



Highfield Priory  
Independent Day School  
and Nursery

## Anti Bullying Policy

### Introduction

Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and victims. It also affects those other children, who watch, and less aggressive children can be drawn in by group pressure and it can take time from class learning time while teachers intervene. Bullying is not an inevitable part of school life but we recognise that bullying can take place in all schools and in society at large and that like all aspects of relationships between human beings we will need to work very hard at this aspect of pastoral care.

### Why is an Anti- Bullying Policy necessary?

At Highfield Priory we believe that our children have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. At Highfield, we recognise the seriousness of bullying, both physical and emotional (which may cause psychological to those involved or witnessing it). All schools contain some children with the potential for bullying behaviour; we recognise that there are three main factors that can reduce and remove bullying. They are:

- The school shows a zero tolerance to all bullying and action is taken when it occurs,
- Creating attitudes within the pupil body that bullying is unacceptable and that any bullying should be reported- it is thus essential that pupils are involved in the formulation and implementation of our policy and feel some ownership. Discussion at School Council and house meetings will take place, interactive assemblies and work in PSHEE and circle time will actively involve all pupils,
- Staff show awareness, concern and vigilance.

Schools which make clear their abhorrence of bullying and who take every incident seriously, tend to have less bullying.

We have some natural advantages- our pupil catchment areas, supportive parents, an attractive environment, a favourable pupil/ teacher ratio and a long established clear, caring Christian ethos- but we cannot be complacent.

This policy has regard to 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies.' DFE 2017 and Cyber bullying: advice for headteachers and school staff DFE 2014. It is in line with 'The Education and Inspection Act 2006', 'Independent School Standard Regulations 2010' and 'The Equality Act 2010'.

### Aims

In line with the 'Every Child Matters' framework, the Schools Mission Statement, Code of Conduct, School Rules, Rewards and Sanctions Policy, Disciplinary Policy and our Inclusion Policy, we aim through this policy to produce a safe and secure environment where all children can flourish, where we operate a zero tolerance on all forms of bullying and where measures are in place to reduce its likelihood.

## **Objectives**

- To promote a secure and happy environment within the school, free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behaviour,
- To take positive action to prevent bullying from occurring through a clear school policy on promoting positive self- esteem and friendship through our PSHEE curriculum,
- To involve the whole school and pupil body in combating bullying and make it unacceptable at Highfield Priory,
- To create a supportive climate and break down the climate of secrecy that often surrounds bullying,
- To encourage pupils who are being bullied or observe bullying to inform staff.

## **Safeguarding Children and Young People**

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, the school staff should report their concerns to their local authority children's social care. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, schools may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

## **What is bullying?**

Definition: Bullying is deliberate hurtful behaviour often repeated over a period of time. There will usually be an imbalance in the bully/ victim relationship such that the victim will have difficulty defending him or herself. It can be carried out by an individual or a group. Bullying can take many forms.

It can be:

- Physical- hitting, kicking, punching, damaging or stolen property .....
- Verbal- name calling, teasing, insults about one's appearance or family, spreading of malicious rumours,
- Exclusion- from social groups, discussions, activities,
- Racial, Religious, Cultural- Any action, verbal or otherwise, which are anti- race, colour, creed, culture or religion. Can take the form of negative stereotyping, name calling or ridiculing based on culture, religion or race.
- Disability- negative stereotyping, name calling, ridiculing or exclusion from activity based on disability or learning difficulties.
- Gender - negative stereotyping, name calling or innuendo based on sexual orientation or use of negative LGBT language.
- Sexual/ Sexist- use of sexist language or negative stereotyping based on gender.

Reasons for bullying may be:

- Enjoy the power,
- Have been bullied themselves,

- Have problems at home,
- Need to get attention or want to impress others,
- Peer group recognition,
- Insecure, jealous or emotionally neglected.

Reasons for being a victim may be:

- Race, sex, class,
- New child in school,
- Child with a family crisis,
- Disability or difference of any kind,
- Ability.

They are likely to be children who are not assertive, unlikely to respond positively, loners with few friends, anxious or fearful children, younger children and those outside a group.

