HOLMEWOOD HOUSE SCHOOL

'Kindness, aspiration & self-belief'

ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGY

Policy Holder	Assistant Head Pastoral and Welfare
Date Approved	September 2024
Approval	SLT
Date for next review	September 2025

Introduction

This policy should be read in conjunction with the:

- o Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- o Behaviour and Sanctions Policy
- o Pupil Acceptable use of Technology
- o My Heart, My Mind, My World Policy
- o Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- o Equality, Diversity and Inclusiveness Policy
- o Online Safety Policy
- o Cyberbullying Policy
- o SEND Policy

This policy draws on local and national guidance including:

- o The Equality Act 2010

- o The Education Regulations (Independent Schools) 2014

- o The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (2019)

- o The Children and Families Act 2014, SEND Regulations 2014 and SEND Code of Practice 2015

- o DfE Advice: Cyberbullying Advice for Headteachers and School Staff 2014

- o DfE Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2017

- o DfE Working together to safeguard children 2018

- o DCSF Guidance 'Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying in schools' 2017

- o DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024

Aims

- o To ensure that a strong anti-bullying culture prevails throughout Holmewood House
- o To demonstrate that the school takes bullying seriously and that bullying behaviour and deeds will not be tolerated
- o That bullying on the basis of protected characteristics will not be tolerated
- o To remind children of our policy on a regular basis
- o To promote a 'reach out' environment for our whole school community
- o To use every opportunity to press home points with appropriate audiences as and when incidents occur
- o To ensure that members of staff are fully aware of our anti-bullying policy and that it is upheld at all times.
- o To ensure that when incidents arise or are reported they are dealt with as quickly and effectively as possible.
- o To ensure that all areas of the school collaborate to ensure that patterns of behaviour are identified.

Objectives

- o That all pupils feel safe
- o That they know what to do if they experience bullying
- o That pupils know what to do and how to act if they are a bystander to bullying
- o That pupils understand our school value of kindness and that examples of this is celebrated appropriately
- o That measures work to prevent all forms of bullying in the school and on off-site activities;
- o That parents have confidence in the school's policy
- o That pupils feel confident that bullying is something that is dealt with effectively
- o For Holmewood to have a reputation as a strongly anti-bullying school where children are safe and their interests attended to.

1. **Definition of Bullying**

The Anti-Bullying Alliance defines bullying as follows:

"Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online."

There are four key elements to this definition:

- o Hurtful
- o Repetition
- o Power imbalance
- o Intentional

Bullying exists in many different forms and can be either physical or emotional. Bullying is deliberate and repeated unkindness. It involves aggression with the intention of causing the victim pain and distress. Serious one-off incidents may also occur.

In its worst form, bullying can cause psychological damage and even lead to suicide. While bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws, which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour. Further information about the nature and impact of differing types of bullying is found in "Supporting children and young people who are bullied: advice for schools" (DfE 2014)

Bullying can be physical or emotional and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example it may be of a racial, religious, cultural, sexual/sexist, homophobic nature or, be targeted on the

grounds of special educational needs or disability, or because a child is adopted or is a carer. The school is particularly aware of the risks posed by electronic or cyber bullying via social website, mobile 'phones, text messages, photographs and email. It includes any way in which an individual or group of individuals deliberately makes another individual unhappy, feel unsafe, or threatened. A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection issue when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.

Types of Bullying Behaviour

Bullying behaviour can be:

Physical	Verbal	Emotional	Sexual	Online/Cyber	Indirect
• Pushing • Poking • Kicking • Hitting • Biting • Pinching • etc	• Name calling • Sarcasm • Spreading rumours • Threats • Teasing • Belittling • Banter • etc	• Isolating other • Tormenting • Hiding belongings • Threatening gestures • Ridicule • Humiliation • Intimidation • Excluding • Manipulation • Coercion • Baiting	• Unwanted physical contact • Inappropriate touching • Abusive comments • Homophobic abuse • Exposure to inappropriate material	• Posting on social media • Sharing images/ videos/ media • Sending nasty messages • Social exclusion	• Can include exploitation of individuals • Undermining • Gossiping for the sake of gossiping • Delibeate exclusion • False friends

Differentiating unkindness from bullying

Sometimes pupils can feel hurt or upset because they have been ill-treated or have fallen out with a friend. **This is not the same as bullying**.

