



# HANLEY CASTLE HIGH SCHOOL



## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

FEBRUARY 2025

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This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

**Behaviour Management Policy**

**Equalities Policies**

**Exclusions Policy**

**Acceptable Use of ICT**

**Our commitment as a school**

The success of Hanley Castle High School has been built on courtesy, kindness and mutual respect. We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a supportive and secure atmosphere.

Bullying of any kind is therefore unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff. This message is regularly reiterated to students.

**1. Objectives of this Policy**

- Bullying will not be tolerated.
- All ASC members, teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents should understand what bullying is.
- All ASC members, teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All students and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Students and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

**2. What Is Bullying?**

Bullying is when a person deliberately tries to exert power over another person, resulting in them feeling hurt, intimidated or distressed. Usually, it is a pattern of behaviour rather than an isolated incident.

Bullying ranges from one-on-one, individual bullying through to group bullying. By-stander bullying is where a person or persons fail to intervene or report the incident. Bullying is also referred to as "child on child abuse". At Hanley Castle High School, the assembly, PSD and tutor education programmes explicitly educate students to recognise bullying in all its forms and teaches them how to respond if they witness bullying either to themselves or to another person.

It can also be a form of discrimination where people are treated differently because of a perceived difference or prejudice. These perceived differences can include race, educational achievement, height, weight, gender, sexuality, body language, accent or name.

Bullying differs from a falling out amongst friends. Of course, this is sad, but differs from bullying because bullying is usually sustained, part of a pattern, and is deliberately designed to hurt and humiliate the victim. It is intentional. It is not a one-off argument or fight.

**Types of bullying include:**

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexualised - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic - because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber – misuse of any technology such as the internet, mobile phones, social networking sites to hurt, intimidate or abuse

It should be noted that the school has the statutory power to discipline students for any misbehaviour, including bullying, during a school-organised or school-related activity. This includes misbehaviour in proximity to the school site and during the journey to or from school, while they are wearing school uniform or are in some other way identifiable as a member of the school.

In addition, the school can sanction misbehaviour, including bullying, in other circumstances if it has repercussions for the orderly running of the school, poses a threat to another student or member of the public or could adversely affect the reputation of the school.

### **3. Why it is Important to Respond to Bullying**

Bullying hurts and no one deserves to be bullied. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Students who are bullying need to learn different ways to behave. Schools, and every member of the school community, have a duty to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

#### **Signs and Symptoms**

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults will be aware of these possible signs and that they may deem it important investigate if a child:

- is frightened of attending school
- is frightened of using the school 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)
- is using money from their school account to pay for other students food
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home very hungry (money / lunch may have been taken)
- 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 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 investigated.

#### **4. What to do if you are being bullied or suspect a student is being bullied**

##### **4.1 Students**

###### **If you are being bullied**

- Talk to an adult or someone in school you trust. This might be a teacher, learning support assistant, sixth former, or any other adult in school.
- You will be taken seriously, and what you say will be passed to your tutor or the Pastoral Team or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- The bullying will be investigated, and appropriate action will be taken.
- You will be informed of the outcome of the investigation without breaching GDPR.

###### **If you see someone being bullied at school**

- If you feel that the victim is in immediate danger, and it is safe to do so, step in and take the victim to any adult or member of the sixth form and describe what you have seen.
- If you are in any doubt concerning your own safety, find any adult or member of the sixth form and ask for their assistance
- If the victim is not in immediate danger report the incident to any member of staff.
- You will be taken seriously, and what you say will be passed to your tutor or the Pastoral Team or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- The bullying will be investigated, and appropriate action will be taken.
- Where possible, your anonymity/ identity will be preserved.

##### **4.2 Parents**

- If you suspect your child or another child is being bullied (see 'Signs and Symptoms' above), gather as much detail as possible.
- Contact the school and talk to the relevant Head of Year.
- Do not let your child talk you out of contacting the school.
- If the bullying is taking place on the journey to or from school, or using any form of technology, please let the school know.
- In some cases, it may be appropriate to refer bullying which is taking place outside school to the Police. However, the school will always attempt to resolve bullying issues beyond the school, and will cooperate fully with any Police investigation.
- The school will inform you of the outcome of the investigation being conscious of observing GDPR.