### **The occasional bully**

The occasional bully can display kinder aspects of their character, but does resort to bullying when it suits. These bullies do share some of the same traits, but are difficult to classify because the bullying behaviour is not consistent and is often precipitated by some sort of crisis or by the bully 'having a bad day'. These children and young people can also be quite charming but often they:

- Are suddenly aggressive to peers, parents, teachers and siblings,
- Act impulsively and regret it later,
- Don't learn from their mistakes,
- Wish to be in charge,
- May be physically strong,
- May be articulate,
- May be manipulative,
- May display other anti-social behaviours, such as throwing tantrums or yelling when things go wrong,
- On the whole, have good self esteem,
- May be 'spoilt' by parents who cannot understand how their children could be bullying others because they are perfect at home where their every wish is granted.

These are characteristics we often find in children who bully occasionally. These children need firm, clear guidelines and established consequences to actions. We also teach them to empathise with other children.

## **The duties and responsibility of the school**

The head teacher and Governors have a legal duty to;

- Encourage within the school community good behaviour and respect for others,
- Prevent all forms of bullying among pupils.

When a school accepts a pupil on roll it takes responsibility for his or hers physical, psychological and educational welfare. The focus should not just be on the pupils' educational attainment but on nurturing their emotional growth and making sure they are safe.

## **Preventing Bullying (Our Anti-bullying Strategy)**

Our response to bullying should not start at the point at which a child has been bullied. As a school we develop a more sophisticated approach in which school staff proactively gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place. This might involve talking to pupils about issues of difference, perhaps in lessons, through dedicated events or projects, or through assemblies. Staff themselves will be able to determine what will work best for their pupils, depending on the particular issues they need to address.

In order to excel at tackling bullying we have created an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave. That culture extends beyond the classroom to the corridors, the dining hall, the playground, and beyond the school gates including travel to and from school. Values of respect for staff and other pupils, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate the whole school environment and are reinforced by staff and older pupils who set a good example to the rest.

We also:

- involve parents to ensure that they are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied. We aim for parents to feel confident that the school will take any complaint about bullying seriously and to resolve the issue in a way that protects the child, and they (the parents) can reinforce the value of good behaviour at home
- involve pupils. All pupils understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders
- regularly evaluate and update our approach to take account of developments in technology, for instance updating 'acceptable use' policies for computers
- implement disciplinary sanctions when required, ensuring that the consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable
- openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference or children with different family situations. We also teach children that using any prejudice based language is unacceptable
- use specific organisations or resources for help with particular problems. If we feel it beneficial we will draw on the experience and expertise of anti-bullying organisations with a proven track record and/or specialised expertise in dealing with certain forms of bullying
- provide effective staff training so that our Anti-bullying policy remains effective and all school staff understand the principles and purpose of the school's policy, its legal responsibilities regarding bullying, how to resolve problems, and where to seek support.
- If/when we feel it necessary work, with the wider community such as the police and children's services to agree a clearly understood approach to cases where bullying is particularly serious or

persistent and where a criminal offence may have been committed. We may also work with other agencies and the wider community to tackle bullying that is happening outside school

- make it easy for pupils to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on, so that our pupils feel that they can report bullying which may have occurred outside school including cyber-bullying
- create an inclusive, safe environment where pupils can openly discuss the cause of their bullying, without fear of further bullying or discrimination.

### **Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Bullying has the potential to damage the mental health of a victim. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

