



## Anti-bullying Policy

### 1. Rationale

- 1.1. We strive to create a culture based on our core values of Respect, Responsibility and Excellence. Students must feel safe and respected if they are to learn effectively. Since we are a school which sets high standards for our students it is important that we create an atmosphere in which bullying cannot thrive and in which no student has to suffer from harassment of any kind. Because bullying happens in all societies, at all levels, it is important that we make our students knowledgeable about bullying and teach them strategies that enable them to stand up for themselves without resorting to retaliation in any form. Because bullying is in the news and is a form of real anxiety for parents, it is important that we inform parents fully about our approach to dealing with bullying, so that parents are able to distinguish between what is bullying and what is not.

### 2. A definition of bullying

- 2.1. There is no legal definition of bullying. Bullying is usually described as being behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.
- 2.2. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber- bullying via text messages or on social media and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.
- 2.3. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is our first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical.
- 2.4. The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click. Schools have wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 to give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones. Homophobic bullying occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) people. (See ref: DCSF Homophobic bullying)



- 2.5. Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted on. The Headteacher will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a student. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed
- 2.6. Bullying can be: physical (hitting, kicking, theft), teasing, making threats, verbal (name calling, racist remarks), indirect (spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups)
- 2.7. Generative Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard. We recognise that AI has many uses to help pupils learn, but may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real. Heckmondwike Grammar School will treat any use of AI to bully pupils in line with our anti-bullying/behaviour policy.

### **3. How we set the right ethos of being a 'telling' school**

- 3.1 A 'telling' school is one where students do inform staff when bullying is taking place.
- 3.2 If students who feel they are being bullied are to tell us about bullying we must work together to create an atmosphere of trust. 'Victims' must know that their concerns will be taken seriously and recognise that investigations take time.
- 3.3 We must also make it as easy as possible to report bullying. Students must understand that reports may result in a number of different outcomes and be familiar with the content of the flow chart on page 6.
- 3.4 If this is to happen, then everyone on the site has a responsibility to ensure that we live by our core values and that we all set a good atmosphere round school. We want to make it clear that this responsibility includes:
  - promoting a respectful and responsible ethos that ensures that all members of the school community know and agree with our stance on bullying,
  - ensuring that all staff exhibit positive behaviours, demonstrate our core values and become positive role models to students,
  - treating other people with respect at all times;
  - doing nothing that could be construed as bullying;



- doing nothing that could be construed as supporting bullying. This includes relaying distressing messages, relaying threats, laughing at bullying, watching a fight;
- reporting to the proper person any bullying we witness or any behaviour which we feel could escalate into bullying.
- engaging students in reviewing and developing our anti-bullying practices
- analyse available data to ascertain how the school environment and the journeys to and from school can be improved.

## **Procedure for dealing with complaints of bullying**

### **4. How to deal with bullying and who to tell**

- 4.1. We will advise all our students to take the following action if they feel they are being bullied:
- if you feel able to, then let the 'bully' know that you do not like what is happening to you and ask the bully to stop;
  - if the bullying doesn't stop, tell someone in school who will initiate action to sort out the problem. This will often be their form tutor, but can be any teacher or any member of staff.
  - report the bullying via our termly anti-bullying survey.
  - Use the Report a concern button under the student heading on the school website.
- 4.2. If bullying behaviour is witnessed by our students, as part of taking on the role as a positive bystander, we ask that they too report their concerns using the above protocols. However, we emphasise that students must not use physicality or verbal abuse to try and resolve a matter.
- 4.3. If parents or carers have concerns regarding bullying behaviour, we ask that this is reported to their child's Head of Year or a member of the pastoral team. This will be logged and the matter will be investigated.

### **5. What any adult – teacher, support staff, parent – who has been told about bullying should do**

- 5.1. Inform the Head of Year of the student concerned. This could be in person, by telephone or email.
- 5.2. If a parent does not know who the appropriate Head of Year is they should contact school and the Admin Team will advise them.



## 6. Who should investigate?

- 6.1. In the first instance we would expect the student's form tutor to discuss any issues with their tutees and suggest possible solutions. If this is ineffective or the form tutor believes he/she needs help in resolving an issue he/she will inform the relevant Head of Year). An investigation into a complaint of bullying will be carried out in most cases by the student's Head of Year), but on occasions by a form tutor or other members of the pastoral team.

## 7. The need for gathering evidence

- 7.1. If we are to deal with incidents fairly, we must gather as much evidence as possible in order to establish what really happened.

## 8. How we deal with incidents that cross the inside/outside school boundaries

- 8.1. Where incidents that happen outside school are clearly having a detrimental effect on the life of the school, we will investigate these and, in conjunction with the parents and the local police, take appropriate action.