##### **4.3 Staff**

- Any member of staff who receives a concern will listen to the parent and / or student(s) and will take the matter seriously. They may take brief notes of names and circumstances as necessary.
- The parent / student should be reassured that they have acted correctly in reporting the bullying.
- The member of staff will refer the matter to the relevant Head of Year in accordance with the referral system established in the Behaviour Management Policy.
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
- The member of staff will listen to all people involved as far as is reasonably possible, to reach as accurate a picture as is possible.
- CCTV footage may be used if available.
- Whilst it is always the aim of any investigation to 'get to the truth', the view point of all parties including those of by-standers must be factored in providing as complete a picture as possible. The outcome of any investigation will be based on the balance of probabilities.



- If the incident is serious, or appears to form part of a more serious pattern, the member of staff should refer the incident to the Pastoral team or the Senior leadership Team.
- The pastoral team will generally be responsible for investigating the incident(s) as fully as possible, although other members of staff may be involved if appropriate.
- Action will be taken including a range of appropriate sanctions which may include contacting parents, the involvement of external agencies, education to prevent re-offending, an apology, a period of refocussing in the Ready to Learn room, suspension, a Behaviour/ Pastoral Support Plan and, if all strategies have been tried and failed, permanent exclusion may be considered.
- If appropriate the Police will be involved.
- Work will be commenced to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.
- Any bullying incident will be dealt with on an individual basis, and the school reserves the right to respond in different ways to different circumstances, while ensuring that consistency is preserved as appropriate.
- Data on bullying will be recorded and monitored carefully by the Pastoral Team. Patterns and / or trends will be evaluated regularly and action taken as appropriate.

## 5. Follow-up actions

### 5.1 The alleged victim

- The victim will be offered advice on how to deal with the incident or any possible subsequent incidents.
- The Pastoral Team or tutor may follow-up later to check on progress.
- If appropriate a referral may be made to the school counsellor or other support agencies

### 5.2 The alleged bully

- After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with and any sanctions applied, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.
- If possible, and appropriate, the students will be reconciled, using mediation.
- Further appropriate support may be put in place, including a Behaviour or Pastoral Support Plan if it is felt that the student may be danger of permanent exclusion.
- If appropriate a referral may be made to our school counsellor or other support agencies

## 6. Prevention

- Bullying is dealt with as part of our Personal, Social and Health Education (PSD) and, RSE, Citizenship course, and in related behavioural themes in all years, across all subjects
- Positive behaviour is encouraged at all times as an integral part of promoting a healthy school.
- PSD, and any lessons may adopt any of the methods below for helping students to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:
  - writing a set of school rules
  - signing a behaviour contract
  - writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying
  - reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly
  - role-plays
  - having discussions about bullying and why it matters

## **8 Appendix 1: Advice for staff dealing with any bullying incident**

### **1. Listen** carefully and calmly, and document what the student tells you

Ensure a private place to talk. Do not dismiss their concerns or make them feel they are at fault. Listen to their account fully first and then ask them (and maybe others) questions to get more detail. Avoid the terms 'bully' or 'victim' and instead talk about the behaviour of everyone involved, including bystanders. Clarify if there are immediate safety risks and let the student know how you will address these. Keep a dated record of the conversation.

### **2. Collect additional information**

Speak with all students involved, including bystanders. Keep records. Ensure you have information that answers who, what, where, when, how, why. Students views on why bullying is happening can suggest ways the school can respond.

### **3. Discuss a plan of action with the students**

Once you are confident you have a comprehensive picture of the situation, discuss a plan of action with the student/s. Refer to HCHS policy in terms of expectations and implications. Invite suggestions from students as appropriate. Inform all students involved of your intention to inform their parents/carers. Where possible include some restorative work which may include support for all parties, restorative meetings, using the school counsellor etc.

### **4. Inform the students, parents/ carers and appropriate staff of what you intend to do**

Provide as much information as you can without violating the privacy of other students or parents. Also inform them about when you are planning to follow up with them after implementing the plan. Explain that you will look at immediate and short-term responses as well as other long-term preventative measures or efforts to promote a positive school climate – utilise the 'daily check in' for the week following the disclosure.

### **5. Provide suggestions about what to do if the bullying occurs again**

Have information on hand to share with students or set up a meeting for them to talk about strategies with an appropriate staff member.

### **6. Record the incident in CPOMS**

### **7. Offer opportunity for review**

Bullying can require a sustained effort to prevent, particularly if situations are long standing. Review allows dialogue to establish whether issues have escalated or continued.