

## Anti-bullying Policy

(Drawn up after consultation with the St. Hugh's Parent Forum and input from the anti-bullying charity 'Kidscape' and the School Council)

**The following policy relates to all children at St. Hugh's School, including those who board and those in the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage).**

### Legal Context

The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014 provide that the proprietor of an Academy or other independent school is required to ensure that an effective anti-bullying strategy is drawn up and implemented. The school also uses the DfE advice on 'Preventing and Tackling' bullying (Nov 2014). This is non-statutory guidance, and makes specific reference to Cyber Bullying; it includes useful information for staff and parents about Cyber Bullying.

Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff (2014) is also drawn upon.

The Equality Act 2010 replaces previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. A key provision is a new public sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5 April 2011. It replaces the three previous public sector equality duties for race, disability and gender, and covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Duty has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it ;
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Part 6 of the Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to admissions, the way it provides education for pupils, provision of pupil access to any benefit, facility or service, or by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment. In England and Wales Part 6 of the Act applies to maintained schools and Academies and to other independent schools.

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

If school staff feels that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to

send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

### **School Context**

The most important element in tackling bullying is to establish an ethos where children respect others' feelings, therefore preventing bullying happening in the first place. We believe we are a caring and supportive school; therefore we must take positive steps to identify and counteract bullying. In line with our safeguarding and child protection policy we aim to create an atmosphere in which children know they will be helped if they become the victim of bullying. Furthermore should there be reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of bullying then the incident should be treated as a child protection concern. This is in line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

In September 2015, as part of our PSHEE work, the children discussed the Pupil Code of conduct and they created our new Pupil Promise:

We will try our best to be:

- Respectful
- Honest
- Kind
- Helpful
- Responsible

These five areas will continue to be discussed in PSHEE, and as part of the new Jigsaw scheme of work for PSHEE in years F1 to Y6.

The following information is given to parents in our Parents' Handbook and this policy as a whole is available on the school website:

“Our school will not tolerate any unkind or cruel actions or remarks. Any repeated behaviour that makes other pupils feel uncomfortable or threatened can be described as bullying. This may take the form of physical or psychological violence by an individual or group against another.

If your child experiences bullying, encourage your child to talk to his/her Form Teacher or another adult at the school. Encourage your child to report incidents of bullying of other pupils and to view this as being responsible rather than being a sneak.

If your child is being bullied, encourage them to talk about it, reassure them that something can be done to help. Contact the school. The school will always respond to any complaint about bullying. The allegation will be recorded and a formal response will be made. After a suitable period of time (normally within two weeks) a further response will be made to ensure that the problem has been resolved.

In order to reduce the potential for bullying to occur staff must be vigilant at all times and pay particular regard when on patrol to such areas as toilets, adventure playground, unsupervised classrooms and any areas where pupils may go to avoid observation. All staff have a duty to ensure that pupils are safe when they are in school.”

Bullying is discussed regularly as part of our Whole School meetings, and in every meeting any incidents of bullying are raised as part of the discussion on behaviour. At this time staff are reminded of the process of reporting bullying as part of the whole school Positive Behaviour Policy. There is also a bullying questionnaire given to pupils at the end of every term. The results of this are compiled by the Head of Pastoral Care and are discussed at the Whole School meeting at the start of every term. At this time staff are reminded of their responsibility to deal with incidents of bullying, the possibility of bullying being a child protection issue and that in cases of severe and persistent bullying, strong sanctions such as exclusion may be necessary.

### **Possible Manifestations of Bullying**

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), 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. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways. It may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. We acknowledge that it can cause psychological damage. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online. Clearly bullying can take many forms, and may fall into one or more of the following categories (not intended to be an exhaustive list):

#### **Physical**

- Pushing/shoving
- Hitting or other means of inflicting physical pain
- Barging
- Queue jumping
- Stealing
- Hiding possessions

#### **Verbal**

- Name calling
- Unwanted nicknames
- Sarcasm
- Belittling
- Teasing/negative joking
- Rumours
- Whispering
- Homophobic comments
- Racist remarks

### **Emotional**

- Intimidation
- Exclusion
- Threats
- Interfering with learning
- Negative body language
- Being deliberately irritating
- Being a bystander to bullying
- Homophobic actions
- Racist actions

### **Cyber bullying:**

Cyber bullying is the use of any information technology such as email, instant messaging, chat rooms, pagers or cell phones to threaten or intimidate someone. 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.

The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 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.

Cyber bullying may include:

- inappropriate use of technologies
- threats
- insults
- racial or ethnic slurs
- homophobic comments
- sending images of victim to others via the internet
- misuse of social networking sites
- attempting to infect the victim's computer with a virus
- flooding an email inbox with nonsense messages

At school computer connection time is limited. Mobile devices are banned in academic time, and should be handed in if brought to school. Pupils may bring a 'phone or hand-held electronic device on trips or away matches or for use on a Sunday. Occasional special permission may be given for a pupil to have a mobile 'phone with them in exceptional circumstances. Pupils are taught not to

respond to threatening or defamatory messages, and never to open email messages from sources they do not recognize.

