



Anti-Bullying and Hate Policy

At Hester's Way Primary School, our main priority is to have a safe, secure and caring atmosphere and environment, in which children are encouraged to achieve academically and socially. Our Behaviour Rules "**Be Ready, Be Respectful, Be Safe**" teach the children to be well-rounded and positive citizens of their local and the global communities. We take accusations of bullying and hate seriously and it will not be tolerated.

What is Bullying?

Bullying includes a range of abusive behaviour that is

- repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally.

Bullying is when individuals or groups seek to harm, intimidate or coerce someone who is perceived to be vulnerable (Oxford English Dictionary, 2021).

It can involve people of any age, and can happen anywhere – at home, school or using online platforms and technologies (cyberbullying). This means it can happen at any time.

Bullying encompasses a range of behaviours which may be combined and may include the behaviours and actions such as:

Verbal Abuse

- name-calling
- saying nasty things to or about a child or their family.

Physical Abuse:

- hitting a child
- pushing a child
- physical assault.

Emotional Abuse:

- making threats
- undermining a child
- excluding a child from a friendship group or activities.

Cyberbullying/Online Bullying:

- excluding a child from online games, activities or friendship group
- sending threatening, upsetting or abusive message
- creating and sharing embarrassing or malicious images or videos
- 'trolling' - sending menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name.

Bullying can be a form of discrimination, particularly if it is based on a child's disability, race, religion or belief, gender identity or sexuality.

The Impact of Bullying

The emotional effects of being bullied include:

- sadness, depression and anxiety
- low self-esteem
- social isolation
- self-harm
- suicidal thoughts and feelings (Bainbridge, Ross and Woodhouse, 2017).

Bullying can affect children's performance and attendance at school. They may find it hard to concentrate on schoolwork and homework, or be too afraid to go to school (Brown, Clery and Ferguson, 2011).

Bullying can happen at any time or anywhere - a child can be bullied online when they are alone in their bedroom trying to relax or do homework - so it can feel like there's no escape (NSPCC, 2016). This can make it even more difficult for children to cope with being bullied.

If a child is being bullied online, they may not know who is bullying them (the bully may have created an anonymous online account). This can be extremely frightening.

Children who have witnessed another child being bullied may also be distressed. They may not know the best way to help the person being bullied. They may fear for their own safety and experience feelings of guilt for not stepping in (Children's Commissioner for Wales, 2017; NSPCC, 2016).

Why Children Bully Others

There are many reasons why children bully others and it's not always a straightforward situation. Some of these include:

- peer pressure and/or wanting the approval of others
- wanting to feel powerful over someone with a perceived disadvantage
- being bullied themselves
- being worried, unhappy or upset about something
- lacking social skills or not understanding how others feel.

Children who bully others may not understand that they are making life difficult for another child, hurting and upsetting their feelings, and they may find this realisation very distressing. They will need help and support to change their behaviour, as well as the victim being supported for their specific needs.

When posting online, children may not consider the impact their actions will have on others. Some children may be more likely to engage in bullying behaviour online as they can create anonymous accounts which may make them feel as if they can't be 'found out'. At school, we explain that children should communicate online, as they would do face to face to avoid any sense of barrier and lack of responsibility for their actions.

Vulnerability factors

Any child can be bullied. Sometimes children who are seen by others as 'different' in some way may be targeted (Children's Commissioner for Wales, 2017). This might be because of their:

- physical appearance
- race
- faith or culture

- gender identity
- sexuality
- disability or additional needs.

(Ditch the Label, 2019)

Or it could be because they:

- appear anxious or have low self-esteem
- lack assertiveness
- are shy or introverted.

It may also be because of a child's family circumstances or home life, for example if they are adopted or in care (Department for Education, 2017) or receiving free school meals (Anti-Bullying Alliance, 2019).