## 9. What sanctions we use

- 9.1. At our school, sanctions are applied fairly, proportionately, consistently and reasonably, taking account of any SEN or disabilities that pupils may have, and taking into consideration the needs of vulnerable children. Bullying by children with disabilities or SEN is no more acceptable than bullying by other children and it should be made clear that their actions are wrong and appropriate sanctions imposed. We expect all students to be proactive and seek help from members of staff if they witness another student being hurt or they are concerned about others.
- 9.2. The following is the normal hierarchy of sanctions. A serious case of bullying, however, might result in immediate suspension:
- In the first instance, a bully will be warned and their parents will be informed. We will impress on them that what they have done will not be tolerated at our school. This frequently solves the problem.
  - If the bullying continues, parents will be invited into school and both student and parents will be told that further sanctions will follow if the bullying doesn't stop.
  - If there is further bullying, the student will be detained at break and lunch times.
  - Removal from specific classes if appropriate will be used.
  - Further sanctions such as isolation in school or suspension from school for a fixed period of time will also be used if appropriate.
  - The ultimate sanction for sustained bullying could be permanent exclusion.



## 10. Engaging with parents and carers

10.1. We believe it is important for our school to work with parents/carers to help them to understand our approach with regards to bullying and to engage promptly with them when an issue of bullying comes to light, whether their child is the student being bullied or the one doing the bullying. We will ensure parents/carers are made aware of how to work with us on bullying and how they can seek help if a problem is not resolved. Some parents may need specific support to help deal with their child's behaviour. Where our school identifies that this is the case, we will initially provide support ourselves or signpost the parents to appropriate channels of help.

10.2. We will make sure that

- key information (including policies and named points of contact) about bullying is available to parents/carers.
- ensure that all parents/carers know who to contact if they are worried about bullying.
- ensure that all parents/carers are aware of our termly anti-bullying survey.
- ensure all parents/carers know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively.
- ensure all parents/carers know where to access independent advice about bullying.
- work with all parents/carers and the local community to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to bullying.
- ensure that parents work with the school to role model positive behaviour for pupils, both on and offline.

10.3. Particularly during a lengthy investigation, or when there is a repetition of bullying, a victim's parents may feel very anxious. It is very important that the investigator and the parents keep in contact but parents must understand that form tutors, Heads of Year and members of the pastoral team do have other demands on their time. We will always endeavour to ring parents on the same day that the incident occurred; however, phone calls may not always be able to be made as soon or as frequently as the parent would ideally like.

## 11. How we monitor the situation

11.1. HGS carries out a termly anti-bullying survey which gives students the opportunity to report any bullying. Any bullying which is flagged in these surveys will be responded to by the student's Head of Year in the first instance and this will be followed up subsequently to ensure that the bullying has stopped.



11.2. Pastoral staff will try to check at regular intervals on the welfare of a student who has been bullied, but we do rely on students reporting any repetition promptly. Whilst the sanctions outlined above will be used as appropriate, both students and parents must understand that we cannot take action if we are not made aware of incidents.

## **12. Guidance and support within the curriculum**

Year 7 PSHE: Healthy Relationships, Diversity

Year 8 PSHE: Self-esteem and body image, Healthy relationships, Discrimination

Year 9 PSHE: Identity and sexuality, Exploring influence

Year 10 PSHE: Respectful relationships, Exploitation, Unhealthy relationships

Year 11 PSHE: Healthy relationships

Year 12 PSHE: Relationships

Year 13 PSHE: Relationships

Bullying is also explicitly covered in the assembly programme.



## The Process Flowchart

The 'victim' will discuss the incident with their form tutor and often this will help resolve the situation. If the bullying continues then the matter will be passed to the Head of Year. The student will then be asked to make a statement, either verbal or written, and the member of staff investigating will make notes.



The 'bully' will then be interviewed and given the opportunity to give his/her side of the story. Again a verbal or written statement will be made and the member of staff investigating will make notes.



If the accounts of both students are the same, there may be no need to involve other students or to find witnesses

In cases where the 'bully' denies the allegation, witnesses will need to be sought and interviewed, and additional evidence gathered. Such investigations are very time-consuming, no matter who initiated the investigation. It may then need to be shared between the form tutor and the Head of Year. Even though the period of investigation may be difficult for the victim, it is essential that we are seen to be thorough and fair. No-one will report bullying if they feel that investigations are rushed or not dealt with properly and fairly. The investigation will continue until a satisfactory conclusion is reached.



The student guilty of bullying will be warned that any repetition will lead to the hierarchy of sanctions.



The victim will be told to report immediately any repetition of the bullying behaviour. Both sets of parents will be informed and the incident logged on both students' files on CPOMS and the school log of bullying incidents.

**Support:** *During an investigation, it is likely that the alleged victim will feel vulnerable, particularly at breaks, lunchtimes and the end of school. They will be offered protection at such times, in the form of a room/office in school to which they might go with or without friends, and alternative arrangements for buying and eating lunch.*