### **Emphasising differences**

Actions which focus upon any of the following:- ability, appearance, culture, disability, families, race, religion or sexuality will not be tolerated. Equally, sexist and homophobic behaviour are unacceptable. Bullying associated with special needs also falls into this category.

### **Homophobic bullying**

This may take the form of verbal acts such as calling someone 'gay', or making comments such as 'those trainers are gay'.

### **Sexual bullying**

This is physical or non-physical behaviour which is based upon a person's sexuality or gender. This will include verbal acts such as calling someone 'a slut' or physical acts such as touching someone in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable.

### **Gender based bullying**

Any action which sets up masculinity against femininity can be classed as gender bullying.

### **Racial and cultural bullying**

This can take the form of discrimination, i.e. being treated differently, or racism which is being subjected to abuse or harassment because of one's race or one's culture.

### **Religious bullying**

St. Hugh's will look to adopt a pluralist viewpoint that affirms the value of other religions and therefore challenge stereotypes and behaviour that harass or discriminate (directly and indirectly) based on religion.

### **Special Needs and Disability bullying**

Evidence indicates that children are more likely to be bullied if they are disabled. Research has shown that children with some form special needs are more susceptible to bullying and are more likely to be sociometrically rejected (Martlew & Hodson; Nabuzoka & Smith; O'Moore & Hillery; Whitney, Smith & Thompson, 1994). Hodges and Perry (1996) stated that peer rejection is a social risk factor that contributes to victimization. St. Hugh's endeavours to be an inclusive school and caters for pupils with special needs. Children are taught to appreciate differences and see their peers as individuals to be respected, with feelings and talents, just as they have.

## Peer on Peer Abuse

When dealing with abuse by young people on peers, St. Hugh's follows the key safeguarding documents, Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Safeguard Children, even where an alleged perpetrator is a child.

This entails:

- effective implementation of the St. Hugh's safeguarding and anti-bullying policies; including a recognition that sexualised abuse, including verbal abuse, by peers is a potential safeguarding issue;
- seeking advice from statutory agencies, as appropriate, and readiness to make a referral if an incident meets the referral threshold set by the Local Safeguarding Children Board;
- if a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, an immediate referral to children's social care and/or the police;
- following the advice for St. Hugh's staff in: [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#);
- effective information sharing with any agencies or other professionals involved;
- where allegations of abuse or assault have been made against one or more of our pupils, a thorough risk-assessment of the situation and risk-based decision-making (with the benefit of the advice of statutory authorities, where appropriate) will be carried out with a view to ensuring the safety of all pupils and that both alleged victims and perpetrator pupils receive appropriate support. Decisions arising might include, for example, whether the accused pupil should be removed from school for a period, or from certain classes, whether sleeping arrangements should be changed for boarders, whether contact with certain individuals should be prevented or supervised, the availability of counselling, the adequacy of arrangements for listening to children etc;
- good record keeping of related conversations, meetings and communications.

Although we are fortunate that bullying is rare in our school we should never be complacent. There are several ways in which we strive to maintain awareness of the problem. All staff and pupils are encouraged to take the issue seriously and to be aware of possible danger signs.

Form staff should be on the lookout for danger signs, and discussions in class PSHEE and circle time should revisit the topic on a regular basis. The issue of racism is particularly important to bear in mind, as our pupils are largely from a white, western European background. Racism is discussed further in a separate St. Hugh's Anti-racism policy.

Early each new term the Head of Pastoral Care details specific pupils and staff to whom victims of bullying can turn, and urges them to tell **someone**. Pupils are also reminded that they have responsibilities towards one another and that if they witness bullying they should report it.

The School Captains and Deputy Captains are given a role as extra eyes and ears to spot potential bullying behaviour and are identified as pupils who are there to listen.

The Pastoral Care box is available for pupils to post concerns over bullying and request support, the Year 3 and 4 classes have their own Worry Boxes.

The school also has an Independent Listener, Mrs Wendy Trotter, whose details are displayed in the boarding houses and around the school, and who provides another avenue for pupils to express anxieties about bullying, or any other matter.

Since 2009 Year 7 pupils have been given training in peer mentoring to empower them to help fellow pupils report and resolve problems including bullying.

The issue of bullying is included regularly in school assemblies and class PSHEE sessions. Local police come to school on a regular basis to talk to specific groups about internet safety, including cyber bullying. We mark anti-bullying week each year and send out the Anti-bullying Alliance literature to parents.

To help provide an opportunity to report bullying, pupils from Year 3 upwards complete a questionnaire each term stating whether they feel they have been bullied, what form that bullying has taken and whether they reported the incident or need help with the situation. This also includes a section where pupils can identify areas where bullying may be prevalent.

The Head of Pastoral Care reviews the results of the questionnaires and follows up any problems they may highlight.

