerance and difference as part of the school's curriculum, aim to promote an inclusive, tolerant and supportive ethos at the school.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 outlines a number of legal obligations regarding the school's responses to bullying. Under section.89, our school must have measures in place encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures should be part of the school's behaviour policy which must be communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents.

All staff, parents/carers and pupils will work together to prevent and reduce any instances of bullying at our school. There will be a zero tolerance policy in place at Hexham First School.

This policy has been written in accordance with guidance, including, but not limited to:

- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2018) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy 1.

What is bullying?

1.1. Bullying is persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another. It is often difficult for a victim to defend themselves against bullying.

1.2. Bullying is generally characterised by:

- Repetition: Incidents are not one-offs but frequent and happen over a period of time.
- Intent: The perpetrator means to cause verbal, physical, or emotional harm. It is not accidental.
- Targeting: Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- Power Imbalance: Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations. Vulnerable pupils are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. Vulnerable pupils may include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who are adopted
- Pupils suffering from a health problem
- Pupils with caring responsibilities 2.

What does bullying look/sound like?

2.1. Many different kinds of behaviours can be considered bullying. Bullying can be related to almost anything. Teasing another pupil because of their appearance / religion / ethnicity / gender / sexual-orientation / home life / culture / disability or special educational needs are all just some of the types of bullying which can occur. Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:

2.2. Verbal – name calling, mimicry, teasing, insulting, spreading rumours, swearing, and making threats.

2.3. Physical – any unwanted or inappropriate touching, physical intimidation, hitting, pushing, kicking, pinching, poking, damaging or taking of belongings, deliberate pushing and shoving, threats of violence and extortion.

2.4. Emotional – spreading rumours, deliberate exclusion from groups, tormenting, ridiculing, isolating, refusing to work with another pupil, revealing personal information, threatening, inciting or coercing others to treat an individual in a manner that could be considered bullying.

2.5. Cyber – threats and intimidation, harassment/'cyber-stalking', defamation, exclusion or peer rejection, impersonation and unauthorised publication of private information or images. (It can include messages intended as jokes, but which have a harmful or upsetting effect.)

2.6. Racist bullying: Bullying another person based on their ethnic background, religion or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.

2.7. Homophobic bullying: Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

2.8. Transphobic bullying: Bullying based on another person's gender 'variance' or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.

2.9. Sexist bullying: Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.

2.10. Sexual bullying: Bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal or non-verbal sexual dimension/dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.

2.11. Prejudicial bullying: Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics, e.g. SEND or mental health issues.

2.12. Relational bullying: Bullying that primarily constitutes of excluding, isolating and ostracising someone – usually through verbal and emotional bullying.

3. Legal issues related to bullying

3.1. Education and Inspections Act 2006 3.2. Public Order Act 1986

3.3. Crime and Disorder Act 1998

3.4. Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Duty (5 April 2011), the school has a responsibility to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

3.5. Under the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, schools could have charges brought against them if they allow the rights of children and young people at their school to be

breached by failing to take bullying seriously. The National Association of Head Teachers has acknowledged this, adding to their guidelines that head teachers must 'satisfy themselves' that their school's anti-bullying policy complies with the HRA 1998. Head teachers cannot do this without fully involving their teaching staff.

3.6. Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications could be considered criminal offences:

3.6.1. Under the Malicious Communications Act it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

3.6.2. Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.

3.6.3. Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by public means of a public electronic communications network, a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or one of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information in any media including internet sites.

3.6.4. Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to police include: violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation and hate crimes.

4. Prevention 4.1.

The school clearly communicates a whole school commitment to addressing bullying in the form of a written statement which is regularly promoted across the whole school.

4.2. All reported instances of bullying will be investigated by a member of staff.

4.3. Staff will encourage pupil co-operation and the development of interpersonal skills through the use of group work and pair work.

4.4. Opportunities within the school curriculum – PSHE, assemblies, workshops, visiting speakers and ICT provision

4.5. Bullying should be discussed as part of the curriculum and diversity, difference and respect for others should be promoted and celebrated through various lessons.

4.6. Changing and organising seating arrangements in class can help to prevent instances of bullying.

4.7. Potential victims of bullying should be drawn into working groups with children who do not abuse or take advantage of them.

4.8. Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills will be provided through participation in special events (for example, drama productions, sporting activities, cultural groups.)

4.9. All members of the school community should be made aware of the school's bullying policies.

4.10. All staff members should have received some training on identifying and dealing with different types of bullying.

4.11. A safe, supervised place, such as the Hub room / classroom, should be available for pupils to go at lunch if they are involved in conflict with their peers or wish to avoid a bully.