Recognising and Responding to Bullying

Signs and indicators

Indicators that a child could be experiencing bullying include:

- being reluctant to go to school
- being distressed or anxious
- losing confidence and becoming withdrawn
- having problems eating and/or sleeping
- having unexplained injuries
- changes in appearance
- changes in performance and/or behaviour at school.

Adults may notice that a child isn't spending time with their usual group of friends, has become isolated or that another children's behaviour towards a child has changed.

Reporting

If you have a concern about bullying, you should speak to the class teacher in the first instance. If you feel that your concerns have not been addressed and that the situation is continuing or getting worse then please speak to the Head Teacher.

There may be circumstances where the school's Pastoral Support Team are informed and asked to support with the situation or an Early Help referral is made to support the children and their families, with consent.

Other external agencies may be signposted for help and support.

If the school think that a child may be at serious risk of harm, they may contact social care or the police.

Safeguarding policies and practises will be followed, where needed.

Responding to incidents

All staff should have a consistent approach to how they respond to bullying, using this policy to support the process. The Child Protection and Safeguarding policies should also be used in collaboration with this policy.

When responding to incidents or allegations of bullying it's important for staff and volunteers to:

- listen to all the children involved to establish what has happened
- record details of the incident, including the type of bullying e.g. cyber, verbal, physical and any actions you've taken
- centralise information in order to monitor and analyse incidents and patterns of behaviours on CPoms
- inform your nominated child protection lead and any staff needing to know about the situation
- inform parents and carers (unless doing so would put a child at further risk of harm)
- provide support to the child/children being bullied, children who witnessed the bullying and the child/children who has been accused of bullying
- access any external support and put preventative measures in place
- ask the child/children who have been bullied what they would like to happen next
- consider appropriate sanctions for children that have carried out bullying
- continue to monitor the situation even if the situation has been resolved
- continue to record incidents or add notes where issues have been resolved
- report to police where it is considered a potential criminal offence.

Any bullying that takes place outside of school, but involves pupils who know each other from school, will be addressed with outside agencies and parent/carers. This includes online bullying, bullying that happens on the way to and from school, and bullying that happens in other public places.

When responding to online bullying, we will:

- make sure children know not to retaliate online or reply to any bullying messages
- make sure children understand how they can take steps to prevent online bullying from happening again, for example by changing their contact details, blocking contacts or leaving a chat room
- ask the child if they have shared the bullying content with anyone else (if so, who).

If bullying content has been circulated online, we will act to contain it:

- if appropriate, ask the person responsible to remove the content
- contact the host (such as the social networking site) and ask them to take the content down
- contact the [NSPCC helpline](#) for advice about what to do.

School will contact the Police, if the online content is illegal, considered to be harassment, uses threatening behaviour or is considered to be malicious communication, under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

Preventing bullying

A whole-school approach is key to preventing and tackling bullying (Department for Education (DfE), 2018a; Welsh Government, 2019). We will aim to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment where children, young people and adults treat each other with respect. As part of this, staff and volunteers should challenge inappropriate behaviour or language and not dismiss it as 'banter' (DfE, 2018a).

All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or

abuse. Everyone has a role to play in preventing all forms of bullying (including online) and putting a stop to bullying.

Our main aim is to create a culture, where it is clear bullying will not be tolerated and children feel they can tell someone if they have a problem.

This might include:

- talking to young people about healthy relationships and challenging unhealthy behaviours
- promoting sources of help and information such as [Childline](#) and using documents and resources from organisations such as the NSPCC.

We will seek to prevent bullying by:

- developing a code of behaviour that sets out how everyone involved in our organisation is expected to behave, in face-to-face contact and online, and within and outside of our activities
- ensure there is an awareness and proactivity around reporting bullying
- holding regular discussions with school stakeholders about bullying and how to prevent it
- providing support and training for all staff and volunteers on dealing with all forms of bullying, including racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic and sexual bullying
- considering whether there are any areas where bullying may be more likely to happen and take steps to make these areas safer, for example making sure staff do regular checks
- putting clear and robust anti-bullying procedures in place.

