



Anti-Bullying Policy

September 2023

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Contents

1. Introduction	Page 3
2. Our promises	Page 3
3. Every Child Matters	Page 3
4. Definition of Bullying	Pages 3- 4
5. Prevention of Bullying	Pages 4 - 5
6. What happens when bullying does occur	Page 5
7. Individual Responsibilities	Pages 6 – 7
8. What to do if an incident of bullying is reported to you	Pages 8 - 10

PLEASE READ THIS POLICY IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE POLICY.

1. Introduction

All schools within HMFA are committed to working with staff, pupils, parents and outside agencies to create a school community where pupils feel safe throughout the school day.

Bullying is not tolerated.

2. Our promises

- We aim to stop all bullying at our school and promote friendship.
- We want to make sure all pupils understand it is wrong to be a bully.
- We will support bullies to change their behaviour and become responsible members of our school community. We need to help the bully to stop and realise!
- We will have a consistent system to deal with bullies so everyone knows what will happen if there is a problem.
- We will publicise our policy to everyone including parents/carers, children and staff.

3. Every Child Matters

Every incident is dealt with individually and measures appropriate to each incident will be adjusted accordingly.

All children and young people deserve the opportunity to achieve their full potential. The five outcomes, as defined in the Every Child Matters agenda (DfES 2004), key to children and young people's wellbeing, are:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic wellbeing

4. Definition of Bullying

From time to time children fall out with each other. How we deal with conflict is part of our social development. Our schools actively promote values and positive behaviour, which are the skills needed to work collaboratively and make a positive contribution to a team.

Bullying is different to the normal falling out and arguments children often have with their friends at play as they grow up.

It is the sustained intimidation of a victim that is emotionally carried out by a person or group in order to cause physical and/or emotional hurt. It can be a single, unresolved, intimidating incident or a series of intimidating incidents. Bullying is a deliberate act, carried out to cause distress in order to give the bully (or bullies) the feeling of power status or some other gratification.

Intimidation can be:

Physical: threats, any form of violence e.g. pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching

Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing

Emotional: tormenting, threatening, ridicule, humiliation, exclusion from groups or activities

Racist: This refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, both physical and psychological, that make the person feel unwelcome marginalised and excluded, powerless or worthless because of their colour, ethnicity culture, faith community, national origin or national status.

Sexual: unwanted physical contact, abusive comments.

Cyber bullying: bullying through the use of communication technology like mobile phone text messages, e-mails or websites. This can take many forms, for example:

- Sending threatening or abusive text messages or emails, personally or anonymously
- Making insulting comments about someone on a website, social networking site (e.g: MySpace) or online diary (blog)
- Making or sharing derogatory or embarrassing videos of someone via mobile phone or email (such as 'Happy Slapping' videos)

Homophobic Bullying This occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against lesbian, gay or bisexual people.

5. Prevention of Bullying

Preventing and raising awareness of bullying is an essential to keeping incidents in our school to a minimum. Through assemblies as well as PSHE lessons, pupils are given regular opportunities to discuss what bullying is, as well as incidents we would not describe as bullying, such as two friends falling out, or a one-off argument. Pupils are taught to tell an adult in school if they are concerned that someone is being bullied.

Encouraging friendships

- All pupils will take part in positive group work in class because it develops good communication skills and teaches us to work together as friends and team members.
- In class we will make use of circle times and PSHE lessons to develop friendship bonds and understand their value and importance. This ethos will be reinforced in school assemblies and the whole school culture.

Building the confidence of all pupils

- We will create a culture where it is okay to talk about weaknesses and worries in a supportive, caring environment. Our ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) will support the work in school to build confidence and self-esteem. We will use worry boxes to share feelings too.

- We will use social groups and nurture groups to work with specific children.
- Our school ethos is based on positive reinforcement. We are always on the lookout for good behaviour, excellent work and kindness which we can all reward.
- Pupils will be taught how to cope with what happens when friendships go wrong and given strategies to deal with conflict. They will also have specific lessons about the problem of bullying. Children can request support via the ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant).
- It is important to remember that it is not necessarily bullying when friendships go wrong.