Bullying:

- o   Is deliberately intended to hurt or humiliate
- o   Involves a power imbalance that makes it hard for the victim to defend themselves
- o   Is usually persistent, however it can be a single incident
- o   Often involves malice or no acknowledgment of the victim's feelings

School staff are ready to support pupils who have fallen out with friends or experienced acts of unkindness but such situations will not be treated in the same way as a case of bullying. However, the strategies we use may well be similar because we acknowledge that over a period of time the impact on the student may be the same and the situation could become bullying if it escalates or continues. Through our MyHeart lessons and assemblies, children are taught the difference between the two and how to act accordingly.

Every pupil has the right to be safe and happy in school and to be protected from feeling vulnerable. Staff and volunteers also have the right to work in an environment free from bullying and to feel able to raise the matter with and seek support from the school.

Signs and Symptoms

Emotional

- o Changes in sleep patterns
- o Changes in eating patterns
- o Frequently upset, teary or angry
- o Mood swings
- o Feeling ill in the morning
- o Becomes withdrawn or starts stammering
- o Becomes aggressive and unreasonable
- o Refuses to talk about what is wrong
- o Begins to target siblings

Physical

- o Unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches
- o Missing or damaged belongings or clothes
- o Hungry
- o May appear less confident or 'happy' with the body posture
- o Repeating the same actions on another individual

School Specific

- o Does not want to go to school
- o Does not want to go to certain areas of the school
- o School performance (academically, sporting, co-curricular) begin to fall.
- o Reluctant to be involved in school activities, games or initiatives
- o Damaged possessions

Others

Sometimes signs bullying can be far more hidden. They can include:

- o Often alone or excluded from friendship groups at school
- o A frequent target for teasing, mimicking or ridicule at school
- o Unable to speak up in class and appears insecure or frightened.
- o Changes their usual routine
- o Appears anxious
- o Becomes isolated
- o Starts being deliberately unkind (bullying) others

2. Procedures and Consequences

Procedures & Dealing with Bullying (including Cyberbullying)

Children are strongly encouraged to tell an adult if they are being bullied or treated unkindly.

- o If any form of bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be investigated and dealt with initially and calmly by the teacher concerned, reassuring and supporting pupils as appropriate especially recognising some pupils will need a differentiated approach due to SEND;
- o The victim will be listened to, believed (until such time as evidence proves to the contrary) and fully supported;

- o Where cyberbullying is suspected, our policy for this area will be followed (see Cyberbullying Policy)
- o The pupils may be asked to write down an account of what has taken place;
- o If a racial element to the bullying is suspected the appropriate person (Head, Deputy Head, Head of Boarding, Head of Pre-Prep or Head of EYFS) must be informed immediately;
- o The teacher will record the details of the incident and inform the appropriate people;
- o The Deputy Head or Assistant Head (Pastoral Care & Wellbeing) will interview all the parties and make a record;
- o The appropriate person will determine in consultation with the relevant staff of the appropriate strategy and plan of action to combat the bullying;
- o A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling, to support the child's mental health, should be agreed. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures;
- o Cases of bullying behaviour will be recorded initially by staff on the Welfare and Behaviour tracker and relevant members of staff tagged into the entry;
- o The investigation will include identifying whether or not the bullying is part of a pattern or a one-off. Reference should be made to the Behaviour/Welfare Tracker;
- o Parents will be informed and may be asked to come into School to discuss the problem
- o Any bullying behaviour and threats of bullying must immediately stop. Repetition of an offence will be treated very seriously, and our sanctions policy will be applied.
- o As both the Deputy Head and Assistant Head (Pastoral Care & Wellbeing) are part of the safeguarding team, they will escalate any incidents to outside agencies should they meet the threshold of requirements. External guidance may be sought in any case.

Consequences

Where possible, there should be a **restorative approach and a reflective process**. Sanctions may escalate to exclusion – if necessary, this will be done in conjunction with the Behaviour and Sanctions Policy taking into account any SEND needs of the pupil/s involved.

The Head will be involved in any serious occurrence or repetition of bullying by a child or group of children and should be informed of any instance that causes any concern to teachers.

An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour. Both bullies and victims will be supported. A behaviour plan may need to be put in place to monitor and help the bully to change his or her behaviour.

The bully will offer an apology, and other appropriate consequences may take place depending on the age of the child and the seriousness of the bullying action.

Significant time will be spent on reflective processes

Where there are proven incidents of bullying, sanctions will be applied in line with the School's Behaviour and Discipline policy and may include suspension or exclusion.

Whenever possible, the pupils will be reconciled, and the aim is to restore positive relationships.

Bullied pupils

Staff who deal with pupils who have been bullied must always offer reassurance. Pupils who have been bullied will be given support determined by the appropriate person in consultation with the pupil. Staff must be mindful of the impact of bullying on a child's mental health and appropriate support put in place.

