



## The Old Hall School

### Anti-Bullying Policy

#### 1 Introduction

It is a Government requirement that all schools have an anti-bullying policy. This policy reflects the guidance contained in The DCFS Guidance on the prevention of bullying, '**Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools**'.

Bullying can be defined as actions that are meant to be hurtful, and which happen on a regular basis. Bullying can be direct (either physical or verbal) or indirect (for example, being ignored or not spoken to).

This policy complies with the DCFS guidance, Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (DCSF 2007).

Bullying can lead to significant and lasting psychological damage and even suicide; although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

#### 2 Aims and Objectives

Bullying is wrong and damages individual children. We therefore do all we can to prevent it, by developing a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.

We aim, as a school, to produce a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety, and measures are in place to reduce the likelihood of bullying. These measures include:

- Organising the community in order to minimise opportunities for bullying
- Discussing aspects of bullying and the appropriate way to behave towards each other, eg through the PSHE programme, which incorporates SEAL, dedicated PSHE lessons and 'circle time' activities
- Dealing quickly, firmly and fairly with any complaints and involving parents of both victim and bully when considered necessary
- Maintaining a firm but fair discipline structure. Our 'Golden Rules' are few, simple and easy to understand
- Ensuring that teaching materials / equipment do not give a negative view of any group because of their ethnic origin, sex, disability etc.
- Encouraging pupils to treat everyone with respect
- Treating bullying as a serious offence and taking every possible action to eradicate it.

- Responding to allegations of bullying seriously and sensitively
- Recording incidents which have required informing parents

This policy aims to produce a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur. We also aim to make all those connected with the School aware of our opposition to bullying, and we make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the eradication of bullying in our school.

### **3 Definition**

DfES guidance defines bullying as actions that are meant to be hurtful, and which happen on a regular basis. Bullying can be direct (either physical or verbal) or indirect (e.g. being ignored or not spoken to).

A bully is a person using strength or power to hurt or coerce others by intimidation (Oxford Reference Dictionary). This power may be physical, verbal, emotional or psychological and when an individual applies it repeatedly, it constitutes bullying.

Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and victims. It also affects the other children who are aware of it, and less aggressive pupils can be drawn in by peer pressure. Bullying is not an inevitable part of school life or a necessary part of growing up, and it rarely sorts itself out. It is clear that certain jokes, insults, intimidating/threatening behaviour, written abuse and violence are to be found in our society. No one person or group, whether staff or pupil, should have to accept this type of behaviour. Only when issues of bullying are addressed, will a child best be able to benefit from the opportunities available at The Old Hall School.

Bullying can occur through various types of anti-social behaviour. It can be one unresolved, frightening experience or a series of such incidents.

Bullying may be brought to the attention of staff by the victim(s), their friend(s), their parents or other interested people. It can take many forms

- Physical: a child can be physically punched, kicked, hit, spat at, pinched etc.
- Verbal: Verbal abuse can take the form of name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing and ridicule. It may be directed at gender, ethnic origin, physical/social disability, personality etc.
- Emotional: A child may be bullied by being excluded from discussions/activities, tormented, humiliated or by the setting of impossible tasks or deadlines.
- Racial , Religious or Cultural: A pupil may experience racially abusive taunts, comments, graffiti or gestures
- Disability or SEN: Pupils may experience insults, taunts or inappropriate comments about their physical and/or mental disability
- Cyberbullying: This is the deliberate use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, to upset

someone else. It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing the bully with another route to harass their target.

Full guidance may be accessed at

[www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/cyberbullying/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/cyberbullying/)

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

Full guidance may be accessed at

[www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/homophobicbullying/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/homophobicbullying/)

- Sexual or sexist: A pupil may experience sexual taunts about their body shape, appearance or preferences in regard sexual stereotyping.
- Damage to property or theft: Pupils may have their property regularly damaged, vandalised or stolen. Physical threats may be used by the bully in order that the pupil hands over property.

#### **4 Signs and Symptoms**

A child may display signs or behaviour that might indicate that he or she is being bullied. Adults 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 money continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home very hungry (snack has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- 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 & jumpy when a cyber message is received
- stops eating

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

## **5 What to do if you are being bullied:**

**Remember that silence is the bully's greatest weapon!**

- Report what has happened
- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied
- Be proud of who you are; it is good to be individual
- Try not to show that you are upset. It is hard but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
- Stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers.
- Be assertive – shout, "No!", walk confidently away, tell a member of staff.
- Fighting back may make things worse. Talk to a teacher or parent/guardian first.
- Generally it is best to tell an adult you trust straight away. You will get immediate support.
- Teachers will take you seriously and will deal with bullies in a way which will end the bullying and will not make things worse for you.

## **6 If you know that someone is being bullied:**

- TAKE ACTION! Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own.
- If you feel that you cannot get involved, tell an adult immediately. Teachers have ways of dealing with the bully without getting you into trouble.

## **7 The Role of Governors**

The Governing Body supports the Headmaster in all attempts to eliminate bullying from our school. The Governing Body will not condone any bullying at all in our school, and any incidents of bullying that do occur will be taken very seriously, and dealt with appropriately.

The Governing Body monitors incidents of bullying that do occur, and reviews the effectiveness of this policy regularly. The Governors require the Headmaster to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying, and to report to the Governors on request about the effectiveness of school anti-bullying strategies.

A parent who is dissatisfied with the way the school has dealt with a bullying incident can ask the Chairman of Governors to look into the matter. The Governing Body responds within ten days to any request from a parent to investigate incidents of bullying. In all cases, the Governing Body notifies the Headmaster, asks him to conduct an investigation into the case and report to a representative of the Governing Body.

