



Headstart School Anti-Bullying Policy	
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Author	Executive Headteacher
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Rationale

Headstart has a 'duty of care' towards its students regarding bullying in that the Headteacher and all staff stand in loco parentis (in place of the parents). This duty of care includes protecting students from bullying and ensuring that a safe and supportive environment is sustained which allows every individual to reach their potential. This ethos is encouraged in all aspects of daily life at Headstart school.

Headstart School also adheres to statements from the DfE in 2007 that it is the school's responsibility to 'provide safe and happy places to learn is essential to achieving school improvement, raising achievement and attendance, promoting equality and diversity, and ensuring the safety and well-being of all members of the school community' (DFE 2007)

In further guidance in 2017 from the DfE on preventing and tackling bullying it is clear that 'Bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals. It can be a barrier to their learning and have serious consequences for their mental health. Bullying which takes place at school does not only affect an individual during childhood but can have a lasting effect on their lives well into adulthood. By effectively preventing and tackling bullying, schools can help to create safe, disciplined environments where pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

This policy takes full account of the school's legal obligations under 'The Education Act of 2006:

'Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides that maintained schools must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures should be part of the school's behaviour policy which must be communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents.'

And

The Equality Act 2010

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.*

In Addition To:

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022** with reference to online safety and Child on Child Abuse.
- **Guidance from the NSPCC – 'Protecting children from bullying and cyber bullying'**
- **Guidance from the Anti Bullying Alliance**



Our Values and Beliefs:

Headstart School is committed to ensuring that students learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment, without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know the incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will pupils be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at school.

Definition of Bullying

The definition of bullying, as stated by the Anti Bullying Alliance (2023) is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online.

Bullying is therefore:

- Deliberately hurtful
- Repeated, often over a period of time
- Something which involves a power imbalance
- An intentional action
- Difficult for victims to defend themselves against

It can take many forms:

Specific examples of bullying behaviour recognised at Headstart include:

Physical - Pushing, Poking, Kicking, Hitting, Biting, Pinching etc.

Verbal - Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling.

Emotional - Isolating others, tormenting, hiding books, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation and coercion.

Sexual - Unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc.

Online / Cyber - Posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion.

Indirect - Can include the exploitation of individuals.

(Taken from Anti-Bullying Alliance 2023)



Signs and Symptoms:

A child/young person may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the School transport / get into their taxis
- wants to be driven to school by family or collected
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep or have 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
- has dinner or other monies continually lost
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (Money / lunch has been stolen)
- 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 and jumpy when cyber messages are recieved

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered as a possibility as part of the investigation



Where a clear link can be established to the school, we will follow the usual Anti-bullying policy to rectify the situation. If the situation occurs outside of school, we would always recommend the involvement of the Police if the situation requires.

Support and advice can be found here:

www.childline.org.uk

www.bullying.co.uk

www.familylives.org.uk

www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying-and-

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Our Approach

First and foremost, Headstart Schools focus is on prevention of bullying through specific, proactive strategies.

These include:

- Effective school leadership that promotes an open and honest anti-bullying ethos.
- Use of curriculum opportunities, in particular tutor periods and PSHE classes where issues of diversity is discussed and anti-bullying messages are drawn out.
- Use of opportunities throughout the school calendar and at certain times of the school day to raise awareness of the negative consequences of bullying e.g. Anti-Bullying Week in November of each year
- Whole school assemblies.
- Pupil surveys.
- Poster campaigns.
- Improved supervision in potential problem areas.
- Peer mentoring and Buddy Schemes.
- Heads up Behaviour scheme – Planned by behaviour consultant.
- Assertiveness training.
- Review of general and specific staff induction and continuing professional development to ensure staff training reflects the anti-bullying policy and practice of the school.

The next emphasis of much of our work is to break this cycle of rivalry and conflict, to encourage the pupils to **want** to co-operate and care for each other. In examples of clear cut bullying the importance of this process being implemented skilfully and effectively is heightened.

We do not believe that punitive reaction to bullying has a long-term effect in reducing bullying. At best a sanction might relieve the victim for a short period of time; at worse it can increase the anger and resentment towards the victim. If bullying is based on power and intimidation then by imposing sanctions on a bully, they are in effect being overpowered and intimidated, (all be it by those in authority and for the right motive.) Our bullying policy is reviewed at least annually or immediately if changing circumstances demand it.



Staff Training

Much of our staff training involves understanding the nature of conflict and the development of skills to diffuse confrontations. We firmly believe that through the systematic application of these skills to all conflicts but especially bullying, we can build constructively from negative experiences.

Our school has a legal duty under the Education Act 2002, the Education and inspections Act 2006 and the Equalities Act 2010 to prevent and tackle bullying.

Our approach is three-fold

- To build an ethos of non-confrontation
- Through mediation between the victim and the perpetrators or perpetrator
- Counselling

Building an Ethos of Co-operation

In all our dealings with the pupils, staff emphasise the importance of respecting the feelings and emotions of others. If a pupil has aggressive tendencies, he/she is made aware of this issue through the target setting process. There is then an expectation that the pupil will consciously work with the support of staff to reducing this problem.

The curriculum builds on this ethos directly through PSHE and our Outdoor Education programme. At key times pupils in PSHE are asked directly about bullying in their experiences in care or at school. Much of the programme for Outdoor Education demands team building and co-operation skills in physically and mentally demanding situations. We will also use our curriculum to raise awareness about bullying and our anti-bullying policy, increase understanding for victims and help build anti-bullying ethos, and to teach pupils how constructively to manage their relationships with others.

Our prevention approach to Anti-bullying can be reinforced further through:

- Current affairs, texts in English and other subjects, historical events will be chosen to reinforce our anti-bullying approach
- Tutorial work, role plays, social stories and stories will be used to show what pupils can do to prevent bullying, and to create an anti-bullying climate in the school
- The School website will carry links to Anti Bullying websites and information on what to do if pupils see or experience bullying
- Bullying will not be tolerated, and we will use assemblies to help students understand the impact of bullying and what they can do if they see or experience bullying
- Posters and a variety of information is displayed around school in a number of accessible ways
- The School takes part in Anti-Bullying week to raise further awareness.
- Students and Student council representatives participate in Anti-Bullying training.

We provide regular training for all staff on spotting the signs of bullying and how to respond.

The Process for Dealing with and reporting a Bullying Incident

When an incident occurs, the following process should be put into practice:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be taken seriously and dealt with as quickly as possible by the member of staff who is in the area.
- A clear account of the incident will be recorded on Behaviour Watch and then passed to the Class teacher and Assistant Head. The incident should be recorded as a red bullying slip.



When the behaviour is recorded on behaviour watch, all of the Senior Leadership team are made aware.

- The Assistant Head (Site Leads) will investigate the incident by interviewing all concerned and record the outcomes in behaviour watch. Every sensitivity will be taken into account when students and staff are interviewed.
- All members of staff involved and linked to the students involved in any incidents will be kept informed by the Assistant Head at appropriate times.
- Parents and Guardian should be kept informed and discouraged from taking matters into their own hands. Parents and Guardians will be informed on the day of the incident, with clear information and timelines provided.
- Students who are victims of bullying will be offered the opportunity to discuss their experience with their form tutor or another member of staff, be offered support in terms of access to the counselling or peer mentoring scheme to restore self-esteem and build confidence and have the use of a supervised room for as long as needed.
- Students who have bullied will be helped by; discussing what happened, discovering why the student became involved and establishing a sense of wrong-doing. Parents/carers will be informed to help change the attitude and behaviour of the student.
- In agreement with both parties involved there will also be the opportunity to rebuild relationships, involving a discussion mediated by a member of staff as a way of resolving disputes.

The behaviour team also meets weekly to discuss behaviour and review slips. This gives an opportunity to highlight possible cases of bullying which are occurring in different locations and settings, through the review of red slips and behaviour logs. If bullying is detected by the behaviour team, the Assistant head (Site Lead) will be notified and the reporting process / investigation begun.

Follow up Meeting

It is essential that both the victim and the perpetrator/perpetrators are seen later to see if the issue has died down. If there is a continuation of the problem, then the dialogue needs to be started again. For things to progress, the same principle applies, concentrating on the reasons behind the bullying and not the bullying itself.

Documentation/Responding to Incidents

It is hoped that each Headstart student would have the confidence to talk with a member of staff if they were being bullied:

- Students who see others being bullied should report this to any member of staff.
- Any member of staff who sees a student being bullied must follow the procedure detailed below
- Any member of staff who has an incident of bullying reported to them, must follow the procedure detailed below
- All incidents of bullying will be logged onto Behaviour Watch

Post investigation disciplinary steps:

All parents, guardians, staff and students will be informed of the outcome of the investigation with the following possible disciplinary steps may be taken:

- Official warning to cease offending
- Suspension from certain area of the school premises or certain activities



- Internal suspension
- External suspension or permanent exclusion
- 1:1 support through therapist intervention
- Referral to senior staff or external agencies
- Safeguarding referral as Child-on-Child abuse

Development, Monitoring and Review:

Headstart School plans to:

Monitor, evaluate and review our anti-bullying policy on a regular basis led by the Assistant Heads and the Deputy Headteacher and reported on regularly in Senior Leadership Meetings and Governor Reports.

Provide a clear policy and procedure for Teachers and Support staff to tackle bullying appropriately.

Ensure that students are aware that all bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively and seek feedback from students via student council and annual student questionnaires.

To learn from anti-bullying good practice elsewhere and utilise the support of the National Association of Special Schools and relevant statutory/voluntary organisations when appropriate.