

# Heart of the Forest Community Special School

## Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with safeguarding /child protection policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings

### Introduction

At The Heart of the Forest Community Special School we aim to provide a safe, caring and friendly climate for learning for all our pupils to allow them to improve their life chances and help them maximise their potential.

We would expect pupils to act safely and feel safe in school, including that they understand the issues relating to bullying and that they feel confident to seek support from school should they feel unsafe.

We also want parents/carers to feel confident that their children are safe and cared for in school and incidents when they do arise are dealt with promptly and well.

The school is aware of its legal obligations and its role within the local community supporting parents and working with other agencies outside the school where appropriate.

### Aims of the Policy

- To create a school ethos which encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour
- To raise awareness of what constitutes bullying with staff, governors, parents/carers and pupils
- To develop procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour
- To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour
- To develop support systems for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.

### Policy Development

This policy was formulated in consultation with the school community with input from

- Governors – through discussions at governors meetings
- The staff team through meetings
- The school council and Senior pupils who helped us with our behaviour and anti-bullying rules
- Parents through consultation

This policy is available

- On the school Website
- From the school office

## Specific Roles and responsibilities

### Governors

There is a nominated Governor with the responsibility for Anti- bullying who is also responsible for Child Protection and Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults. Governors are responsible for reviewing the anti-bullying policy and monitoring any bullying incidents.

### The Head teacher

Has overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation and liaising with the governing body, parents/carers, LA and outside agencies.

The specific responsibilities are:-

- Policy development and review involving pupils, staff, governors, parents/carers and relevant local agencies
- Implementing the policy and monitoring and assessing its effectiveness in practice
- Ensuring evaluation takes place and that this informs policy review
- Managing bullying incidents
- Managing the reporting and recording of bullying incidents
- Assessing and coordinating training and support for staff and parents/carers where appropriate
- Coordinating strategies for preventing bullying behaviour

## Definition of Bullying

‘Behaviour by an individual or a group usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally’

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>

Preventing and tackling Bullying – Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies (November 2014, Updated July 2017)

How does bullying differ from teasing/falling out between friends or other types of aggressive behaviour?

- There is a deliberate intention to hurt or humiliate.
- There is a power imbalance that makes it hard for the victim to defend themselves.
- It is usually persistent.

Occasionally an incident may be deemed to be bullying even if the behaviour has not been repeated or persistent – if it fulfils all other descriptions of bullying. This possibility should be considered, particularly in cases of hate crime related bullying and cyber bullying. If the victim might be in danger then intervention is urgently required.

## **What does bullying look like?**

Bullying can include:

- Name calling
- Taunting
- Mocking
- Making offensive comments
- Physical assault
- Taking or damaging belongings
- Cyber bullying - inappropriate text messaging and e mailing; sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet
- Producing offensive graffiti
- Gossiping and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours
- Excluding people from groups.

Although bullying can occur between individuals it can often take place in the presence (virtually or physically) of others who become the 'bystanders' or 'accessories'.

## **Why are children and young people bullied?**

Specific types of bullying include:

- Hate crime related bullying of, for example, children with special educational needs or disabilities, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children, or bullying related to race, religion or culture
- Bullying related to appearance or health
- Bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances
- Sexist or sexual bullying.

There is no hierarchy of bullying – all forms should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately.

## **Where does bullying take place?**

Bullying is not confined to the school premises. Advice for school leaders to help with this problem and its affects on children acknowledges the problem also persists outside school, in the local community, on the journey to and from school and may continue into Further Education.

The increasing use of digital technology and the internet has also provided new and particularly intrusive ways for bullies to reach their victims.