### **Staff responsibilities and Procedures**

- Staff will be aware of areas around the school where bullying might take place and be sensitive to times and situations when it is more likely to happen,
- Cases of bullying or suspected bullying that are observed in class or around the school should be acted on immediately by the member of staff involved,
- All reported cases will be investigated. Pupils must be confident that bullying will be investigated and taken seriously. Pupils may see failure to respond to incidents or allegations, as tolerance of bullying,
- All parties involved will be listened to. Initially an oral discussion will take place; if it is felt that it will be useful, a written account may be requested from the involved parties,
- Initially, reported incidents will be dealt with by class teachers; if further guidance or support is needed or for recurrent incidents of bullying involvement of the SMT will be sought,
- A record of bullying incidents will be kept on the School Record Software,
- Staff will provide opportunities to discuss our stance on bullying through assemblies, PSHEE lessons, circle time and in other areas of the curriculum when opportunities arise,
- Staff will ensure that a firm but fair discipline structure is in place which is understood and used by all (in line with Rewards and Sanctions Policy and Disciplinary Procedure Policy),
- Staff will foster by example the values we, as a school, believe in,
- Staff will remain calm when faced with an incident and think hard about whether their actions need to be private or public,
- Staff will take time to explain clearly the sanction and why it is being given.
- Staff will ensure that the incident doesn't live on through reminders from them.

### **Pupils' responsibilities: (to be discussed in class)**

- To understand that 'not telling' is playing the bully's rules and we want you to tell,
- Tell your parents and/or a member of staff,
- Talk to your student councilor or house captain about any problems,
- Identify the person, places and times,
- Until the situation is resolved, can you avoid the circumstances?
- Do not buy the bully off with presents or money,
- Do not just 'put up with it' as it will become worse,
- If you aware of someone who you think is being bullied, let your class teacher know,
- Don't be drawn into a bullying situation by your peers, be strong!!

### **Parents' responsibilities**

- Watch for signs of distress in their child,
- Take an active interest in their children's friends,
- Advise their child to tell a member of staff about the incident. If possible allow them to report the problem themselves,
- Inform the school if bullying is suspected,
- Do not encourage retaliation,
- Be willing to come into school to discuss any incident of bullying your child has been involved in,
- Support any sanctions that are put in place as a result of a bullying incident.

### **Reporting to parents**

Bullying is a highly emotive issue and little else can rival it in this regard. Parents of victims can rightly become very upset on behalf of their child, very protective and very angry. Parents of victims often feel helpless, while parents of bullies often do not know and also feel very vulnerable and defensive when they find out.

Certain forms of bullying should normally be reported to parents, even if it is to inform them of what has happened and that we have taken action. It is important to be fully open with parents.

- Not every single case of bullying will necessarily be reported to parents but the expectation is that most will be. It will depend on circumstances and severity,
- Staff should make clear to parents of victims and bullies, the actions we are taking, why we are taking them and what they can do to help and re-enforce our actions,
- We urge parents to contact us immediately if they have any suspicion of bullying.

## Sanctions

### Formal discipline

As always, any sanctions must be proportionate to the offences and should allow the pupil to make amends where appropriate.

Minor offences- discipline for minor offences will include a reprimand, loss of house points, red minus, loss of playtime, time spent recording the incident/ writing a letter of apology.

Serious offences- for persistent long term cases of bullying we will look to suspension and exclusion. (These would only be used as a last resort).

### Informal discipline

Bullying is rarely solved by sanctions alone; it is important to do a lot of talking and listening and take time in fact finding and reaching a resolution. Work on repairing relationships is important to overcoming bullies. Many pupils, when confronted with bullying, will not repeat the behaviour. As with all discipline, it must be consistent and fair; however dealing with bullying may call for adaptable and flexible thinking.

Work with children who have been bullied could involve some or all of the following:

- They will be reassured that they do not deserve to be bullied and this is not their fault.
- We will assure them that it was right to report the incident.
- We will encourage them to talk about how they feel.
- We will try to ascertain the extent of the problem.
- We will engage them in making choices about how the matter may be resolved.
- We will try to ensure that they feel safe.
- We will discuss strategies for being safe and staying safe.
- We will ask them to report immediately any further incidents to us.
- We will affirm that bullying can be stopped and that our school will persist with intervention until it does.
- We will involve their friends / older pupils in peer support / mediation where appropriate

We may then adopt strategies from the following list as appropriate:

- We will interview the pupil (or pupils) involved in bullying separately.
- We will listen to their version of events.
- We will talk to anyone else who may have witnessed the bullying.
- We will reinforce the message that bullying is not acceptable, and that we expect bullying to stop.
- We will seek a commitment to this end.
- We will affirm that it is right for pupils to let us know when they are being bullied.
- We will adopt a joint problem solving approach where this is appropriate, and ask the pupils involved to help us find solutions to the problem. This will encourage pupils involved to take responsibility for the emotional and social needs of others.
- We will consider sanctions under our school's Rewards and Sanctions Policy.