The school environment

- Playtimes and lunchtimes are well staffed so there are lots of people looking after pupils and encouraging positive relationships.
- We are a well-resourced school with lots of useful play areas and equipment to allow us to play constructively.
- There are clear guidelines about where children can and cannot go at unstructured times to ensure they can be supervised properly.

Rules

- Pupils will all be made aware of the school's anti-bullying policy and the high expectations of their behaviour.
- In the first week back after the summer holidays pupils will be responsible for writing and agreeing to a set of class rules which support our anti-bullying and behaviour policies.

6. What happens when bullying does occur

We will encourage an environment where ALL incidents of bullying are reported to an adult.

If a pupil reports an incident of bullying they need to know the adult will ALWAYS treat it seriously and with discretion. All incidents will be investigated.

To begin with the teacher will speak to both the bully and the victim to establish exactly what has been happening. If the teacher thinks they can deal with it with a warning then they will. If the incident requires further investigation it will be dealt with by a member of the Senior Management Team. The Head of School will always be informed. All incidents will be recorded on an incident form. Mrs Johnson will keep a log.

Bullies will always be given the support they need to understand why their behaviour is inappropriate.

If the bullying continues the bully faces the risk of seclusion and ultimately exclusion.

After a report of bullying the adult will always ensure that there are follow up meetings with the victim to check everything is alright.

All teachers must inform Mrs Johnson of any incidents of bullying that they deal with.

7. Individual Responsibilities

All staff in HMFA schools have a responsibility to respond to allegations of bullying, and all pupils will be covered by this policy.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to: -

- report all incidents of bullying using the procedures in place,
- act in a respectful and supportive manner to their fellow pupils, reporting any suspected incidents that the victim(s) may be afraid to report. A vehicle for this may be Circle Time, Role Play sessions or School Council,
- if you are targeted, try to remain calm, look at the bully and tell them to stop; remove yourself from the situation as quickly as possible, tell someone,
- adhere to and promote the aims and objectives of this statement,
- refrain at all times from any behaviour which may constitute bullying of fellow pupils.

Parents

If a child appears very unhappy, always complains of pains, is reluctant to go to school or displays significant changes in behaviour it **MAY** be they are a victim of bullying. However, children may display these symptoms for a variety of reasons and they are not necessarily being bullied. For example, they may be having difficulty with some aspect of work in school, experiencing friendship difficulties, feeling tired or unwell, experiencing changes to home or school routines etc. It is therefore important that parents/carers discuss these issues with teachers so that support can be offered.

In all instances we ask parents/carers to :

- encourage children to talk to them, their friends or teachers about their concerns,
- report any concerns to the school as soon as possible.

It is important that parents realise that they have a vital role to play in the good conduct of their children at school. They have a responsibility to:

- stress the importance of sociable behavior,
- report any misgivings they may have concerning either victims or perpetrators of bullying to the school,
- actively endorse and support the Anti-Bullying Policy.

The school will discuss with the parents/carers of the victims and perpetrators actions taken. However, due regard will be given to confidentiality in the event of referrals to outside agencies.

Staff

It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that they:

- adhere to the policy and apply it consistently themselves,
- carry out their responsibilities for supervision of children at all times with a rigour that will lessen the opportunities for bullying behaviour to occur,
- deal with **ALL** suspected/reported incidents in a serious and sensitive manner,
- monitor pupil performance and note any significant changes, which may be the result of bullying behaviour.

Whilst recognising that there are constraints on time, it must be appreciated that the benefits of these actions will greatly outweigh the burden put upon teachers, and if **all** incidents are dealt with **effectively**, then their number will **decrease**.

Governors

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to monitor the progress being made by the school in relation to incidents of bullying and the effectiveness of this policy. This may take the form of periodic reports from Mrs McColl to the Governing Body as appropriate. They may have access to the Bullying log as appropriate.

Termly returns to the Local Authority will be made. If no incidents of bullying have occurred a nil return will be logged.

8. What to do if an incident of bullying is reported to you

Teaching Staff

Explain to the child that they have done the correct and mature thing in reporting the problem to you.

