



FOUNDED 1879

# HALLFIELD SCHOOL

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

<b>Head Master</b>	Mr K Morrow	
<b>Chairman of Governors</b>	Mr T Venner	
<b>Staff member with responsibilities</b>	Deputy Heads (Head of Prep and Head of Pre-Prep)	
<b>Subcommittee with responsibilities</b>	Education	
<b>ISI Regulatory Policy</b>	No	
	Date	Autumn 2020
<b>Date for policy review</b>	Autumn 2023 (unless new legislation requires amendment)	



# HALLFIELD SCHOOL

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

### SCOPE

All staff and pupils including those in the EYFS and after school care.

### AIMS

It is our aim to create a culture where bullying will not thrive; to respond to all complaints of bullying; to investigate reasons for bullying incidents in order to help, support and educate all those concerned and to improve our own responses and strategies. We want our school to be a safe and secure environment where children can learn freely and without fear of bullying. This policy reflects and supports the principles of the DfE guidance 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (July 2017), and includes EYFS.

### GOVERNORS

The governing body supports the Head Master in all attempts to prevent and reduce the likelihood of bullying in our School.

## POLICY STATEMENT

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At Hallfield we believe that all pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment. We recognise bullying as a serious problem which can result in long term damage to the emotional welfare of its victims, or even suicide or self-harming. Bullying can arise in any school - we are not immune - and we therefore make it clear to everyone in our community that bullying in any form, whether it involves physical or verbal bullying, or bullying by exclusion or by damage to property or theft, is totally unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All adults working with children have a role to play in the whole school approach to bullying.

In order to protect our pupils from bullying and to promote, change where bullying occurs, we will do the following:

- Strive to create an atmosphere and ethos in the School community in which bullying is seen as unacceptable and is not allowed to thrive;
- Regularly review our policies and procedures to minimise opportunities for bullying and to deal effectively with the problem whenever it arises;

- Be vigilant for signs of bullying and to ensure that instances of bullying are investigated and dealt with as soon as they are witnessed or reported;
- Record instances of established or suspected bullying and follow a standard procedure in the event of bullying taking place;
- Written records should be looked at carefully to identify any patterns that might emerge looking in terms of victims, perpetrators, location and nature of incidents of bullying;
- Whenever appropriate involve parents in disciplinary procedures and in seeking solutions;
- Ensure that the School's policies on bullying are made clear to the pupils through a wide range of measures, including assemblies, PSHE lessons, circle time, posters, leaflets and sensitive and caring pastoral care. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour and Discipline Policy;
- Raise and maintain staff awareness of the issues surrounding bullying through staff training and effective internal communication;
- Involve parents in the School's anti-bullying measures and make them aware of the School's policies and procedures.

When reading this policy, it is important to refer to the School's Behaviour Policy, which deals with a number of related aspects.

Staff should also be aware that in serious instances bullying can qualify as peer on peer abuse. If there are concerns this may be the case, a DSL must be contacted immediately and the safeguarding policy referred to.



# HALLFIELD SCHOOL

## ANTI-BULLYING PROCEDURES

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### 1. DEFINITION OF BULLYING

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Bullying may be defined as any deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period and intentionally hurts another pupil or group physically or emotionally, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. Bullying is often pre-meditated and persistent, and may involve one or more individuals systematically undermining the confidence and self-esteem of others.

Bullying can take many different forms. These include verbal intimidation, deliberate ostracism, sexist or racist behaviour as well as threats and physical attacks. Cyber bullying is becoming an increasing threat where forms of technology such as mobile phones, chat rooms and the internet can be used to target others, often anonymously. Bullying can focus on the cultural or religious identities of other people, may be homophobic in character and reflect negative attitudes to others' sexuality, physical appearance, home circumstances, special educational need, disability or because a child is adopted or is a carer.

The seriousness of bullying cannot be emphasised enough. Bullying is among the top concerns that parents have about their children's safety and well-being at, and on the way to and from, school. Bullying is also a top concern of children. Bullying can and does result in serious long-term damage to the emotional welfare of its victims; it undermines their confidence and self-esteem and destroys their sense of personal security. It can have a long-term negative effect on young people's lives and in worst case; scenarios can even result in suicide or self-harming.

### 2. LOOKING OUT FOR THE SIGNS OF BULLYING

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It is important to be aware that children who are being bullied will potentially exhibit symptoms in many different ways. Staff and teachers should always be vigilant and look out for the following:

- Unwillingness to return to school;
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet;
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoiled by others;
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly going missing, or being damaged;
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Diminished levels of self-confidence;
- Frequent visits to the School Nurse with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches;
- Unexplained cuts and bruises;
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class;
- Choosing the company of adults;
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact; • Difficulty in sleeping, experiencing nightmares;
- Talking of suicide or running away.

### **3. CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE BULLYING DOES NOT THRIVE**

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The School will raise the awareness of staff through training and take action to reduce the risk of bullying at the times and places where it is most likely to occur. The key points from this policy will be prominently displayed on School notice boards and in pupil planners and will be discussed with pupils at the start of the school year. It will also be revisited as necessary during PSHE sessions to all years and reinforced in other areas of the curriculum as the opportunities present themselves e.g. drama, physical education, national anti-bullying week. Opportunities will also be sought to allow parents to contribute to the School's actions to prevent bullying.

