

HEMDEAN HOUSE SCHOOL



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY STATEMENT

Aims and Statement of Policy

We endeavour to ensure that every member of the school community is regarded as being of equal worth and importance, irrespective of culture, race, gender, sexual orientation, learning abilities, physical impairment, appearance, religion and social class. Every pupil has an equal right to the educational and extra-curricular opportunities provided by us, and to be happy during their school years here. Pupils who are happy and confident achieve better results and interact more positively with their peers and become better able to acquire the life skills they will need to make a success of their lives.

Our behaviour policy is important in our anti-bullying strategy and details our policy for promoting and rewarding caring and considerate behaviour whilst discouraging and imposing sanctions for unkind and otherwise unacceptable behaviour.

The school has a statutory duty to promote and safeguard the welfare, health and safety of pupils at the school and this includes ensuring that we have competent systems in place for addressing bullying issues. We pride ourselves on being an effective and caring school. We wish to demonstrate through policy and action that we will try to prevent behaviour that can be construed as bullying, and will respond positively and effectively to bullying as soon as we are aware of it whenever it occurs.

This policy has regard to the DCSF document **Safe to Learn – Embedding anti-bullying work in schools**.

What is bullying?

There are many definitions of bullying; our definition is based on that given in the *"Bullying - don't suffer in silence" DfES 2002*, document.

Incidents of bullying usually have three things in common:

- deliberately hurtful or aggressive behaviour

- repeated often over a period of time
- it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

Bullying can take many forms but four main types are:

- **physical** - hitting, kicking, taking or hiding belongings;
- **verbal** - name-calling, insulting, **racist, sexist or sexual** remarks, teasing repeatedly about **gender, religion, culture, sexual orientation (homophobic bullying)**, appearance or **special educational needs and disability**;
- **indirect** - spreading malicious stories about someone, excluding someone from social groups, sending nasty notes.
- **cyberbullying** – texting, emailing, publishing photos or videos, instant messaging and the abuse of websites like Face book, Stardoll, Bebo, My Space and YouTube, for the purposes of any of the above.

Bullying can take place:

- out of school at social events, by mobile phone : calls, texting, email, photographs, messages on social websites, on computers and by pupils from other schools when our pupils travel to and from school;
- in school it is more likely to take place where adult surveillance may be less astute i.e. walking to and from lessons, in form rooms at lunch time and break time, in cloakrooms and toilets and in the playground where teachers on duty cannot be aware of every incident.
- between pupils, between teachers and pupils or between members of staff.

Why we are concerned about bullying

When pupils are bullied, their lives are made miserable. They may become unhappy about coming to school and, over time, they are likely to lose self-confidence and self-esteem. Some may blame themselves for "inviting" the bullying behaviour. Bullying may cause a victim to feel suicidal.

At least the emotional harm caused by bullying is also very likely to affect concentration, learning ability and academic achievement.

Pupils who are bullied may feel let down by adults in authority.

As a school we are committed to dealing with all forms of bullying in order to ensure pupils feel safe and happy in school.

How do we try to prevent bullying?

Staff discuss bullying at meetings and are reminded reminded to practise the following:

- there is to be no tolerance of bullying behaviour, however minor any incident may seem;
- incidents of bullying should be recorded by the teacher who observed it

- and these records passed to the form teachers of the pupils involved;
- form teachers or tutors should keep a record of any bullying behaviour, including how it was dealt with, and inform the Head about it;
 - model positive behaviour themselves in relationships with colleagues, pupils and parents;
 - name calling is not tolerated;
 - the use of bad or coarse language is to be corrected;
 - responsible behaviour respecting the rights of other pupils must be maintained at all times, during lessons and at break / lunch times etc;
 - opportunities should be found to encourage co-operative behaviour through praise, "happy faces" (Key Stages 1 & 2) and credit marks (Key Stages 2, 3 & 4) for being helpful, kind or caring, and also for working hard, trying their best and for producing good work;
 - they should try to create an open environment where pupils feel they can approach adults and be listened to;
 - Smiley badges are given out in assembly to pupils who have shown particular kindness to others.
 - Serious or repeated incidents should be referred to the Head or the Deputy Head who will investigate and contact parents.

