

Heathfield House School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction

Every pupil in Heathfield House School has the right to enjoy learning, free from intimidation, both in school and the surrounding community. Heathfield House School will not tolerate bullying behaviour of any kind including unkind actions or remarks, verbal taunting or exclusion or cyber-bullying from groups or individuals. All forms of bullying can cause psychological damage and must be treated seriously. Cyber bullying will be treated in the same way as face to face bullying. As bullying is considered a type of behaviour this policy is closely linked to the behavioural policy of Heathfield House School.

This policy has regard for 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (July 2017). Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. It also affects those children who watch, and less aggressive pupils can be drawn in by group pressure. Bullying is not an inevitable part of school life or a necessary part of growing up. No member of our school community should have to accept this type of behaviour.

We believe that bullying is wrong and it will not be tolerated. Heathfield House School has a clear written policy to promote this belief, where our whole school community is aware that any bullying complaints will be dealt with firmly, fairly and promptly.

At the start of every academic year this policy is addressed with all staff making them aware of any changes as the policy is reviewed on an annual basis. This policy applies to the entire school including EYFS and will apply to bullying behaviour outside of the School of which the School becomes aware.

This policy is available on the school website and parents are made aware of this document.

Aims

- To be aware of the quantity and particular nature of bullying that takes place in our school.
- To be aware of areas of the school which pose a threat to pupils and to take appropriate action to reduce those threats.
- To effect all changes to the community which may be necessary to negate bullying.
- To create a caring community where no pupil need fear intimidation by promoting an open listening ethos and encouraging pupils to support one another by reporting all instances of bullying.
- To make children (when appropriate) and staff aware of the effects of bullying ranging from being slightly withdrawn to suicide. (Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.)
- To further the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of the individual and the community.
- To further develop pupils respect for others, we use our School 'Keys to Success' and promote Fundamental British Values.

What is bullying?

Bullying is any behaviour which intentionally hurts another individual or group, physically or emotionally. Bullying behaviour may be motivated by prejudice against particular groups.

Specific types of bullying include: bullying related to race, religion or culture; bullying related to special educational needs and disability; or because a child is adopted or in care, or is a carer, bullying related to appearance or health conditions; bullying related to sexual orientation, sexual bullying. Bullying may occur directly or through the use of technology. Bullying can often be motivated by prejudice. Bullying can occur in a variety of ways:

Physical

A child can be physically bullied i.e. punched, kicked, hit, spat at etc.

Verbal/Emotional

Verbal abuse can take the form of name-calling. It may be directed towards gender, ethnic origin, physical/social disability or personality.

Exclusion

A child can be bullied simply by being excluded from discussions/activities, with those they believe to be their friends.

Damage to property or theft

Pupils may have their property damaged or stolen. A bully may use physical threats in order that the pupil hands over property to them. We will actively encourage children not to bring expensive toys etc. into the school.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using technology. This may include bullying through the use of mobile electronic devices, social media or gaming sites. An incident of cyberbullying will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures in this policy. The School's separate acceptable use policy for pupils sets out the School rules about the use of technology including mobile electronic devices.

Parents and pupils may find the following websites helpful for further information about cyberbullying:

<http://www.childnet.com/young-people>

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/Explore/Bullying/Pages/online-bullying.aspx>

Bullying, of any type (physical or emotional), is NOT tolerated at Heathfield House School and will be dealt with as a serious issue. Sanctions are in place to reflect the seriousness of bullying incidents and convey a deterrent effect. (Strong sanctions such as exclusion may be necessary in cases of severe and persistent bullying).

Procedures to follow

Who can report bullying?

Anyone can and should report any bullying incident – a victim, a bully or any other member of the school community. We will encourage our children to report any bullying incident, whether they are the victim, another child that has heard or seen the incident or a parent. This includes bullying both inside and outside school and all bullying behaviour should be reported to the school regardless of where and when it happens.

Bullying behaviour may be of such a nature that safeguarding concerns are raised. Such behaviour may include hazing behaviour, initiation rituals or any form of sexual harassment. See the School's child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures for the School's approach to peer on peer abuse. Concerns about a pupil's welfare because they are the perpetrator or victim of bullying behaviour must be reported in accordance with the child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures and appropriate action taken, taking into account the Local Safeguarding Children Board's threshold document.

What a child can do if they are being bullied?

A pupil who is being bullied should tell someone without delay.

Pupils will be informed on a regular basis that anyone wishing to report a bullying incident can approach any member of staff with whom they feel comfortable. If the matter is urgent - a pupil should approach the first adult they encounter. Welfare checks by senior members of staff are carried out on a regular basis to ensure that children are aware of who they can talk to if they have a problem. We run a weekly 'Chat Club' where children can talk to a senior member of staff about an issues or concerns they may have.

Throughout the time children are part of Heathfield House School community, they will be given practical ways of dealing with bullying. It will be made clear to everyone within the school that bullying is wrong and that if they are bullied or see this going on that it must be reported to an adult.

We will encourage children to do this through Personal Social Health and Economic Education (PSHEE) lessons and school council sessions, class discussions, assemblies etc. We will actively promote every child to have a positive self-image of themselves.

What should you do if you know someone is being bullied?

Tell an adult immediately. You will not get in trouble for telling on a bully.