Our staff and volunteers should be alert to the dynamics of children's relationships and consider what approaches might be appropriate to prevent any situations that might escalate into bullying. This includes talking to the children in assemblies or lessons or having smaller discussions.

Our discussions with staff, volunteers, children, young people and families will focus on:

- group members' responsibilities to look after one another and uphold the behaviour code
- practising skills such as listening to each other
- respecting the fact that we are all different
- making sure that no one is without friends
- dealing with problems in a positive way
- checking that our anti-bullying measures are working well.

Responding to Bullying

We will make sure our response to incidents of bullying considers:

- the needs of the person being bullied
- the needs of the person displaying bullying behaviour
- needs of any bystanders
- our organisation as a whole.

Where possible staff will use the behaviour policy, to enable reparative conversations to address the issues.

We will review the plan we have developed to address any incidents of bullying at regular intervals, in order to ensure that the problem has been resolved in the long term.

We will seek more information about responding effectively to the bullying, in order to:

- protect children from bullying and cyberbullying
- recognise and respond to abuse

We may seek to support pupils through buddy systems, peer mentoring and/or any direct work needed for pupils and cohorts. The School Council may also be involvement in tackling any aspect of behaviour, bullying and promote our school rules of "Be Ready, Be Safe and Be Respectful".

Diversity and Inclusion

We recognise that bullying is closely related to how we respect and recognise the value of diversity. We will be proactive about:

- seeking opportunities to learn about and celebrate difference
- increasing diversity within our staff, volunteers, children and young people
- welcoming new members to our school.

We promote multi-cultural awareness by choosing stories and posters, which display children of other races and cultures, and we discourage gender stereotyping by encouraging children to engage in all activities.

Cyber Bullying

In school, if staff become aware of any inappropriate use of the internet they will report this to the Head Teacher and Pastoral Support Team.

Sexting and the pressure to do so will be recorded and dealt with by the school and Governing Board in accordance [with](#) our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

The Head Teacher will contact the PC Beat Officer, Police Community Support Officer (PSCO) working with the school and inform them of any concerns, in order for the PCSO to work with children, parents and staff, if needed.

Parents/carers will be informed of any incidents and made aware of the legal implications of posting such material online.

We aim to teach the children to be good citizens, who know right from wrong, in order that they follow the rule of law when they are adults. It is important to bear in mind that some types of harassment, 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.

What is hate?

In extreme cases prejudice-motivated bullying and harassment can also be considered a hate crime which is punishable by law.

Hate in the context of behaviour and attitude has been defined as; "Acts of violence, hostility and intimidation directed towards people because of their identity or perceived difference" (Chakraborti, Garland and Hardy 2014:6)

A hate incident is defined as: "Any incident, which may or may not constitute a criminal offence, which is perceived by the victim or any other person, as being motivated by hostility or prejudice." (College of Policing 2014) If a criminal offence has been committed the Incident becomes a Hate Crime.

Protected characteristics under current (2019) hate crime legislation are named: disability; race; religion or belief; sexual orientation; and transgender identity. Gloucestershire also includes: age; gender (sex); and alternative subcultures, eg homeless.

Identifying the problem

It is recognised that Hate Incidents/Crimes can be more impactful on the victim than standard bullying because they have been attacked on account of 'who they are', an element of their core identity. There is also wider invisible impact on those that share that identity who may not themselves have been targeted. For example: If a young person with a disability witnesses disablist bullying towards a peer, he/she may become fearful and anxious about also being at risk, despite never having been directly targeted themselves.

Resolving the Issue

Any incidents regarded as Hate concerns should be reported to school staff and they should report this to the Head Teacher. This will be dealt with as a bullying incident (as above) – although the HT as Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide as to which staff and agencies need to be informed in order to protect children. Referrals can be made to Gloucestershire Hate Crime Unit at www.gloshate.co.uk for support and guidance.