Bullying can take place between:

- young people
- young people and staff
- between staff
- individuals or groups

## **Signs/ Symptoms of Bullying**

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he/she is being bullied. Adults should investigate if a child:

- Is frightened of travelling to and from school
- Is unwilling to go to school
- Develops persistent symptoms eg headache, stomach ache
- Begins to truant
- Has unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts
- Becomes anxious, withdrawn or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Begins to do poorly in school work
- Has their possessions go missing or damaged
- Asks for money or starts stealing money
- Often 'loses' money
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Loses appetite
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous when a cyber message is received.

## **Prevention**

The school's response to bullying should not start at the point at which a child has been bullied. The best schools 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.

Schools which excel at tackling bullying 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 pupils who set a good example to the rest.

## **Reporting and responding to bullying**

Our school has clear systems to report bullying for the whole school community (including staff, parents/carers, children and young people) this includes those who are the victims of bullying or have witnessed bullying behaviour (bystanders). We consider bullying to be totally unacceptable and

therefore all alleged incidents should be reported to the Head Teacher as DSL or if the head teacher is not available then report to a DDSL, who will then assess the situation and take appropriate action. They should also be recorded on Solar as a behaviour report so that patterns of bullying behaviour can be seen.

We are in a fortunate position within our school that pupils tend to be protected from any possible incidents of bullying because of our high staff to pupil ratios and it is very rare that pupils are not supervised.

Discriminatory language is not tolerated in our setting and will be challenged to prevent it turning into bullying behaviour. The Education and Inspections Act (2006) gives Head teachers the power 'to such an extent as is reasonable to regulate the behaviour of pupils when they are off the school site'. This is particularly pertinent to cyber bullying and the Head teacher will liaise with families and relevant professionals if there is a concern raised that any act of bullying is occurring outside of school hours.

## Procedures

All reported incidents will be taken seriously and investigated involving all parties. The staff are aware of and follow the same procedures.

If staff identify bullying incidents they should

- React promptly, showing the bully and the bullied that staff are in control and intend to take action
- Comfort the victim and address the issue
- Deal with bullying issues as soon as possible
- Record the incident on Solar the **Child Protection Incident/Concern form**
- Inform the Head teacher as DSL (or DDSL) and share the incidents of bullying with all relevant staff
- Speak to bully and bullied separately
- Inform parents/carers of all parties involved, if appropriate
- If appropriate speak to other pupils and record observations that may be significant
- If constructive, speak to the bully and bullied together in order to highlight why the bullying behaviour is inappropriate
- Where required, action should be taken against the bully in ways that are fitting in relation to the incident and to the pupil's level of understanding as outlined in the school's behaviour management policy.

DO NOT make hasty judgements. Stay calm and do not be confrontational. Collect as much evidence as possible. Once a matter has been dealt with it should be made clear that the matter is closed. If appropriate the bully should also be clear that future recurrence will be dealt with more severely.

If parents or carers are concerned about any bullying behaviour or have seen any signs or symptoms that may indicate that their child is being bullied they need to contact the school as soon as possible. It is important that we all work together to prevent or stop bullying incidents.

### **Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:**

- Reassuring the pupil and providing continuous pastoral support.
- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their teacher, the designated safeguarding lead, or a member of staff of their choice.
- If appropriate, being advised to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience.

- 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 or Children Social Work Service, or support through the Children and Young People's Mental Health Service (CYPMHS).

### **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 official warnings, removal of privileges, including online access when encountering cyberbullying concerns.
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this may include involvement from the Police or referrals to Early Help, Children Social Work Service, or the Children and Young People's Mental Health Service

### **Recording bullying and evaluating the policy**

Bullying incidents will be recorded by the member of staff who deals with the incident and this will be recorded on Solar as a behaviour incident. **stored by the Head Teacher on the Child Protection Incident/Concern Form.**

The information stored will be used to ensure individual incidents are followed up. It will also be used to identify trends and inform preventative work in school and development of the policy. This information will be discussed by staff in staff meetings where necessary.

This information will be presented to the governors as part of the annual report.