- We will advise pupils responsible for bullying that we will be checking to ensure that bullying stops.
- We will ensure that those involved know that we have done so.
- When bullying occurs, we will contact the parents of the pupils involved at an early stage.
- We will keep records of incidents that we become aware of and how we responded to them.
- We will follow up after incidents to check that the bullying has not started again.
- We will also work with pupils who have been involved in bullying others to ascertain the sort of support that they themselves need, including counselling which we can provide in-house through our support counsellor.

There is a tendency, often quite a natural one, to want to investigate an incident and “get to the bottom of it.” Sometimes this will be entirely appropriate. There will be other occasions where an extended investigation is actually unhelpful and where a problem solving approach will be the most effective response.

Our policy will be to use our discretion to respond flexibly and in an appropriate way to each incident

### **Cyberbullying**

In this age of constantly developing technology, this form of bullying is becoming increasingly common. There are several types of cyber bullying:

- Text messaging,
- Sending pictures/ video clips,
- Email messaging,
- Chatroom and instant messaging,
- Social websites and defamatory blogs.

Measures taken in school to prevent this form of bullying include:

- Charter for safe internet usage,
- Guidance from the local police and other agencies on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying,
- Guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile telephone numbers and personal details safe.
- External agencies to come and talk to staff, parents and children where feasible.
- Issues raised during curriculum lessons (especially but not exclusively IT lessons) or in PSHE or class/circle time sessions or school assemblies

It is important for parents, outside of school, to monitor their child’s internet use, particularly use of social websites as incidents of this type of bullying outside of school have been identified in the past.

For further reference to this type of bullying and online safety in general see the school CSIT policy and E-safety policy.

Additional guidance on the use of technology/devices (including social media) by pupils, staff and visitors to the school (permissions/restrictions and agreed sanctions) can be found in the school CSIT policy, E Safety policy, Staff Handbook and Extended Visitor Guidelines (available for visitors from the school office).

## **EYFS: (Further guidance in EYFS Behaviour Management Policy)**

Even the youngest children are encouraged to behave towards each other with kindness and consideration. They have to learn to look after their own possessions and to respect other's possessions. It is important that they are encouraged to respect everyone and learn to value differences and diversity. Staff will take time to explain to the children why some forms of behaviour are unacceptable and hurtful to others. The use of circle time enables EYFS pupils to develop social and emotional skills in such areas as empathy and management of feelings. We have a named member of staff for Behaviour).

## **Raising awareness of Staff**

To raise awareness of our anti-bullying policy we will:

- Review our anti bullying policy at least once a year; this will be done by the SMT and shared with all staff and the governing body,
- Ensure new staff are introduced to our anti bullying policy as part of their induction programme and have access to further training as and when requested or when the school feel it is appropriate,
- Ensure that staff are clear about their responsibility to resolve pupils problems, know sanctions and behavioural management strategies (in line with our Rewards and Sanctions Policy) and where to seek support, have the required knowledge and skills for preventing bullying and repairing harm, understand the need of vulnerable pupils.
- Ensure all staff know the procedures for referrals and safeguarding.

This anti- bullying policy is an integral part of the whole school ethos, based on the mission statement and the rights of each individual.

**It is relevant within the school day. Staff and Governors have no responsibility for actions taken beyond the school day although we will support and offer advice if situations do arise.**

The Education Committee is responsible for this policy

Date last reviewed: June 2019.

## **Authority**

The Full Board of Governors, by delegation to sub-committees, is responsible for formulating the policies and procedures that will ensure the school continue to achieve the aims of the overall school strategy. Hence, each sub-committee has Terms of Reference and assigned responsibility for policies within that scope. The sub-committees are: Finance and General Purposes, Health and Safety, Safeguarding, Education and Marketing.