Bullies

Changing the attitude and behaviour of bullies will be part of the responsibility of the positive procedures used by the school. Bullies, however, are also in need of support as often they bully others to deflect their own unhappy feelings caused by others or by emotional distress in their lives. The school recognises, however, that sanctions will also have to be used against bullies. The school will also act appropriately towards any bystanders to bullying in order that they understand their part in the behaviour and the implications of this.

Involving Parents

Parents, as well as all staff and pupils, should know that the school will not tolerate bullying, and takes a positive approach to educating pupils to combat it.

Parents of pupils who are being bullied and parents of the bullies will be involved in the solution to the problem as appropriate by the relevant teacher in consultation with the Assistant Head Pastoral Care and Wellbeing, the Deputy Head and Head.

Parents will be informed of the policy and procedures and the possibility of permanent exclusion following gross acts of bullying.

Teaching Positive Strategies to Pupils

Pupils will be engaged in learning about positive strategies to prevent and react to bullying situations through both the school council, form and tutor groups. Pupils will have an input into the MHMM Anti-Bullying content and will be consulted on how it could be developed. A major part of the programme will consist of educating pupils in how to identify and manage bullying and using events such as Anti-Bullying Week, Childrens' Mental Health Week etc to highlight why bullying is wrong.

Staff Responsibilities:

➢ **Be proactive**

ensuring that all pupils are well informed via assemblies, current affairs, MHMM and academic lessons.

➢ **Support**

Events such as Anti-Bullying Week or Children's Mental Health. Attend and discuss assemblies, workshops or talks

➢ **Encourage**

Ensure pupils aware that bullying is seen as a serious disciplinary offence and strong sanctions such as exclusion or suspension may be necessary in cases of severe and persistent bullying.

Discuss and celebrate differences between people and stress the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language.

➢ **Prevent**

Work to prevent incidents of bullying by maintaining a disciplined atmosphere and remaining alert to the importance of relationships, supervision, active listening.

➢ **Recognise**

Be vigilant a breaktimes, between lessons and during 'un-structured' parts of the school day.

Recognise signs and symptoms of potential bullying.

➢ **Investigate**

Listen and talk to all children involved.

Ensure a full written account is taken and the notes are as accurate and where necessary corroborated by peers or staff.

➢ **Record**

Record any reported incidents of bullying or potential bullying on the Pastoral Welfare & Bullying Behaviour Document – This will then be uploaded to the pupils notes on iSAMS and entered onto our Bullying Behaviour Record

➢ **Share**

Inform the Assistant Head (Pastoral Care and Wellbeing), the Deputy Head/DSL, the Head, tutors and Form Teachers.

Where appropriate raise the matter in staff briefing and/or inform duty staff.

3. Recording

All incidents of bullying or potential bullying behaviour are recorded on the Pastoral Welfare & Bullying Behaviour Document. These notes are then uploaded to the pupils notes on iSAMS – for all pupils involved.

Depending on the severity or repeated nature of the incident parents may be informed. Best practice should be to keep parents informed of any upset that may have happened at school so as it can be monitored both at home as well as at school – it may be an indicator for another type of concern.

All incidents are reviewed termly to establish if there cultural or societal changes that need to be made as a school-wide approach.

4. Training

Regular training, including at induction, will be given to staff formally and informally via INSETs, staff briefing and online courses to create confidence in staff recognising and tackling incidents of bullying. Staff are encouraged to take the view the 'it could happen here'.

Staff are also encouraged to stay abreast of any changes or updates that may impact the school's approach to bullying – this may be anything from sharing good practice ideas to proposing a new initiative.

5. Resources & Support

    a. Anti-Bullying Alliance - https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/advice-and-support/if-youre-being-bullied/find-help-and-support

    b. Anti-Bullying Pro - https://www.antibullyingpro.com/resources

    c. NSPCC Bullying & Cyber-Bullying - https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/

    d. Childline – Advice - https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/types-bullying/

    e. Kidscape - http://www.kidscape.org.uk/

    f. BBC Information and Support - https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/5Ffpz77jVbLvjsFj9GvKd8l/information-and-support-bullying

    g. National Bullying Helpline - https://www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/

    h. Place2Be - http://www.place2be.org.uk/

    i. Cybersmile Foundation - http://www.cybersmile.org/

    j. Bullying UK - http://www.bullying.co.uk/

    k. Cyber bullying: advice for headteachers and school staff https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1069987/Cyberbullying_Advice_for_Headteachers_and_School_Staff_121114.pdf

    l. Advice for parents and carers on cyber bullying: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444865/Advice_for_parents_on_cyberbullying.pdf