### **Promoting awareness of Bullying**

Awareness of bullying is promoted in a number of ways at The Heart of the Forest

- To pupils – during class time, school assemblies, PSHCE or RE lessons, during anti-bullying week, through symbolised anti-bullying and behaviour rules. (Appendix)
- To staff – during training sessions as appropriate, staff meetings and general discussion. Staff are encouraged to be aware of the signs/symptoms of bullying listed in this policy.
- To parents – via newsletters, prospectus, parents meetings and this policy
- Via outside agencies – e.g. community police officers addressing groups of pupils.

### **Links with other policies and why**

| <b>Policy</b>                | <b>Why</b>                         |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Behaviour Policy</b>      | <b>Rewards and sanctions</b>       |
| <b>Safeguarding Policy</b>   | <b>Child protection</b>            |
| <b>Acceptable use policy</b> | <b>Cyber bullying and e-safety</b> |

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Equalities policy</b>  | <b>Hate crime (homophobia, race and disability)</b>                              |
| <b>Allegations policy</b> | <b>If an allegation of bullying is made by a pupil against a member of staff</b> |

### **Monitoring, Review and Evaluation**

This Policy undergoes a review by staff and Governors annually.

The Governing body together with the Head teacher monitors the effectiveness of the Policy.

Nominated Member of Leadership Staff Responsible for the policy: Sara Franks, Deputy Headteacher

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Stephanie Withington, Headteacher

Named Governor with lead responsibility: Pam Jones

Ratified on: 9<sup>th</sup> Feb 2021

Chair of the Governing Body: Maxine Wiseman

# Our anti-bullying Charter

SHOW that we are against bullying.....

say nice things

help people

offer to be a friend

welcome everyone

Designed by our Senior pupils

The graphic is enclosed in a blue border and contains several icons: a person with eyes and a document, two people with red hearts, a sad face, a person bullying another, two people talking, a thumbs up, a hand, a group of people, two people exchanging a book, two people as friends, a person welcoming others, a pencil and paper, a square and circle, two people with hearts, and a person at a whiteboard with an audience.

## Reference documents and related policy documents

### National

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>

Preventing and tackling Bullying – Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies

Supporting children and young people who are bullied

Cyberbullying: Advice for Head teachers and school staff

Advice for parents and carers in cyber bullying

(November 2014)

Keeping Children Safe in Education

Behaviour and Discipline in School- Guide for Head Teachers and School Staff 2014

Useful organisations

**Anti-bullying Alliance (ABA)** - [www.anti-bullying.org](http://www.anti-bullying.org)

Brings together more than 65 organisations with the aim of reducing bullying and creating safer environments in which children and young people can live, grow, play and learn.

**Mencap** – [www.mencap.org](http://www.mencap.org)

Mencap is a learning disability charity that provides information and support to children and adults with a learning disability, and to their families and carers.

**Stonewall** – [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

The lesbian, gay and bisexual charity

**Educational Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH)** – [www.eachaction.org.uk](http://www.eachaction.org.uk)

Educational Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH) is a charity and training agency helping people and organisations affected by homophobia. The website gives guidance, contact details and a freephone helpline.

**School's Out** – [www.schools-out.org.uk](http://www.schools-out.org.uk)

**Beatbullying** – [www.beatbullying.org.uk](http://www.beatbullying.org.uk)

Beatbullying is the leading bullying prevention charity in the UK and provides anti-bullying resources, information, advice and support for young people, parents and professionals affected by bullying.

**Childnet International** – [www.childnet-int.org](http://www.childnet-int.org)

Childnet International - The UK's safer internet centre

### References Documents and Related Policy/Guidance

#### National Documents

Safe to Learn- DCSF Guidelines

Embedding anti-bullying work in schools – DCSF-00656-2007

Homophobic bullying – DCSF – 00668-2007

Cyberbullying – DCSF – 00658-2007

[www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications)

Cyberbullying - supporting school staff – [www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications)

Cyberbullying - A whole school community issue - [www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications)