



# Highclare School

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

This policy applies to all sections of the school including EYFS, TOPS and Pre-Prep holiday Care groups and is available to all parents and prospective parents on the website and from the school office on request.

This policy has been drawn up with assistance from guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE), *Preventing and tackling bullying (2017)* and the *Education (Independent Schools) Standards Regulations 2014*, and will be reviewed against any new government guidance issued from time to time. Our Anti-bullying Policy is supported by our Behaviour Policy which details action to be taken. This is a whole school policy (EYFS to KS5) and includes Prep (Homework Club), TOPS and Holiday Care groups

### Introduction

Highclare School is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere where bullying will not be tolerated. This is consistent with two of our school aims:

- to provide high quality teaching and to encourage independent learning within a secure and happy environment
- to develop the values of self respect and self discipline, alongside tolerance and respect for others and the environment

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Highclare School and it is the responsibility of all adults in the school to enforce this. When bullying is reported we will liaise with parents, pupils and, if appropriate, others, to address the problem. The School believes that bullying is a serious offence which can cause psychological damage and even suicide. The School is aware that there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour. If bullying does occur, all pupils and parents should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Staff should model positive relationships and good behaviour should be praised and rewarded (as appropriate).

### Aims of this Policy

- To maintain and drive a positive and supportive culture among all pupils and staff throughout the whole School.
- To deter bullying behaviour, detect it when it occurs and deal with it on a case-by-case basis by counselling and/or disciplinary sanctions and, if necessary, by expulsion.
- To comply with the School's duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.
- To ensure that all governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents have an understanding of what bullying is.
- To ensure that all governors, teaching and non-teaching staff know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- To be confident that all pupils and parents know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- To assure pupils and parents that bullying will not be tolerated and that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- To make all governors, teaching and non-teaching staff aware of areas of the school where pupils might be threatened and take appropriate action to reduce these threats.
- To ensure that pupils who engage in bullying behaviour know that they will be held to account but also helped to modify their behaviour.
- Bullying behaviour is always unacceptable and will not be tolerated at the School because:
  - It is contrary to the aims of the School, our internal culture and to the reputation of the School;
  - It is harmful to the person who is bullied, and to those who engage in bullying behaviour, and those who support them, and can in some case lead to lasting psychological damage and even suicide; and
  - It interferes with a pupil's right to enjoy their learning and leisure time free from intimidation.

This policy will also apply to bullying behaviour outside of the School of which the School becomes aware.

## What is bullying?

Meaning: There is no legal definition of bullying.

However bullying is usually, **but not always**, repeated behaviour which hurts intentionally or causes distress by taking unfair advantage of another person in some way, making him or her feel uncomfortable or threatened.

**We are aware that bullying can also be a one-off incident.** Bullying may be:

- Physical – hitting, kicking, pushing people around, spitting; or taking, damaging or hiding possessions;
- Verbal – name-calling, taunting, teasing, insulting, or demanding money;
- Exclusionary behaviour – intimidating, isolating or excluding a person from a group;
- General unkindness – spreading rumours or writing unkind notes, phone texts or e-mails; or
- Cyberbullying – using the internet, mobile phones, text messages, photographs, e-mail, social networking sites (such as Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and Twitter), etc to deliberately upset someone else. (The School has an Acceptable IT Use Agreement which is printed in all student planners and signed by parents and pupils annually).
- An imbalance of power (between perpetrator and victim)

Bullying may also be:

- Sexual – talking to or touching someone in a sexually inappropriate way;
- Sexist – related to a person's gender or gender reassignment;
- Racist, or relating to someone's religion, belief or culture;
- Homophobic – related to a person's sexual orientation;
- Related to pregnancy or maternity;
- Related to a person's home circumstances; or
- Disability – related to a person's disability, special educational needs, learning difficulty, health or appearance.

The nature of bullying:

- Deliberately hurtful (including aggression)
- Generally repeated often over a period of time, **although it can also be a one-off incident.**
- Difficult for victims to defend themselves
- Not all bullying is deliberate or intended to hurt. Some individuals may see their hurtful conduct as 'teasing' or as 'a game' or 'for the good of' the other person. These forms of bullying are equally unacceptable but may not be malicious and can often be corrected quickly with advice and without disciplinary sanctions being imposed. A bully who does not respond appropriately to advice or sanctions would ultimately have to leave the school.
- The School recognises that abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'having a laugh' or 'part of growing up'.

## Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Parents and Staff should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school/public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- 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 and jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated

### **Responsibility:**

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure, whatever the circumstances, that no-one becomes a victim of bullying. A person may be vulnerable to bullying because of his/her age, physical appearance, nationality, colour, gender, sexual orientation, religion, culture or disability, or because he/she is new in the School, appears to be uncertain or has no friends. They may also become a target because of an irrational decision by a bully.

### **Parents and Staff – Procedures to follow**

1. All staff should be aware of the signs and symptoms of bullying.
2. All staff who witness an incident should:
  - a. state clearly why the behaviour is unacceptable
  - b. if necessary separate the pupils involved
  - c. record the incident in accordance with normal practice on CPOMS as 'bullying'
3. Staff who are told of bullying by a bullied child, a parent or a child who has witnessed an incident should:
  - a. Take the matter seriously and be sensitive to the child
  - b. Assure the child that they are right to tell and that everyone has the right to be safe
  - c. Not promise to keep it a secret, but assure the child that further action will be taken and that you will give support.
  - d. Record the incident in accordance with normal practice on CPOMS as 'bullying'

In the first instance, staff who witness or are told of incidents should also report them to the Form teachers. Most issues can be dealt with at this level.

4. Cases of serious bullying should be reported to the DSL, Deputy Head of Senior School: Pastoral, Head of Preparatory School, Deputy Head of Preparatory School, Assistant Heads, Head of Sixth Form, KS3/KS3/KS2/KS1/EYFS/Pre-Prep Co-ordinators and they will record the incidents in accordance with recording and monitoring procedures which will be reviewed regularly by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and collated to evaluate effectiveness of approach adopted and to enable patterns to be identified. Any necessary interventions will be supported by a period of monitoring and review to ensure that the victim feels safe and that the bullying has ceased. A bullying incident report will be made available to Governors on a regular basis as part of the safeguarding procedures and the monthly pupil monitoring meetings and reporting process.
5. The victim, alleged bully and any witnesses will be interviewed separately by the relevant senior member of staff named above.
6. In cases of serious bullying parents should be informed and invited into school to discuss the problem. A bullying issue may be reported to external agencies such as the Police or children's social care. A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.
7. It is important that information is communicated to relevant staff. As a minimum, form teachers (and tutors in senior school) of those involved should be informed and possibly involved in any strategies that are adopted.
8. Different sanctions will be used depending on the nature of the incident. These will be age related. Primarily they are aimed at preventing further bullying and sending out a clear message that bullying at Highclare will not be tolerated. On some occasions it may be appropriate to counsel the bully.
9. One possible strategy is the "no-blame approach".
  - a. After the evidence is gathered all parties involved meet, and everyone will have an opportunity to speak without interruption.
  - b. It will be made clear that what has happened is not acceptable and must not happen again.
  - c. All parties should agree on what is acceptable behaviour.
  - d. Support should be given for both victim and bully.
10. If the matter cannot be dealt with at this level and severe and persistent bullying continues, extreme sanctions, eg. suspension, reverse exclusion, or exclusion may be necessary. See Behaviour Policy.
11. The relevant Senior member of staff should follow up the incident later to check the issue has been resolved.
12. Legal aspects: A person who makes a physical or sexual assault on another, **engages in the sexual harassment of another** or who steals or causes damage to the property of another, commits a criminal offence and also a civil wrong known as a 'tort' for which there can be legal consequences outside the School. Bullying behaviour may also be regarded as threatening behaviour or harassment which can be either a criminal offence or a civil wrong. Misuse of electronic communications could also be a criminal offence, for example it is an offence to send an electronic communication (such as a text message or email) to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety.

## **Strategies to discourage bullying and raise awareness among pupils:**

### **1. WHOLE SCHOOL – Anti-Bullying Culture**

**Ethos:** Our expectation of all members of the School community is that:

- Every pupil at Highclare School will uphold the Code of Conduct which is contained in the Behaviour Policy and in the pupil planner.
- A pupil or a member of staff who witnesses or hears of an incident of bullying will report it;
- A complaint of bullying will always be taken seriously; and
- No one will tolerate unkind actions or remarks or stand by when someone else is being bullied.

**Equal opportunities:** In School and in every key stage/year group:

- Discriminatory words and behaviour are treated as unacceptable;
- Positive attitudes are fostered towards people who are disabled and towards ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic groups within and outside the School; and
- Positive attitudes are fostered towards both sexes through the curriculum and tutorials.

**Staff:** Through their training and experience, and during their induction period if new staff, members of staff are expected to promote an anti-bullying culture by:

- Celebrating achievement;
- Anticipating problems and providing support;
- Disciplining sensibly and fairly;
- Making opportunities to listen to pupils;

**Pupils:** Through our pastoral care systems, pupils are informed and taught that bullying will not be tolerated in the School. They are encouraged:

- To celebrate the effort and achievement of others;
- To hold and promote positive attitudes;
- To feel able to share problems with staff;
- To turn to someone they trust, if they have a problem;
- Not to feel guilty about airing complaints; and

### **2. Anti-Bullying Systems**

**Approach:** Our systems for detecting and dealing with bullying are designed to operate:

- Vertically, through all year groups and house groups; and
- Horizontally, within year groups and in the classroom and other activities.

Our anti-bullying systems are implemented and driven in the way described below:

#### **WHOLE SCHOOL (EYFS – KS5)**

- PSHCE - Schemes of Work, Circle Time, Role Play
- Assembly – discussion and stories and news items relating to bullying and e-safety
- Annual e-safety awareness focus
- Annual Anti-bullying week to raise awareness
- Visits by outside agencies including the other groups and Police

**Vigilance:** Members of staff are vigilant at all times but particularly:

- Before lessons; in the queue at lunch and break and in the lunch rooms themselves;
- In lessons;
- At the end of the day;
- On School transport. (The School's own minibuses have CCTV)
- In changing rooms for PE.

**Meetings:** Bullying is regularly discussed in meetings between:

- Members of the Senior Leadership Team at Highclare;
- Heads of School, teaching staff and School Council groups;
- Form teachers, Tutors and pupils in their form groups and tutor groups;
- Pastoral House teams.
- The Head and the Board of Governors.

The results of these meetings is to feed back information about friendship patterns, particular incidents, any pupil who seems to be isolated, any growing 'power base' and any known conflict between a member of staff and a pupil, or between pupils so that strategies can be developed to prevent bullying incidents occurring. Content of these meetings will be recorded and reviewed regularly by the SLT.

### 3. Education:

Measures are taken throughout the year to educate pupils about bullying and this policy.

#### These measures include:

- Anti-bullying messages given in assemblies
- Discussion in Form time and School Council meetings
- Annual Anti-Bullying/Anti-Cyberbullying activities and/ or assemblies
- Visiting speakers and workshops

#### SENIOR SCHOOL and SIXTH FORM

- The topic is covered in English, PSHCE and Drama lessons e.g. use of poetry, creative writing
- The pupils are referred to visit the website [www.dontsufferinsilence.com](http://www.dontsufferinsilence.com)
- Useful Agencies/Resources:
  - [www.anti-bullyingalliance.org](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org)
  - [www.chatdanger.com](http://www.chatdanger.com)
  - [www.luckyduck.co.uk](http://www.luckyduck.co.uk)
  - [www.beatbullying.org](http://www.beatbullying.org)
  - [www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk)
- Pupil planners include information on seeking support
- Pupils are able to train as Anti-bullying ambassadors as part of the Diana Award Scheme
- Sixth form pupils are able to train as peer mentors
- Personal tutors discuss wellbeing with pupils
- Anti-bullying ambassadors champion means of support and have a notice board signposting this support

#### KS1 AND KS2

- The topic is incorporated in all cross curricular activities to include poetry and drama.
- Assemblies and workshops are used to address the issue
- Outside agencies come to talk to the children.
- Playground initiatives to encourage and acknowledge positive behaviour.
- Open discussions with children about 'what is bullying'.
- Participation in National anti-bullying awareness.
- Open conversations with children

#### EYFS

- Through all seven areas of learning and development (see EYFS Policies and Procedures)

#### Staff Training

All staff are trained to enable them to recognise the signs and symptoms of bullying, how to deal with it and how to reduce opportunities for bullying to take place in school.

#### Monitoring and Recording

Information on incidents of bullying will be passed to staff at weekly bulletins together with appropriate advice on the actions to be taken.

All instances of bullying will be recorded according to name/s, form, type of bullying, location, name of who reported it and any other factual information that may enable patterns of behaviour to be identified together with action taken. The log will be kept electronically on CPOMS and information collated monthly.

The SLT will monitor all records, interviews with pupils and the patterns that may arise from the collation of records and check the effectiveness of this policy.

This policy will be reviewed and updated annually and on the publication of new guidance or legislation. It will be presented to Governors for their consideration and approval together with a report on the trend of recorded incidents and how the school will use this to reduce instances of bullying.

#### Policies linked to this Policy

- Accessibility
  - Behaviour
- Care and Control
  - E-Safety
- PSHCE
  - Safeguarding

Written by:	Approved by the Board:	Review Cycle	Most Recent Review:
AMM/May 2012	September 2013	Annual	September 2023