### **How do we deal with Bullying?**

All instances of bullying are noted on iSAMS and causes for concern are raised in staff briefings.

When an incident of bullying is reported, staff must always:

Act immediately (if on duty, gain cover from other staff if necessary)

- Treat all instances seriously
- Isolate the victim and the alleged bully/bullies
- Reassure the victim
- Talk to witnesses, try to collect full facts and not jump to premature conclusions
- Get a report from both sides in an objective, helpful manner, without appearing to take sides
- Deal with the situation on the spot, if at all possible, discussing the implications with all parties (including any disciplinary action)
- Ensure that any property taken from the victim is restored to them
- Make a written record of all the details of the incident
- Report all instances to the Form Tutor and the Head of Pastoral Care (serious incidents such as physical violence or severe intimidation should be reported directly to the Headmaster).
- Record the incident on iSAMS.

As a school we must continually strive to eradicate bullying and to bring about a change of behaviour in the instigator. Reporting and recording of incidents is essential so that patterns of bullying may be highlighted, and to provide evidence of what has happened and the action we have taken.

### **Bullying outside school premises**

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises “to such an extent as is reasonable”. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The Headmaster will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or local authority anti-

social behaviour coordinator of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying the teacher can only discipline the pupil on school premises or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the staff member.

### Helping the Pupil who has been a Target of Bullying

The relationship of trust built up between adults and pupils at school is important in providing opportunities for those being bullied to approach someone to tell, but it may be necessary to work with the victim to help them understand that they do not have to face the bullying on their own.

In most cases the Form Tutor will have a key role to play, and they should become involved at the earliest opportunity. They will also be responsible for keeping the parents informed of the situation and trying to ensure a common approach at home and at school.

The Head of Pastoral Care should be involved from the outset to help reassure the pupil being bullied and their parents that the school takes the issue seriously.

It is important to tackle any negative feelings which bullying may engender and victims may need help to feel more positive about themselves.

Pupils who have experienced bullying may also need guidance as to how they can change their behaviour to make them less of a target.

At times victims may need to learn how they should react when they feel they are being bullied to avoid getting themselves into trouble or encouraging further bullying.

Pupils who experience bullying may be asked to write a diary of instances and how they respond in each situation, to try to help build up evidence of what is going on.

The pupil being targeted may be given a safe haven where they can go during break times. If this is the case, all duty staff should be made aware.

Captains and Deputy Captains as well as the Teaching Assistants should also be asked to keep a special lookout for further problems.

The pupil targeted by bullying should be reassured that they have done the right thing in speaking up and that **action is being taken**, but it must be stressed that the bullying may not stop immediately and that if this is the case, they should continue to report what is happening.

The Form Tutor should make a point of following up initial action by checking that the problem has been sorted out, as the pupil at the receiving end may well be reticent to raise the subject again. Parents should be kept informed of the situation so they feel that the school is taking action.

Where there has been an allegation of bullying the parents of the victim should be invited to talk about the situation with the Form Tutor and the Head of Pastoral Care (and the Headmaster in more serious instances). There should be a follow-up meeting after a suitable period (generally not more than a month) to review progress and amend responses if necessary.

### Helping the Pupil Instigating the Bullying

It is worth noting that most people have behaved towards someone else in a manner which could be termed bullying, at some time. We do not believe that it is helpful to brand children as 'bullies'. It is the behaviour not the child that we are condemning. The pupil who is bullying needs to understand that there is a problem, and that their behaviour is hurtful and unacceptable.

In more minor instances it may be sufficient to identify the unacceptable behaviour and to make it clear that it will not be tolerated. Often all that is needed is a sincere apology to the victim at this stage and apart from reporting and recording, no further action is necessary.

Where the bullying is of a nature to warrant sanctions, these are available in line with the school's Behaviour Policy; this includes warnings, report cards, detentions, internal and external exclusions and potentially leaving the school. If sanctions are imposed, the pupil must understand the reasons and the possible consequences of further bullying.

It may be necessary to restrict their movements during free time to make it less likely for them to have the opportunity to bully.

The instigator should be made aware that all staff will be on the lookout for any further bullying behaviour.

There is a key role for the Form Teacher to play in talking to pupils in their form who are involved in bullying. Such pupils may need help with particular problems such as their own feelings of inadequacy, or coping with circumstances which they may find difficult. They often need help to empathise with the target of their bullying behaviour. Pupils who persist in bullying have to understand that they can and must change. Root causes may be various and complex and it is important to try to get to the bottom of these.

The Form Tutor should also inform parents of the situation initially, in all but the most minor 'one-off' situations (which are unlikely to be classed as bullying in any case). It may well be necessary, after discussion with the Head of Pastoral Care, to arrange a formal meeting with the parents in which strategies can be agreed to combat the problem.

Initial action must be followed up and parents kept informed.

Staff Responsible	Head of Pastoral Care
Last reviewed	Summer 2017
Date of next review	Summer 2018