- Staff and teachers are trained to recognise the symptoms of bullying and to be aware of how they might affect victims. Staff are made aware that bullying often occurs away from the view of teachers and outside of lesson times. This might include in changing rooms, in corridors or secluded areas of the site or at break times.
- New members of staff are given copies of the School's Anti-Bullying policy and its contents are discussed.
- Teachers should use a range of methods to help prevent bullying, and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all, including within the formal curriculum e.g. PSHE.

- The School takes part in national initiatives such as Anti-Bullying Week to promote tolerance and mutual respect during assemblies, and in displays around the School.
- There are copies of the School's Anti-Bullying policy posted in all Upper School classrooms. A copy is also inserted at the front of the children's Academic Planners.
- In the Pre-Prep, circle time is used to praise, reward and celebrate the success of all children and to create a positive atmosphere.
- In Upper School timetabled PSHE lessons are used to tackle directly bullying and the issues it raises, as well to promote considerate and tolerant behaviour in general.
- Victims of bullying are encouraged to report any problems immediately to a member of staff.
- All children will be actively encouraged to report incidents of potential bullying that they witness happening to another child.
- When a report of bullying is made children should be assured that the member of staff will undertake a full and fair investigation into the allegations. It should be made clear that whilst it might be necessary to pass on the information that is disclosed to another member of staff, the child's wishes will be respected as far as good practice will allow, and according to School policies and procedures on confidentiality and child protection.
- Staff should at all times, but particularly outside the classroom, watch out for children who are potential or known victims of bullying and try to ensure that they are protected from further distress.
- Friends of the victims of bullying will be encouraged, as appropriate, to offer support and to ensure that the victim is included in group activities.
- Victims of bullying, and their parents, will be kept informed of any action being taken against the bully.
- Internet access within school must be closely monitored to reduce the likelihood of cyber bullying. Guidance is also offered to children to avoid risk of this kind of bullying outside of school, including advice on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe and secure.
- Involving parents: parents have an important part to play in recognising the signs of bullying and keeping the School informed of any concerns, they may have. This may apply particularly to inappropriate or abusive use of electronic communication from home.

Parents will be kept informed of school policies and initiatives in information meetings, newsletters, the school website, children's planners and workshops when appropriate.

#### **4. DEALING WITH THE THREAT OF CYBER BULLYING**

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As mentioned in the definition above, cyber-bullying is becoming an increasing threat, where forms of technology such as mobile phones, chat rooms and the internet can be used to target others, often anonymously.

The School ICT policy highlights the need for appropriate use of ICT in school. Internet usage is monitored and any inappropriate usage that potentially involves cyber bullying, radicalisation or safeguarding issues is immediately brought to the attention of one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads. Any evidence such as computers used or records of usage will be preserved in case of the need for further investigation, potentially involving the police. The school has managed filtering systems in place to make sure that inappropriate materials are not viewed or accessed by the pupils.

Each year the older children in the school are given guidance and advice on how to stay safe online, including when they are outside of school. This is built into our PSHE scheme of work and forms part of our Anti-Bullying awareness week in November.

#### **5. PROCEDURES FOR STAFF DEALING WITH AN INCIDENT OR ACCUSATION OF BULLYING**

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In some cases, behaviour that is potentially bullying is witnessed at first hand by a member of staff. In this case, the background to the bullying should be looked into at the time and appropriate action taken. It may be that the incident witnessed is an example of something more systematic going on, and a close eye should be kept on the children concerned.

If a member of staff receives a complaint of bullying from a child or child's parent, the member of staff should investigate the accusation carefully before taking any action. They may choose to refer it to the Head of Year in the first instance, and to the Deputy Head: Head of Pre-Prep, or the Deputy Head: Head of Prep if the matter remains unresolved.

It is worth bearing in mind that things are not always as simple as they might first appear. The initial investigation might involve talking informally with the victim, as well as any possible independent witnesses. It might be appropriate to interview the accused as well, but being sure to say that you are in the middle of your enquiries and will need to speak about it again soon.

When making these enquiries it is important to allow the children to talk openly and without prompting. It is too easy to jump to conclusions and put your own pre-judgments into the minds of the children you are talking to. The children are often confused when this happens and subsequently find it difficult to separate fact from fiction. At this stage staff should do all that they can to support the victim of bullying.

When a child makes an accusation of bullying it is important that the child is informed that it might be necessary to pass the information on to other members of staff in accordance with school policies on confidentiality and child protection. It is not appropriate to offer unconditional confidentiality at any stage.

It is often a good idea to arrange a meeting with both the bully and the victim present to discuss what has happened and to put all of the information on the table. It can often be appropriate for both parties to share their feelings on the matter, being allowed to respond and coached to use 'I' rather than 'you' statements. This meeting needs careful management and thought but can often prove to be very constructive.

