

TONBRIDGE FEDERATION POLICY

Policy name	Anti-Bullying Policy
School in which policy applies	LONG MEAD AND HUGH CHRISTIE
Date written	September 2021
Date agreed by Governing Body	15 TH SEPTEMBER 2021
Date of renewal	AUTUMN 2023
Senior member of staff with oversight	MARK FENN ELIZABETH ALEXANDER
Governor with oversight	SUE MASON



Anti-Bullying Policy

Any reference to the school in this policy refers to both Hugh Christie School and Long Mead Primary School.

Mission Statement

Our aim is to enable every student to reach their full potential and develop self-esteem, confidence and maturity.

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our School. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING School.

Introduction

Hugh Christie and Long Mead has an anti-bullying policy to meet Department of Education requirements contained in "Safe to Learn", also to comply with the Human Rights Act 1998. The "Safe to Learn" package of guidance (published in September 2007) includes specialist advice on cyber bullying, homophobic bullying and bullying involving students with SEN and disabilities. This is in addition to the existing guidance on tackling bullying related to race, religion and culture, which was issued in 2006.

Principles

All students have an absolute right to be educated in a safe and secure environment and to be protected from others who may wish to harm, harass, degrade or abuse them. There is no justification whatsoever for bullying behaviour and it should not be tolerated in any form. Differences of age, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation and ability are absolutely repudiated as reasons for bullying.

Bullying behaviour is a problem for both the bully and the victim and should be addressed in positive and constructive ways, which provide opportunities for growth and development for the bully and victim alike. This policy embodies support and management strategies that are pragmatic and non-oppressive.

Effective management of bullying is a shared responsibility and strategies should involve school staff, parents/carers and other professionals involved with students who are the victims or perpetrators of bullying behaviour. It is important to invest time and resources in the prevention and management of bullying and staff require advice, training and support to manage it with confidence.

Best outcomes follow when the school can work with parents to address concerns about bullying behaviour and victimisation.

What Is Bullying?

Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological aggressive behaviour by a person or group, directed towards a person or group over a period that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear.

It is therefore:

1. Repeated & sustained;
2. One-way (i.e. from one student/group towards another passive student/group);
3. Intended to hurt either physically or emotionally;
4. Often aimed at certain groups e.g. because of race, religion, culture, class, gender or sexual orientation.

Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

It takes many forms and can include:

- Teasing;
- Alienating friends by spreading rumours / untruths;
- Physical assault;
- Making verbal threats;
- Stealing personal belongings;
- Name calling;
- Cyberbullying – bullying via a mobile device or online (e.g. email, social networks, instant messaging);
- Enticing others to do any of the above on behalf of another person.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures);
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence;
- Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures;
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality;
- Homophobic name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing because of a person's sexuality;
- Cyber bullying using the internet or electronic devices, such as email, internet chat room misuse, text messaging or the misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities.

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

Hugh Christie School and Long Mead has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of the Policy

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is;

Anti-Bullying Policy

- All governors and 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 arises;
- As a school, we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should feel safe to report bullying and should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported;
- All pupils and parents should know what action will be taken as a consequence of bullying;
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

Scope

The school is legally responsible only for incidents of bullying which occur on the school premises or within the school's official remit as described below:

A student is deemed to be in school, and therefore under the guidance of the school Behavioural Policy, and this policy, when they are on the school site, walking to and from school and on all official school visits.

The school is however concerned about students' conduct and welfare outside school and will actively work with the appropriate agencies to address issues that come to light from other sources.

If there are more general concerns about a students' safety outside of school, then the local police will be contacted and their help sought in making the area around the school premises more secure. If concerns arise in relation to school transport, then the issue will be raised with the transport companies and their help sought in dealing with the problem.

If information is received that a student is being bullied by a sibling outside the school, this will initially be discussed with the parents. If concerns persist then the matter will be referred to the appropriate agency.

If students are being bullied by students of another school the Head of that School will be informed and invited to deal with the matter.

Matters of social media bullying out of school hours, for example when the students are at home, **do not** fall under the school's remit. In these cases, the appropriate agencies should be contacted.

Aims

1. To fulfil the school's statutory responsibility to respect the rights of students and to safeguard and promote their welfare;
2. To clarify the school's responsibility for responding to incidents of bullying and to emphasise to staff, students and their parents and carers the school's zero tolerance attitude towards bullying behaviour;
3. To eliminate intimidating behaviour and promote the schools ethos in which each student is safe and able to realise his/her full potential;

Anti-Bullying Policy

4. To reassure parents and carers that the school takes their children's welfare seriously and that they are being educated in a safe and secure environment.

Prevention

The school has a zero-tolerance attitude to bullying. It is best prevented through the development of a school ethos based on mutual respect, fairness and equality and our schools behaviour policy. All staff have a responsibility for dealing with this problem. Students will have their awareness of bullying raised at a number of levels and be informed of the school's expectations about the unacceptability of bullying and what to do if they experience or are aware of bullying by others.

The issue of bullying will be raised with students at a number of levels including:

- At whole-school level through assemblies when students will be informed of the School's zero-tolerance policy and the actions that will be taken to prevent bullying taking place;
- In PSHE lessons;
- Discussions during Advisory periods/classes
- Posters and wall displays;
- Guest speakers,
- Normal curriculum lessons.

The school recognises that there are particular times when students may be more vulnerable to bullying, such as lunch and break times and the beginning and end of the school day. Arrangements will be made to ensure that at such times there is adequate supervision available to reduce the risk of bullying incidents.

In addition, there are locations about the school of which incidents or bullying are more likely to occur and again arrangements will be made to ensure that these are properly supervised otherwise students will be forbidden access to these areas.

Students will be encouraged to talk to staff about incidents of bullying which they experience or of which they may be aware. In these circumstances, staff will respond positively, take the expression of concern seriously and ensure that the matter is fully investigated.

If parents believe their child is bullying others, this information should be shared with school so that the problem can be addressed and a plan agreed to prevent further incidents and the bullying student helped to change his/her behaviour.

All of these preventative strategies operate within a school ethos founded on equality, fairness and respect for others in which individual differences are celebrated and seen as a source of enrichment. In order to help students learn and develop appropriate responses to others, all staff at all times will treat each other (and students, parents and carers) with courtesy and respect and will model appropriate and acceptable behaviour.

Parental Involvement

Anti-Bullying Policy

The school recognises the important part parents/carers play in supporting their children and promoting change. The school welcomes the active involvement of parents (of both victim and bully) in bringing this problem under control. Parents/carers will be kept informed of any concerns the school has about their children in relation to this issue.

Implementation

All staff are responsible for the rigorous application of this policy and ensuring that the incidents falling within the school's definition are properly recorded.

All students need to be aware that staff want to be informed of any incidents or concerns and that action will be taken when bullying is reported.

The school can only act effectively when incidents are reported accurately and quickly. Incidents become more difficult to solve when important information is not reported immediately or withheld.

Bullying inside the School

Our student surveys always indicate that the vast majority of students feel safe and free from bullying at the school. However, when it occurs, bullying can be very distressing.

Friendship issues become bullying when they continue over a period and involve extreme name-calling. Issues involving physical threat, violence or extortion are dealt with immediately through the school's Behaviour Policy.

If you are concerned a student is being bullied, contact either the student's Advisor/teacher, their Head of Year or any teacher immediately. All students will be interviewed about what they have been doing to ascertain the nature of the interactions. They will have explained to them the impact it is having on the alleged victim. The students will be given an opportunity to resolve their issues with the victim, or cease their poor behaviour immediately. If they continue to behave in the same way following this intervention and through the investigation and it is deemed to be bullying, this will be treated very seriously and will be dealt with through the School's Behaviour Policy.

Bullying outside the School

Where bullying is taking place outside of the school's remit, parents should contact the Police. If a student is being intimidated through electronic means, parents need to make sure the messages are printed out and made available to the Police. Online bullying is a criminal offence and will be treated seriously by the appropriate authorities.

Post Incident Responses for the Victim

Protection, sympathy/empathy/counselling and advice on how to avoid future incidents, mediation (where appropriate) and support will be provided. More detail is given below.

Anti-Bullying Policy

The School will offer a proactive, sympathetic and supportive response to students who are the victims of bullying. The exact nature of the response will be determined by the particular student's individual needs and may include:

- immediate action to stop the incident and secure the student's safety;
- positive reinforcement that reporting the incident was the correct thing to do;
- reassurance that the victim is not responsible for the behaviour of the bully;
- strategies to prevent further incidents;
- sympathy and empathy;
- counselling;
- befriending;
- support;
- assertiveness training;
- extra supervision/monitoring;
- creation of a support group;
- restorative justice;
- peer mediation/peer mentoring;
- informing/involving parents;
- adult mediation between the perpetrator and the victim (provided this does not increase the victim's vulnerability)
- involvement of external agencies;
- arrangements to review progress.

Post Incident Responses for the Bully

The school will respond to incidents of bullying behaviour in a proportionate way – the more serious the cause for concern, the more serious the response. When sanctions are felt to be necessary, they will be applied consistently and fairly. The following options will be considered and may be applied:

- immediate action to stop an incident of bullying in progress;
- engagement with the bully to reinforce the message that their behaviour is a breach of school rules and is unacceptable;
- loss of lunch/break-time privileges;
- use of isolation;
- detention;
- behavioural stages applied;
- change of teaching groups;
- removal from class/group;
- withholding participation in sports or out of school activities (if not essential part of curriculum);
- parents informed;

Anti-Bullying Policy

- behaviour management lessons;
- adult mediation between the perpetrator and the victim (provided this is safe for the victim);
- involvement of external agencies;
- loss of privileges;
- fixed period exclusion;
- permanent exclusion (in extreme cases);
- rewards/positive reinforcement for students in order to promote change and bring unacceptable behaviour under control;
- being educated on a different site or at a different educational establishment.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Procedures

When an incident of bullying is reported, action should not only be taken, but be seen to be taken. The most important step is to assure the victim of support. All incidents should be logged. Even minor incidents may add up to a pattern of harassment. Students who feel that they are consistently being picked on can be encouraged to keep their own log of events.

When a major problem has occurred, person statements will be collected from as many witnesses as possible. The victim and the aggressor will be kept separate to enable this to happen.

A short-term action plan will be devised and implemented. If deemed appropriate, parents will be informed of the situation. If a punishment is applied, it must be made clear to the bully why this action has been taken.

There is much evidence to suggest that peer counselling/restorative justice is an effective way of educating bullies. Where this is felt possible, the bully and victim may be brought together, the latter explains how it feels to be bullied and the former explains why s/he is behaving in this way.

Repeated bullying should be brought to the attention of the appropriate Head of Year.

If this intervention does not stop the bullying, the situation should be brought to the attention of the Heads of Upper and Lower School, the Head of School and finally to the Governing Body.

Monitoring/Evaluation

The Head of School is responsible for monitoring incidents of bullying and reporting to the Governors. Senior staff and Governors will evaluate the effectiveness of the policy and agree adjustments that may be necessary to address any ongoing concerns. These will be shared with staff, parents/carers, students and other interested stakeholders.

Associated Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- School Behavioural Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

Useful Documents / Additional Reading and Support:

www.bullying.co.uk www.childline.org.uk
www.beatbullying.org

www.gov.uk (search for 'safe to learn')

Don't Suffer in Silence – a HELP sheet for pupils

If you are being bullied

- try to stay calm and look as confident as you can
- be firm and clear – look them in the eye and tell them to stop
- get away from the situation as quickly as possible
- tell an adult what has happened straight away

After you have been bullied

- tell a teacher or another adult in your School
- tell your family
- if you are scared to tell an adult by yourself, ask a friend to come with you
- keep speaking up until someone listens and does something to stop the bullying
- record when the bullying happened, how it happened and by who
- don't blame yourself for what has happened

When you are talking to an adult about bullying, be clear about

- what has happened to you
- how often it has happened
- who was involved
- where it happened
- when it happened
- what you have done about it already

If you find it difficult to talk to anyone at School or at home, ring ChildLine, Freephone 0800 1111 or visit www.childline.co.uk. The phone call is free. It is a confidential helpline.