Do not become friends with a bully, just so that they will not bully you. We will reassure children that they will NOT get in trouble for 'telling'.

As a parent

If parents have concerns they should contact the school to discuss the situation. Parents are encouraged to look for signs of bullying such as unusual behaviour in your child, (for example they may suddenly not wish to attend school and do not have a reason, or they may 'feel ill' regularly with no real symptoms) or marks on their body that cannot be explained.

We encourage you as parents to always take an active role in your child's education. Enquire how their day has been, who they spent time with, how lunchtime was spent etc.

If you feel that your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the school IMMEDIATELY. Your report will be taken seriously and dealt with appropriately.

The school does not recommend that you encourage your child to fight back as this can sometimes make the situation worse. Instead encourage them to ask for help within school.

Reassure your child that there is nothing wrong with them and that it is not their fault they are being bullied.

As a school

All break times and lunch times will be supervised to reduce the likelihood of bullying at Heathfield House School. We will use any opportunity to discuss any aspect of bullying, and the appropriate way to behave towards each other, through assemblies, drama, stories and PSHEE to discuss differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language.

We will deal quickly, firmly and fairly with any reports of bullying in accordance with this policy, involving parents when necessary. The school policy will be regularly monitored to ensure it is effective. The behavioural policy will be of great importance to the whole school community which will promote respect for all members of the community. We will ensure that the whole school community is aware and practices the equal opportunities policy to ensure that ethnic origins, sex etc. are not portrayed in a negative manner.

Action to be taken when bullying is suspected

All staff will be ready and willing to deal with any incident that is brought to their attention. They should respond quickly and sensitively by offering advice, support and reassurance to the alleged victim. They should then report the matter to the Deputy Headteacher/Headteacher or Proprietor and it will be decided who is the most appropriate person to deal with the matter.

When consulted about a bullying incident, the member of staff handling the matter will interview separately the victim, the bully and any witnesses in order to establish an accurate account of events. Written reports by those involved may be made and the teacher will make notes after the interviews. Children who are unable to write may have a scribe.

At this stage, the possible outcomes for an incident which is not too serious include:

- (a) there has been a misunderstanding which can be explained sympathetically to the alleged victim with advice to the alleged bully; or
- (b) the report is justified in whole or in part, and further action will be needed in accordance with the sections below).

If the matter is more serious, this information will be passed to the Headteacher/Proprietor and further investigation may be carried out.

Once the facts have been established, the Headteacher/Proprietor/Deputy Headteacher will decide on the action to be taken in accordance with the sections below. Such action may include action in accordance with the School's behaviour policy.

School staff maintain records of the welfare and development of individual pupils. Every complaint or report of bullying is recorded in the Bullying Log and the Incident Folders and put into a table

that is centrally maintained. These records are monitored to enable patterns to be identified, both in relation to individual pupils and across the school as a whole and to evaluate the effectiveness of the School's approach.

The school will support the victims in the following ways:

By offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about their experience with a teacher they feel comfortable to talk to.

The victim's parents / guardians will be informed as soon as possible and a meeting will be called to discuss the incident(s).

Support will be made available whenever the child needs it and appropriate actions will be taken to minimise the chance of bullying – perhaps arrange an escort / a buddy for the day etc. Support will be sought from external agencies where appropriate.

By taking one or more of the steps described below to prevent more bullying.

The school's responses to the bully may include:

Talking about what happened, to discover why they started behaving like this. If these considerations give rise to safeguarding concerns, the School's child protection procedures will be followed.

The bully's parents / guardians will be informed as soon as possible.

The School will work with the bully to alter prejudices and attitudes as far as possible.

If appropriate a meeting will be held with the bully and their parents to discuss the expectation of Heathfield House School.

Monitoring the bully and have regular meetings.

A disciplinary sanction in accordance with the School's behaviour policy. In a very serious case or a case of persistent bullying, a pupil may be required to leave the School permanently. Any disciplinary action will be applied fairly, consistently and reasonably, taking into account any special educational needs or disabilities and the needs of vulnerable pupils.

The subject of bullying

Within PSHEE lessons, class discussions and assemblies children will be made aware of what bullying is and the effects it has on the people that are involved. If a bullying incident affects a particular class of children the class teacher will overtly ensure that some anti-bullying work is undertaken.

Within Computing lessons, e - safety is discussed and children are made aware of how to communicate via the internet and safe and responsible use of technology. Parents are informed about e- safety issues and the School's strategies to safeguard pupils through correspondence. See the School's e-safety policy for further information about the School's e- safety strategy.

Staff guidance and training in all aspects of care is arranged on induction and at regular intervals thereafter to ensure that staff and volunteers have the necessary professional skills, especially:

- awareness of the risk and indications of bullying and how to deal with cases;
- an awareness of the risks of peer-on-peer abuse and how bullying behaviour may give rise to safeguarding concerns.

Summary

At Heathfield House School we try to create an environment of good behaviour and respect, with helpful examples set by staff and older pupils and celebrate all individuals. We believe that the school's 'Keys to Success' (our 5 school values) help children to develop into caring, kind, respectful and honest individuals.

This policy is evaluated and reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness throughout the school. The Headteacher/Proprietor will consider the revisions made as part of its responsibility to carry out an annual review of safeguarding.

Reviewed August 2020 by Pauline Williamson