After this initial investigation, the member of staff might come to one of four conclusions:

**a. Bullying not proved**

An argument or disagreement, or even a physical fight, is not always bullying. If bullying is not proved, all pupils concerned should be reminded of our attitudes to bullying and should be reassured that complaints will always be followed up.

**b. Bullying is suspected**

If, after allowing all parties to put forward their views, you suspect there is substance to the allegation although you do not have definitive proof, you should endeavor to identify the reasons for the bullying and to help the children (both suspected bully and victims) deal with the underlying problems causing the bullying behaviour.

At this stage the matter should be reported to the appropriate members of staff, in particular the child's form teacher, Head of Year, Deputy Head: Head of Pre-Prep or Deputy Head: Head of Prep. Depending on the nature of the particular case and its severity the senior member of staff may become directly involved and talk to the children concerned. A written report should be made.

**c. Bullying proved**

If bullying is proved, the culprit should be told clearly of our attitudes to bullying and that bullying is totally unacceptable. He/she should be told that they must stop offending and that a final warning is being given. The School's policies on bullying should be explained clearly, and that repeated offences could ultimately result in suspension or expulsion. The culprit should also be warned to stay away from his/her victims. The Head Master and the parents of both the bully and the victim should be informed.

Every effort should be made to find out why a child is bullying and to seek ways of helping with any problems that might lie behind the behaviour. Children who bully should understand that whilst we cannot tolerate bullying in school, we will do everything we can to support the child in his/her efforts to reform and to involve the families in this process. A written record should be kept of what has occurred and of any meetings with parents.

All staff as well as the parents of “bully” and “bullied”, should be notified that there has been a problem that may recur, and should be asked to keep a close watch on the children concerned.

**d. Continued bullying**

If bullying is proved and it is clear that this is a recurring problem and that the bully has not heeded previous warnings the Head Master and the Deputy Head: Head of Pre-Prep or Deputy

Head: Head of Prep will take appropriate measures, as outlined in the procedure set out

below. **e. Bullying and safeguarding**

When there is ‘reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm’ a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern under the Children Act

1989. Where they believe this could be the case, the School staff should discuss with the appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead (Lizzie Sanderson, Deputy Head: Head of Pre-Prep, or Tim Butcher, Deputy Head: Head of Prep) who will consider those concerns and whether a referral to Birmingham Children’s Trust is required.

## **6. RECORD KEEPING AND SANCTIONS**

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When a case of bullying is suspected or proven, records must be kept. These records may be informal notes taken as well as written reports on incidents or interviews with children involved. These records will be kept as Pastoral records on iSAMS. Such records will be subject to the School’s policies on confidentiality. More serious cases, where there are lengthy records kept, may be stored between iSAMS and the appropriate Deputy Head’s office. This enables the School to keep track of bullying cases, to judge the effectiveness of our approach, and to guard against certain children offending repeatedly and the offences being treated in isolation.

Broadly speaking, cases of bullying will be treated according to the stages described below. (In cases of severe or sustained bullying being clearly identified it is possible that it will be treated as a more advanced case directly from the outset.)

When dealing with parents it is essential that they realise the serious nature of the offence, and are aware that repeated bullying behaviour by their child can result in suspension or expulsion.

**a. Warning Stage**

When bullying is suspected but not proved the child suspected should be told clearly about the accusation and its seriousness. They should be reminded about the School’s policy on bullying and warned not to put themselves at risk of further accusations by unkind or inconsiderate behaviour. At this stage parents may or may not be consulted depending on the discretion of the staff involved.

**b. Stage One:**

The culprit is given a warning that if he/she continues to bully, further steps will be taken. At this stage it should be made clear that repeated bullying could result in suspension or expulsion. Again, all efforts should be made to find the causes of the bullying behaviour and to address these in cooperation with parents. Parents will be invited to a meeting to discuss the problem and seek solutions.

**c. Stage Two**

If there is a further incident involving that pupil, the Head Master must be informed. He, or the appropriate Deputy Head, will ask the parents to come into School again and the problem and solutions will be discussed. If necessary, and with the parents' agreement, professional help or in-house counseling may be sought for the bully and/or the victim. At this meeting, parents and pupil will be informed clearly of the next stage of our bullying procedure. **d. Stage Three**

If the problem continues, then the Head Master will decide what further action to take. That may be a formal warning letter, suspension or permanent exclusion (expulsion). Parents who are not satisfied with decisions made at this stage will be referred to the Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure.

**Notes**

- Any requests to view records kept by the School will be treated on a case-by-case basis, taking into account constraints placed on the School by the need for confidentiality of other parties involved.

These are minimum sanctions. In very serious cases it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or Social Services. However, it is the policy of the School to attempt to resolve such issues internally using our own disciplinary sanctions, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely.

**7. PROCEDURES FOR STAFF**

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In the School situation, bullying is most likely to affect pupils. However, we are also aware that adults themselves can be bullied in the workplace. In cases of alleged bullying, the member of staff should refer to the appropriate grievance procedure and, in the first instance, the Staff Handbook.