Do not Suffer in Silence – a HELP sheet for parents and families

Every school is likely to have some problem with bullying at one time or another. Hugh Christie must by law have an anti-bullying policy, and use it to reduce and prevent bullying.

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological aggressive behaviour by a person or group, directed towards a person or group over a period that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear.

It is therefore:

1. Repeated & sustained;
2. One-way (i.e. from one student/group towards another passive student/group);

Anti-Bullying Policy

3. Intended to hurt either physically or emotionally;
4. Often aimed at certain groups e.g. because of race, religion, culture, class, gender or sexual orientation.

Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying behaviour includes

- name calling and nasty teasing;
- threats and extortion;
- physical violence;
- damage to belongings;
- leaving pupils out of social activities deliberately and frequently;
- spreading malicious rumours;

Parents and families have an important part to play in helping Schools deal with bullying.

First, discourage your child from using bullying behaviour at home or elsewhere. Show how to resolve difficult situations without using violence or aggression.

Second, ask to see the School's anti-bullying policy. Each School must have an antibullying policy, which sets out how it deals with incidents of bullying.

Third, watch out for signs that your child is being bullied, or is bullying others. Parents and families are often the first to detect symptoms of bullying, though sometimes School nurses or doctors may first suspect that a child has been bullied. Common symptoms include headaches, stomachaches, anxiety and irritability. It can be helpful to ask questions about progress and friends at School; how break times and lunchtimes are spent; and whether your child is facing problems or difficulties at School. Do not dismiss negative signs. Contact the School immediately if you are worried.

If you child has been bullied

- calmly talk to your child about it;
- make a note of what your child says – particularly who was said to be involved; how often the bullying has occurred; where it happened and what has happened;
- reassure your child that telling you about the bullying was the right thing to do;
- explain that any further incidents should be reported to a teacher/Advisor immediately;
- make an appointment to see your child's teacher or Advisor; □ explain to the teacher the problems your child is experiencing;
- do not make contact with the bully or his/her parents.

Talking to teachers about bullying

- try and stay calm – bear in mind that the teacher may have no idea that your child is being bullied or may have heard conflicting accounts of an incident;

Anti-Bullying Policy

- be as specific as possible about what your child says has happened – give dates, places and names of other children involved;
- make a note of what action the School intends to take;
- ask if there is anything you can do to help your child or the School;
- stay in touch with the School – let them know if things improve as well as if problems continue;

If you think your concerns are not being addressed

- check the School anti-bullying policy to see if agreed procedures are being followed;
- make an appointment to meet the Head of Year/Key Stage Leader, keeping a record of the meeting;
- if this does not help, contact the Head of School explaining your concerns and what you would like to see happen;
- if this does not help, write to the Chair of Governors explaining your concerns and what you would like to see happen;
- contact local or national parent support groups for advice;

If your child is bullying other children

Many children may be involved in bullying other pupils at some time or other. Often parents are not aware. Children sometimes bully others because:

- they do not know it is wrong;
- they are copying older brothers or sisters or other people in the family they admire;
- they have not learnt other, better ways of mixing with their School friends;
- their friends encourage them to bully;
- they are going through a difficult time and are acting out aggressive feelings;

To stop your child bullying others

- talk to your child, explaining that bullying is unacceptable and makes others unhappy;
- discourage other members of your family from bullying behaviour or from using aggressions or force to get what they want;
- show your child how to join in with other children without bullying;
- make an appointment to see your child's class teacher or Advisor; explain to the teacher the problems your child is experiencing; discuss with the teacher how you and the School can stop them bullying others;
- regularly check with your child how things are going at School;
- give your child lots of praise and encouragement when they are co-operative or kind to other people;

Resources for parents and families about bullying

ALEXANDER J **Your child bullying: Practical and easy to follow advice**

Anti-Bullying Policy

Elements Books 1998

ELLIOTT M **101 Ways to deal with bullying – A guide for parents**

Hodder and Stoughton 1997

KIDSCAPE **Keeping safe: A practical guide to talking with children**

Kidscape, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH 1990

LAWSON S **Helping children cope with bullying**

Sheldon Press 1994