The school will:

- Take bullying/hate incidents seriously and investigate incidents thoroughly interviewing all involved
- Put actions into place to try and prevent any repeat bullying/hate incidents through: direct teaching; talking through the incident in a "Restorative Justice" style approach where appropriate; sanctions; training; support; reward systems and assertiveness awareness and ensuring that pupils are confident in knowing and are able to report their worries and concerns
- We would aim to support the victim and the potential or alleged "bully" in order to teach them how to change their behaviour
- Ensure that all children know how to report bullying/hate and offer discreet ways for them to report incidents

School will report Hate Crime to the Police through the Police Community Support Officer (PCSO), School Beat Officer and/or our local policing team, if it is considered to potentially be a criminal offence.

We will seek support for the victim through our Pastoral Support Team and/or Victim Support, if needed.

Gloucestershire Restorative Justice Team may be contacted for support with the wider family, if needed.

Pupils

Victims will not always tell those in authority. They may inform parents/carers or friends rather than staff. Disclosures must be treated seriously.

In all classrooms there are "worry boxes" in order that pupils can report concerns and issues, discreetly.

We are proactive in using and analysing Pupil Voice and use the Local Authority Online Pupil Survey to find out about how children feel about school and if they are aware of any bullying.

Staff

There is a legal requirement for employers to provide a safe place of work for employees and others that use the establishment. The Head Teacher is required to ensure the enactment of that responsibility within the school. The Head Teacher has a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees. Bullying can irrevocably damage the mental health of an individual and this responsibility extends to eradication of bullying in the work place. Staff must report any incidents to their line manager immediately.

Bullying may occur between 'professional' teaching staff, support staff and voluntary workers. Tell-tale signs might include:

- Low morale
- Increased level of staff turnover
- High rates of absenteeism
- Frequent disputes, complaints or grievances
- Isolated members of staff
- Inefficient team work.

When investigations are undertaken other colleagues will be involved and rigorous vigilance maintained.

School Actions

Our priority is to develop self-esteem, independence, trust and assertiveness through our Personal, Social and Health Education and Citizenship curriculum and through wider aspects of school life.

Staff teach the children how to be tolerant and respectful members of the community and as such preventing or tackling bullying through Social, Moral, Social and Cultural Development as well as the teaching of British Modern Values.

Teaching takes place in classes, as year groups, as well as whole school assemblies, which may be led by visitors from external agencies.

As a school, we expect adults to model this behaviour to children.

We support national Anti-Bullying Week and advocate friendship and kindness in our daily school life.

Our Behaviour Policy outlines how we encourage positive behaviour through praise, rewards, assemblies and circle times as well as consequences for negative behaviours.

We want our pupils to be able to use skills learnt at school, to be good citizens in the community and later in life, to be able to deal with people and situations that they may find themselves in, in a sensible and legal manner.

In Conclusion:

We will always take any allegation, disclosure or report of bullying seriously.

The school will always do everything it can to support pupils, parents/carers and staff.

We may have to report incidents to other agencies depending of the seriousness of the concerns.

Other Policies

Parents should be aware of the school complaints procedure and any issues will be taken seriously and dealt with accordingly. Our school also has a Serial Complaints Policy.

Related policies and procedures This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies and procedures including:

Acceptable User
Allegations Management
Attendance
Behaviour Policy
Complaints
Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy
Early Help Offer
E-Safety Policy
First Aid and Medication
Health and Safety
Keeping Children Safe in Education
Offsite Visits
Lettings/Hirers agreement
SEND Local Offer
Safeguarding
Safer Recruitment and staff HR policies
Safer Working Practice
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
Staff Behaviour - Code of Conduct and Teaching Standards
Whistle Blowing
Working Together to Keep Children Safe

If you need a paper copy of any policy please contact the school office.

This policy was reviewed in February 2024.

It will be reviewed in February 2025.

It will be reviewed at least annually or when needed.