Vulnerable Children

Children deemed vulnerable, as defined earlier, will meet with the head teacher once per week to ensure any problems can be actioned quickly. An open door policy for children to come and talk about problems will be promoted. Before a vulnerable pupil joins the school, the pupil's form teacher and the DSL will develop a strategy to prevent bullying from happening – this will include giving the pupil a buddy to help integrate them into the school. The school will be alert to, and address, any mental health and wellbeing issues amongst children, as these can be a cause of bullying behaviour. The school will ensure potential perpetrators are given support as required, so their educational, emotional and social development isn't negatively influenced by outside factors, e.g. mental health issues.

5. Staff guidance principles

The school will ensure that prevention is a prominent aspect of its anti-bullying vision. Staff will treat reports of bullying seriously and they will not ignore signs of suspected bullying. Unpleasantness from one child towards another is always challenged and never ignored. Staff act immediately when they become aware of a bullying incident; this applies to all staff, not solely teaching staff.

Staff always respect childrens' privacy, and information about specific instances of bullying are not discussed with others, unless it is in a setting that the victim has given consent to, or there is a safeguarding concern. If a member of staff believes a pupil is in danger, e.g. of being hurt, they will inform the DSL immediately. [Mrs Overton or Ms Jones] Follow-up support is given to both the victim and bully in the months following any incidents, to ensure all bullying has stopped.

6. Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all staff to be alert to possible harassment of pupils and deal with incidents of bullying as the highest priority.

1.1. The governors will (evaluate and review) the anti-bullying policy, and will ensure that it is non-discriminatory.

1.2. The head teacher will review and amend the policy, using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in the previous year to improve procedures and taking account of new legislation and government guidance. The head teacher will keep a record of all reported incidents and provide appropriate training for staff members.

1.3. The head teacher will correspond and/or meet with parents where necessary. They will also provide a point of contact when more serious bullying incidents occur.

1.4. Class teachers will be alert to social dynamics in their class and available for pupils who wish to report bullying. They will also provide follow-up support following bullying incidents.

1.5. Parents/carers should inform their child's teacher if they are concerned that their child may be being bullied/involved in bullying.

1.6. Pupils should inform a staff member if they witness bullying, or are a victim of bullying. They should not respond to bullying by making counter-threats, walking away from any dangerous situations and avoiding involving other pupils in incidents. Pupils should be advised to retain all evidence of cyber-bullying as evidence.

7. Signs of bullying

Staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil is a victim of bullying:

- Being frightened to travel to or from school
- Asking to be driven to school
- Unwillingness to attend school
- Truancy
- Becoming anxious or lacking confidence
- Saying that they feel ill in the morning
- Decreased involvement in school work

- Returning home with torn clothes or damaged possessions

- Missing possessions

- Missing dinner money
 - Asking for extra money or stealing

- Cuts or bruises

- Lack of appetite

- Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices

- Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages
 - Lack of eye contact

- Becoming short tempered

- Change in behaviour and attitude at home

7.2. Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental health issues, so are still worth investigating.

7.3. Pupils who display a significant number of these signs are approached by a member of staff, to determine the underlying issues, whether they are due to bullying or other issues.

7.4. In addition, staff will be aware of the potential factors that may indicate a person is likely to have bullying behaviours, including, but not limited to, the following:

- They have experienced mental health problems, which have led to the child becoming aggravated
- They have been the victim of domestic abuse
- Their academic performance has started to fall, which has meant they are stressed.

If staff become aware of any factors that could lead to bullying behaviours, they will notify the head teacher, who will investigate the matter and monitor the situation.

8 Procedures for dealing with bullying

Minor incidents:

Minor incidents will be reported to the child's teacher, who should investigate the incident, set appropriate sanctions for the perpetrator and inform the head teacher in writing of the incident and outcome.

Serious incidents:

The procedure outlined below will be adopted by all staff in serious incidents.

Interviews:

- The victim, alleged bully and witnesses are all to be interviewed separately.
- Try to ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the children interviewed, for example by texting.
- If a child is injured, take the child immediately to the first aid room for first aid treatment/ assess the extent of the injuries.[all staff are first aid trained.]
- Use a room that allows you to interview in privacy. A witness is recommended for serious incidents.
- If appropriate, and necessary, ask all parties (bully, victim, witnesses) to write down details. This may need prompting with questions from you to obtain the full picture.
- Avoid making premature assumptions. It is important not to be judgemental at this stage. Listen carefully to all accounts, be non-confrontational and do not attach blame until your investigation is complete.
- Staff are encouraged to adopt a 'problem-solving' approach, asking the bully to suggest ways they could have improved the situation, and, if the victim has provoked the bullying incident, helping them to understand and explain more appropriate ways of behaving.
- Inform all children concerned that they must not discuss the interview with other children.