Pupils know:

- that older pupils may be used as mediators in the playground to deal with minor incidents of name calling and conflict, listening to both sides and encouraging compromise;
- that they should tell an adult as soon as possible if they are worried about themselves or others;
- that pupils may place notes confidentially in the worries/ concerns box, positioned by the back lobby cloakroom (as decided by the Student Council);
- that kind and caring behaviour is rewarded with praise or happy faces.

Parents know:

- that the school will not accept bullying behaviour;
- that they will be informed if their child is involved as victim or perpetrator in an incident of bullying behaviour;
- that they should inform the Head, or their child's form teacher or tutor if their child reports any incident of bullying to them;
- that the school will investigate any incident and give support or impose sanctions as appropriate.

School assemblies and collective worship, including the weekly assemblies planned by each class in rotation, are also used throughout the year to promote the behaviour we desire in school as well as to draw attention to unacceptable behaviour. R.E and P.S.H.E. and citizenship lessons are very important in this context; drama, role-play and face-to-face discussions are often used.

Class teachers have a special role in monitoring relationships within a class and are expected to liaise with specialist members of staff who teach the class on an occasional basis and also with the Head and Deputy Head. Incidents that occur in other lessons or on the playground must be reported to the form teacher.

Circle time is also used to discuss issues that may be affecting pupils. It is a chance

for pupils to air their feelings without naming names. It can help make the bully or bullies aware of how hurtful their behaviour can be. Many pupils will say, "We were only teasing", or "It was a laugh!", and they need to be made aware of the consequences of their behaviour.

Cyberbullying

Electronic bullying has become a more prevalent method of bullying. This type of bullying has minimal cost, the sender can remain anonymous so a message can be sent to someone the sender would be afraid to face in person and may say things that they would never say aloud.

There is a concern that bystanders can inadvertently become perpetrators; simply by passing on videos or images they are playing a part in the bullying. Senior and junior assemblies, as well as ICT lessons, are used to inform pupils about how to protect themselves online.

Prevention of cyberbullying

In school

- Computers are monitored to avoid pupils going on to inappropriate web sites.
- Mobile phones and cameras are handed in at the office first thing in the morning and collected at the end of the day. If a phone is seen or heard during the day it is confiscated and has to be collected by a parent.
- Discussions take place in RE, PSHCCE and at form times to give pupils the chance to talk about this form of bullying and what they can do to prevent it.
- Training from outside agencies is used to give advice to staff, pupils and parents about how to deal with cyber bullying and using the internet safely.

At Home

Parents have been given a list of recommendations in a letter dated Nov 2011.

- Do not provide your child with an online computer, ipad or smart phone in his or her own bedroom.
- Keep the family computer in an open area of the house.
- Talk to your child about the value and risks using the internet. Explain why you are interested.
- Do not allow your child unsupervised access to instant messaging providers.
- Find out how to bar "social media" internet websites from your computer.
- Tell your child you will regularly check their emails/Blackberry messages/profile pages and any websites visited.
- Do not allow a "web cam" to be routinely connected to your computer.
- Advise your child never to lend their phone to a friend, as private numbers may be copied and used for nuisance or harassment purposes.
- Ensure your child's phone is switched off and not in his or her room at night.
- Do not give in to "pester power" when you are told that everyone else is allowed to do or have something.

Homophobic bullying

This type of bullying can be insidious and pupils may be reluctant to tell adults if it is happening. We have not had cases of this type of bullying reported, however we are aware that this does not mean it doesn't occur. We hope through education and

discussion that pupils accept that people may have different sexual orientations and that they would not do or say anything to other pupils, to offend them or make them feel uncomfortable. Discussions take place in PSHCCE and in other lessons.