## **8 The Role of the Headmaster**

It is the responsibility of the Headmaster to implement the school anti-bullying strategy, and to ensure that all members of staff (teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy and know how to identify and deal with incidents of bullying. The Headmaster reports to the Governing Body about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy on request.

The Headmaster ensures that all children know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour in this school. The Headmaster draws the attention of children to this fact at suitable moments. For example, if an incident occurs, the Headmaster may decide to use an assembly as the forum in which to discuss with all children why this behaviour is wrong.

The Headmaster will ensure that all pupils are aware that they should:

- Report incidents of bullying to an adult if they are the victim
- Report incidents of bullying if they are a witness
- Treat others as they would wish to be treated
- Accept the consequences of their behaviour

The Headmaster ensures that staff receive sufficient training to be equipped to identify and deal with all incidents of bullying.

The Headmaster sets the school climate of mutual support and praise for success, so making bullying less likely. When children feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour.

## **9 The Role of the Teacher and Support Staff**

All the staff in our school take all forms of bullying seriously, and seek to prevent it from taking place.

If teachers become aware of an issue which involves bullying, they will refer it to the Deputy Head, Head of Junior Department or the Headmaster. A Sanctions Record is located in the Common Room, where incidents of bullying are also logged, whether they occur in class or out of class. This is regularly monitored by the Headmaster and the Deputy Head.

Teachers and support staff do all they can to support the child who is being bullied. All staff will monitor the situation and if a child continues to be bullied over a period of time, the Headmaster will be informed and the child's parents will be informed.

When any bullying has taken place between members of a class, the class teacher / form tutor will deal with the issue in the first instance. The teacher may also offer counselling and support for the victim. All members of staff are offered training, which equips them to identify bullying and to follow school policy and procedures with regard to behaviour management.

Teachers use a range of methods to help prevent bullying and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. They use drama, role-play, stories etc., within the formal curriculum, to help pupils understand the feelings of bullied children, and to practise the restraint required to avoid lapsing into bullying behaviour.

PSHE, Religious Education, visits, assemblies and circle time all provide opportunities to praise, reward and celebrate the success of all children, and help create a positive atmosphere. The school participates in National Anti-Bullying Week and children are engaged in discussion and activities which are appropriate to their age.

## 10 The Role of the Parent

Parents should:

- Look for unusual behaviour in your child. For example, a child may suddenly not wish to come to school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to his/her normal standard
- Always take an active role in your child's education. Enquire how his / her day has gone, how lunch time was spent etc. If you feel that your child may have been the victim of bullying behaviour, inform the school IMMEDIATELY. We cannot help unless we are informed. Your concern will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.
- It is important to advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse.
- Tell your own child that there is nothing wrong with him or her. It is not his or her fault that he /she is being bullied.
- Ensure that your child is fully aware of the policy concerning bullying and that he / she need not be afraid to ask for help.
- Remind your child that he/she must tell an adult at school if they feel they are being bullied and that they will know what to do about it.
- Parents also have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy, actively encouraging their child to be a positive member of the school.

## 11 The Role of Pupils

Pupils are encouraged to tell somebody they trust if they are being bullied, and if the bullying continues, they must keep on letting people know. Children can sometimes be confused about whether they are being bullied or whether an incident is normal in the social atmosphere of a school. Children can talk to any adult at school if they are worried about bullying or if they are confused and the following people will be particularly willing to listen and to help:

- Matron
- Class Teachers / Form Tutors
- Deputy Head
- Head of Junior Department
- Head of Learning Support
- Head of Kindergarten (EYFS)
- Headmaster

Our pupils' School Council is encouraged to take an active role with the issue of bullying and to be alert to the signs and symptoms. National 'Anti-Bullying Week' is recognised and supported at school, by the children engaging in a range of discussions and assemblies. The children view this as an important issue, about which they have strong views.

## **12 Action to be taken when bullying is suspected**

When there is serious or continued bullying, both the parents of the alleged perpetrator and the victim are informed by the Deputy Head, the Head of Junior Department or the Headmaster.

If bullying is suspected we will talk to the suspected victim, the suspected bully and any witnesses.

If an instance of bullying is identified the following action will be taken:

- Help, support and counselling will be given as appropriate to both the victim/s and the bully/bullies

We support the victims in the following ways:

- By offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience with their class teacher, or another member of staff if they choose
- Informing the victims parents and by offering continued support
- By taking one or more disciplinary steps described below to prevent more bullying

We will support the bully by talking about what happened to discover why they became involved. Other actions include:

- Informing the bully's parents
- Continuing to work with the bully in order to change prejudiced attitudes as far as possible
- Suggesting counselling, accessed through the child's GP.
- Taking one or more of the disciplinary steps outlined below.

## **13 Disciplinary Steps**

Disciplinary action must be taken which is in line with the School's behaviour policy. Action must be appropriate to the age of the child but may include:

1. An official warning to stop offending
2. Informing the bully's parents
3. Issue of Playtime Sanctions and or Detention
4. Suspension for a fixed period
5. Exclusion from school if bullying continues to persist

## 14 Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of this policy is monitored on a day-to-day basis by the Headmaster, who reports to Governors on request.

This policy is reviewed every two years or earlier if deemed necessary.

### Key Sources of Information

Safe to Learn DCSF

[www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/safetolearn/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/safetolearn/)

Bullying - Charter for action DCSF (2007)

Don't Suffer in Silence DCSF (2000)

Kidscape [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

Bullying Online [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)

The **Chairman of Governors** may be contacted by writing to:

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