

Heart of the Forest Community Special School

Anti-Bullying Policy 2023/24



Approved by:	HoF Governing Body	Date:	2/2/2022
Last reviewed on:	Oct 2023	Next review date:	Oct 2024
Website:	Yes	Type:	Statutory

Introduction

Heart of the Forest Special School is committed to creating and sustaining a safe, positive and inclusive environment for all pupils, staff and parents/carers. We believe that all members of the School community have the right to be protected from bullying and abusive behaviour. This underpinned through our school values;

Heard
Empowered
Achieving
Respected
Trusted

Safe

Legal References

This policy operates within a wider national and local policy framework which includes:

- The Education Act 1996 & 2011
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 & 2014
- DCSF Guidance ‘Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying in schools’
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children and Families Act 2014, SEND Regulations 2014 and SEND Code of Practice 2015
- DfE Advice: Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2014
- Dfe Advice: Cyberbullying Advice for Headteachers and School Staff 2014
- DfE Guidance on Anti Bullying 2017
- DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education: for Schools and Colleges 2022 □ DfE Working together to safeguard children 2018

Objectives of this policy

- All Governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All Governors, teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying and what they should do if bullying occurs.
- Pupils and parents feel assured that the School takes bullying very seriously and that they will be supported if bullying is reported.
- All members of the School community know that bullying will not be tolerated.

Definition of Bullying

The Department for Education defines bullying as a *'behaviour by an individual or group, that can be a single incident or repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or groups either physically or emotionally'*.

Bullying is any sustained, targeted, deliberate action which causes pain, anguish, distress or upset. It may be:

- Physical (pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence)
- Emotional (being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, threatening, gesturing)
- Verbal (name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing)
- Racist (racial taunts, graffiti, gestures)
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic (taunts or name calling focusing on the issue of sexuality)
- Cyber bullying refers to all areas of internet abuse, such as email & internet chat room misuse, mobile threats by text messaging & calls or misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities.
- Child-on-child abuse including: bullying; abuse in intimate personal relationships between children; physical abuse; sexual violence and harassment; consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images and/or videos; causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent; upskirting; initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

How does bullying differ from unkindness?

Sometimes pupils can feel hurt or upset because they have been ill-treated or have fallen out with a friend. This is not the same as bullying. Bullying:

- Is deliberately intended to hurt or humiliate
- Involves a power imbalance that makes it hard for the victim to defend themselves
- Is usually persistent, however it can be a single incident
- Often involves no remorse or acknowledgment of the victim's feelings

School staff are ready to help and support pupils who have fallen out with friends but such situations will not be treated in the same way as a case of bullying. Every pupil has the right to be safe and happy in school and to be protected from feeling vulnerable.

Signs and Symptoms

The children and young people at Heart of the Forest School have a wide-range of complex communication and cognitive needs and as such not all pupils will recognise bullying behaviour if they experience it. All adults should therefore be aware of the following signs and symptoms which may indicate that a child is being bullied:

- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- lacks concentration
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feigns illness
- clings to adults
- begins to do poorly in school work
- has possessions which are damaged or " go missing"
- 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 & jumpy when a text message is received

Whilst these signs and symptoms could also be indicative of other issues, bullying should be considered as a possible cause and should be investigated.

Role of Staff and Volunteers

All staff should have an awareness that bullying which may be a safeguarding issue and can manifest itself via *child on child abuse*. All staff should be clear as to the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures concerning *child on child abuse* as referenced in the Safeguarding Policy.

Role of Senior Leadership and Governors

- To develop school policies that are in line with current regulations
- To promote a school climate where bullying and violence are not tolerated and cannot flourish
- To ensure a review of all school policies every year and, as a result, the policy and procedures are updated as necessary
- To provide curriculum opportunities to address bullying

- To ensure pupil support systems are in place to prevent and respond to bullying
- To address school site issues and promote safe play areas
- To have a filtering and monitoring system and a policy in place to help detect signs of cyberbullying within school
- To be responsible for preventing and responding to bullying
- To be aware of the importance of modelling positive relationships
- To work in partnership with parents, other schools and with children's services and community partners to promote safe communities

Role of Parents and Carers

The school is highly proactive in communicating with parents. Parents are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and will follow the anti-bullying policy.

- Parents/Carers have a responsibility to support the School's policies and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school.
- Parents/Carers are encouraged to express and share any concerns about bullying by approaching the class/form teacher, whether that be as a parent of a pupil or a bystander in a situation.
- They are aware of procedures to use if they are concerned their child is being bullied or does not feel safe to learn, including the school's complaints procedure.
- They have confidence that the school will take any complaint about bullying seriously and investigate/resolve as necessary, and that the school systems will deal with the bullying in a way that protects their child.

Procedures

- Bullying incidents to be reported and recorded as a behaviour incident on Solar. The frequency of incidents and patterns of behaviour will be monitored by the behaviour lead and overseen by the Pastoral Manager.
- Re-occurring incidents of bullying should also be recorded on MyConcern as a safeguarding concern linked to child on child abuse. This will be monitored and overseen by the DSL and DDSL's who will then assess the situation and take appropriate action.
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying will be investigated and measures introduced to stop the behaviours, including PSHE interventions as appropriate.
- In serious cases, parents to be informed and invited to a meeting to discuss the problem.
- Appropriate interventions will be identified and implemented to support both the victim and the bully/bullies to move on in a positive way.

- Racist and homophobic incidents will be dealt with in line with current GCC Guidance.
- Where a bullying incident leads to a concern regarding safeguarding, the School Safeguarding policy and procedures will be followed.

Prevention

- Recording, monitoring and analysis of incidents to identify vulnerable pupils/groups, any correlation between bullying incidents and specific activities or events and to prevent repeat bullying occurring.
- A child friendly version of this policy will be shared through PSHE lessons where appropriate.
- Is proactive in ensuring that all pupils are well informed via assemblies, SMSC, collective worship and PSHE/RSE to support a consistent message that bullying is unacceptable.
- Actively supports National Anti-bullying week (November) where assemblies and other pupil centred activities are predominant.
- Support pupils where appropriate to understand the roles they can take in preventing bullying.
- Celebrates success to reinforce a positive school environment.
- Ensure staff are trained and kept updated so that they are able to identify signs of bullying and able to respond appropriately.
- Parent workshops including anti-bullying and online safety sessions. Updates and information communicated as appropriate to parents through ParentApp or social media.

Providing Support

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Reassuring the pupil and providing continuous pastoral support.
- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their teacher, the designated safeguarding lead, or a member of staff of their choice.
- If appropriate, being advised to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience. Working towards restoring self-esteem and confidence.

- Providing ongoing support; this may include: working and speaking with staff, offering formal counselling, engaging with parents and carers.
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this could include support through Early Help or Children Social Work Service, or support through the Children and Young People's Mental Health Service (CYPMHS).

Pupils who have perpetrated bullying will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened, establishing the concern and the need to change.
- Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude and behaviour of the child
- Providing appropriate education and support regarding their behaviour or actions.
- If online, requesting that content be removed and reporting accounts/content to service provider.
- Sanctioning, in line with school behaviour policy
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this may include involvement from the Police or referrals to Early Help, Children Social Work Service, or the Children and Young People's Mental Health Service