When an incident of bullying is noticed or reported

If the incident is not too serious, it may be resolved if possible by the member of staff concerned. If the incident is dealt with by a specialist member of staff without a specific pastoral role, the incident and its treatment should be reported as soon as possible to the class teacher, who will investigate what has occurred, record it and may also report it to the Head and Deputy Head.

Records should include names of the individuals involved, times and dates so that when reviewed any patterns of behaviour may be determined.

A 'problem solving' approach is recommended. The member of staff should try to remain neutral and to make sure that all pupils concerned have an opportunity to talk. The discussion should be focused on finding a solution and preventing the bullying from recurring. The teacher may aim to help the pupils find their own solution to their personal disagreement, and also discuss with them how they are going to behave in future.

If a member of staff does not feel able to deal effectively with a problem, he/she should consult with other members of staff and the Head or Deputy Head, to determine the most suitable action to take. This should be done as soon as possible; instant reaction to problems is regarded as very important.

Mild sanctions are used in responding to one-off incidents of bullying which do not result in actual physical harm or significant emotional distress. A reprimand may be sufficient to deter a pupil from name-calling or mild teasing. The perpetrator will lose privileges i.e. loss of breaktimes or lunchtimes, order marks may also be given or, more seriously, after school detentions when parents are informed of the reasons for this form of punishment.

Counselling can also be useful on these occasions, especially if a number of pupils are involved.

Dealing with more serious incidents or persistent bullying

Involvement of parents is essential in these cases. Parents should be informed and invited to see the Head. Discussions should take place both individually and collectively with the pupils involved, always with the aim of resolving the problem for the future. Reinforcement in specific lessons (Drama, R.E. or P.S.H.C.C.E.) should be discussed with the relevant staff. The bullying incident and any action taken will be recorded by the Head in these serious cases.

All members of staff should be made aware of such situations; monitoring the future behaviour and interaction of those involved is the responsibility of all the staff who teach or supervise the pupils concerned. Extra vigilance is necessary from all staff to ensure further bullying does not occur in the playground or in areas of limited supervision. Discussion of any cases will take place at regular staff meetings; extra

staff meetings may be required if the incidents warrant wide-ranging discussion.

Exclusion, fixed-period or permanent, of a pupil is regarded as a last resort and will not be used without previous warning to both pupil and parents. The School Council would also be consulted before such a course of action was considered. If parents are not satisfied with the outcome the Complaints Procedure (see Complaints Procedure Policy) would come into effect.

Where bullying has a sexualised element (e.g. amounting to indecent assault or threatening, or coercing another pupil to do something of a sexual nature) this should be dealt with as a child protection matter and referred instantly to the Designated Person for child protection in the school (the Head).

Similarly where a child uses violent or aggressive behaviour to another pupil and discloses subsequently that there is domestic violence at home, this will be seen as a child protection matter and reported as above.

Bullying in the workplace

Hemdean House School is committed to ensuring that all members of staff are treated with respect and dignity by colleagues and pupils, irrespective of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, sex, marital status, disability, sexual orientation or age.

The school wishes to provide an environment of positive working relationships which maximises staff potential, values their skills and abilities and sets a good example to pupils. It follows that we will not permit or condone any behaviours by staff which amount to bullying, by which we mean persistent and normally deliberate misuse of power or position to intimidate, humiliate or undermine an employee.

Bullying may take many forms, ranging from overt verbal abuse and threatening gestures to more covert behaviours including setting unreasonable deadlines, removing responsibilities without good reason and marginalising individuals by ignoring them.

The Head Teacher and members of the School Council will consider seriously and confidentially any allegations of bullying. Bullying is regarded as a disciplinary offence and any incidents reported will be dealt with under the school's disciplinary procedure. Whether or not any complaint is upheld, the school will not tolerate any discrimination against a member of staff who has lodged a complaint about bullying or who has assisted the investigation.

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