Try to get a history of: -

1. what has happened
2. to who
3. by whom
4. where
5. when
6. over how long
7. names of witnesses

Make brief notes, if possible, and encourage the child (who is possibly the victim of bullying) to re-count as much as they can. The important factor to remember is that the child may have been bottling up all of this upset for some time and it may have taken a great deal of courage to report these incidents.

After every incident is re-counted then repeat back to the child what you believe the situation to be. This ensures that you have the situation clear in your head, and assures the child that you have listened to them properly. Listening is very important at this stage as the child will often be experiencing extremely low self-esteem and the time you spend with them is extremely important in the counselling process.

Once these facts, as the child sees them, have been ascertained, the next step is to call in the perpetrators of the bullying and question them. If there is more than one then it is necessary to try to interview each child separately, so that there is the opportunity to allow a child who has been caught up in events that they do not really want to be involved in, to relate the series of events with anonymity. This also means that suggestion/influence of one or more of the group will not interfere with the series of events as re-counted by others.

Whilst recognising that time is precious, with support from teaching assistants and others, it is necessary to make the time to resolve these situations.

Try not to use leading questions but allow them to re-count their version of the events. It is important once again to repeat what they have said so that they realise that you are listening to their interpretation of the facts.

They should also be asked if there are any witnesses that they can think of that might substantiate their accounts.

Where there are discrepancies between the accounts it will be necessary to call in witnesses from both sides to verify the facts.

Once the facts have been established then it is necessary to resolve the conflict in a sensitive and fair manner. This usually takes the form of asking those responsible to try to appreciate the hurt and upset they have caused, by doing your best to help them to empathise with the other child's feelings.

As the process continues it is advisable to keep notes and refer to them so that the children feel that you have noted down the situation and that a record of what is said is being kept.

The final stage of the resolution is to explain that a close eye will be kept on the situation, that a member of the Senior Management Team will need to be informed and that a record will be logged in the Bullying log for future reference if needed.

It must be explained that the first instance of the bullying continuing must be reported to any member of staff who will then refer it on as necessary.

Where there is clear evidence of a case of bullying, then the agreed sanctions will come into effect.

Having said a close eye will be kept on the situation it must be made clear that this applies to all involved. The setting up of a mentoring system to monitor all cases is essential in this process. The Pastoral and Safeguarding Manager must be a key member of this system.

A record of all incidents and interventions must be kept, if for no other reason than to facilitate the monitoring of the frequency of incidents of bullying, so that the effectiveness of the policy may be monitored.

If any staff need any help or guidance then they must approach a member of the Senior Management Team who will provide assistance in the form of support with relevant literature, training opportunities as available, or just advice.

Lunchtime staff

- **LISTEN** carefully to what is being said in a calm and sensitive manner.
- Find out **who** is involved.
- Find out **where** and **when** it has been happening.
- Find out if there are any witnesses.
- Call those being accused of bullying to you and give them a chance to tell you their version of what has happened. **DO NOT ACCUSE – LISTEN.**
- Ensure they have a chance to answer any accusations made of them.
- If there is a problem then this should be reported to the Teacher in Charge who will proceed in the appropriate manner.

Parents:

We will deal with all accounts of bullying reported to us in a serious and confidential manner.

We regard bullying as “behaviour by one or more people that produces damaging or hurtful effects, physically or emotionally, to any individual(s).”

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD REPORTS THAT THEY FEEL THEY ARE BEING BULLIED IN SCHOOL: -

- **LISTEN** carefully to what they have to say.
- Tell them they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Try to explain to them that although they are part of a problem it is **not** their fault, and steps can be taken to resolve the problem without escalating it.
- Try to be supportive; **do not advise them to retaliate**. (This often makes the situation worse.)
- Try to get as many facts as possible –

Who is involved?

When is it taking place?

Where is it taking place?

How often is it occurring?

WRITE THESE DOWN.

- Ask if they have told anyone in school and what the outcome was.
- Come into school or ring up and report the facts that you have to the Class Teacher.
- Check periodically, to find out if the bullying has recurred; if so, report it immediately to the school. This will be referred on to the appropriate members of staff who will then investigate the matter.

It has always been, and will continue to be, our aim to provide a safe, secure and happy environment in which all children can learn, play and develop without fear of bullying. Working in partnership with parents we will endeavour to fulfil this aim.