Record keeping:

- The teacher who conducted the interviews should write out a brief summary of the incident. A separate interview sheet should be completed for each child involved and the written statements of each part should be included.

- This record should then be forwarded on to the head teacher who is responsible for holding all records centrally.

- A bullying incident form must be completed and submitted to the Local Authority to record the act of bullying at Hexham First School Action/Sanctions: Conventional sanctions such as lunch time detentions, loss of privileges, may be pursued. In addition to this however, the following actions should be taken. Discretion can be used.

Appropriate action to deal with the bully:

- If you are satisfied that bullying did take place, help the child to understand the consequences of their actions and warn them that there must be no further intimidation. Inform them of the type of sanction to be used in this instance (detentions, missed breaks etc.) and future sanctions if the bullying continues.

- If possible, try for reconciliation and a genuine apology from the child. This can be in writing to the victim (and/or witnesses if appropriate), or face-to face, but only with the victim's full consent. (Discretion should be used here; victims should never feel pressured into a face-to-face meeting with the bully.)

- Realise that some children do not appreciate the distress they are causing and are willing to change their behaviour.

- Try to reach agreement on reasonable long-term behaviour.

- Prepare the child to face their peer group - discuss what they will say to others.

- Inform parents about bullying incidents and what action is being taken. Face to-face meetings between the teacher/head teacher may be appropriate.

- Head teacher to informally monitor child over the next half term.

Appropriate actions to deal with the victim:

- The class teacher should check informally on a weekly basis for a month after the complaint of bullying.

- The head teacher should check formally the week after the bullying, and again during the same half term.

- If necessary, break up the group dynamics by asking staff to assign places and groupings differently.

- Encourage the victim to tell a trusted adult in school if bullying is repeated. Encourage the victim to broaden their friendship groups and play with others

- Ensure lunch time supervisors are aware of changes in grouping and are vigilant re bullying in all instances. Follow-up: The progress of both the bully and the victim should be monitored by their teacher/teachers. One-on-one sessions to discuss how they are getting on may be appropriate. If the incidence was sufficiently serious, follow-up correspondence with parents a month after the incidence may be necessary. This should be from the class teacher.

Children who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Being listened to (having an immediate opportunity to meet with the head teacher or the class teacher)
- Being reassured.
- Being offered continued support.
- Being offered counselling where appropriate.

Children who have bullied others will be supported by:

- Receiving a consequence to their actions.
- Being able to discuss what happened.
- Reflecting on why they became involved.
- Understanding what they did wrong and why they need to change.
- Appropriate assistance from parents/carers.

9. Preventing peer-on-peer sexual abuse

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of peer-on-peer sexual abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. The school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy outlines our stance on addressing peer-on-peer sexual abuse, and the procedures in place will be adhered to if any instances of sexual harassment or sexual violence be uncovered.

To prevent peer-on-peer abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate pupils about abuse, its forms and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum, assemblies and PSHE lessons. The school will also ensure that pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum in PSHE lessons, RSE and group sessions.

Such content will be age and stage of development specific, and tackle issues such as the following:

- Healthy relationships
- Respectful behaviour
- Gender roles, stereotyping and equality
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- Prejudiced behaviour
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong
- Addressing cultures of sexual harassment

12 CYBER-BULLYING (On-line bullying)

We believe that every single child should be taught how to protect themselves in the online world, including beyond the school environment. This policy works alongside our Acceptable Users Policy (AUP) e-Safety Policy, the Behaviour Policy and the Child Protection/Safeguarding policy Cyber-bullying (On-line bullying) will be treated

as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. The school has a zero tolerance approach to cyber bullying

11 Bullying outside of the school

Teachers have the power to discipline children for misbehaving outside the school premises. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre. Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, the teacher can only discipline the child on school premises or elsewhere when the child is under the lawful control of the staff member.

Head teachers have a specific statutory power to discipline children for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives head teachers the power to regulate pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and therefore not under the lawful charge of a school staff member. The head teacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or antisocial behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

As a school we acknowledge that:

- Many mobile devices and games consoles offer broadband connections.
- Increasingly children have access to personal devices not covered by network protection and therefore the emphasis needs to be on educating all users as to the risks involved and their obligation to act responsibly while online.

Our aim is to:

- Safeguard pupils by educating them how to protect themselves in both the real and virtual world and build resilience in this area. We do this through the ICT curriculum, PSHE, assemblies, all lessons where IT is used, visiting speakers e.g. police and informing parents via updates through newsletters parent talks and the website.