

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Holcombe Grammar School is completely opposed to bullying and will not tolerate it. It is entirely contrary to the values and principles we work and live by. All members of the school community have a right to work in a secure and caring environment. They also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment.

Holcombe Grammar School endeavours to foster an atmosphere of respect for all members of the school community. However, this ethos is unlikely to exist unless all stakeholders – the Governing Body, staff, students, parents and others - work together in a cooperative way. While cases of bullying are relatively rare at our school, and a wide range of preventative measures are in place and applied robustly, bullying can, sadly, still occur. All instances of bullying reported to the school are dealt with seriously on a case-by-case basis.

This policy defines bullying and clarify the school's stance on bullying.

Bullying is defined as “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.’ (DfE, 2014)

This policy further acknowledges that bullying is “Persistent, disruptive, unprovoked, physical or psychological harm by a more powerful child or young person or group, against a weaker child or group.”

However, unacceptable behaviour is not called bullying when students of about equal strength argue or fight nor is it bullying when teasing is done in a genuinely friendly and playful way, without malicious intention to hurt or cause harm.

This policy deals primarily with bullying between different students. In cases where pupils allege harassment by staff, (or vice versa) the Head of School will investigate, but note that there is a difference between a member of staff enforcing school rules and expectations, and a member of staff harassing a student. There are separate procedures for incidents involving school employees.

Bullying usually takes one of four forms:

verbal e.g. name calling;

physical e.g. assaults;

social-psychological e.g. a group “sending someone to Coventry”;

cyber e.g. using the internet or mobile phone to bully others.

Some incidents have particular root causes relating to factors that may include: race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, faith, culture, political beliefs, physical appearance, disability, learning difficulties, sensory impairment, sexuality and gender. In practise this means that Holcombe Grammar School will not tolerate instances of racism, sexism and homophobia or any other form of offensive behaviour towards others.

Bullying behaviour may include: name-calling and nasty teasing, threats and extortion, physical violence, damage to belongings, spreading malicious rumours, unprovoked malicious E-Mails and mobile phone text messages or leaving students out of social activities deliberately and frequently.

In a case of bullying at least two of the following three types of individuals, (or groups) will be involved: the perpetrator (the ‘bully’), the victim, and/or the perpetrator-victim. As previously stated each individual involved will need to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. In all cases of bullying it is expected that members of staff will be mindful of signs of bullying that might include (but are not limited to):

Physical symptoms such as frequent headaches and stomach aches, unexplained and suspicious injuries, anxiety and irritability.

Withdrawn, isolated behaviour.

Unwillingness to come to school.

Unaccounted damage to property, school-work or clothing.

Complaining about missing possessions.

Refusal to talk about the problem.

Being easily distracted.

At Holcombe Grammar School we believe that the best way to deal with bullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. A number of strategies are in place for this including:

The school’s code of conduct for students and our Home-School Agreement.

The Life Skills programme dealing with the issue of bullying.

Assemblies and curriculum subjects such as Religious Studies actively promote concepts such as self-esteem, mutual respect and the tolerance of diversity.

Praise for responsible and caring conduct e.g. certificates, merits and rewards.

Use of the school's Student Council, questionnaires etc. to provide students with the opportunity to highlight anti-social behaviour in and around the school.

Supervision of the school site, (including the gates), by staff and prefects outside of lesson times.

Extra-curricular activities such as school clubs; break down age-group barriers.

Displays around the school concerning bullying.

Our Student Services area and the provision of a quiet, supportive area for students who are vulnerable.

Central to all of this is the school's ethos, which endeavours to promote tolerance, respect and caring for one another.

Despite all of this, instances of bullying and anti-social behaviour will unfortunately sometimes still occur. Parents, family members and other students have an important part to play in supporting the school's work to deal with bullying. Bullying should not have to be an inevitable part of growing up and witnesses should not ignore what is going on around them. Students must be encouraged to tell staff about problems.

Members of staff should consider the following:

Never ignore suspected bullying and do not make premature assumptions.

Listen carefully to all accounts: several pupils saying the same thing does not necessarily mean that they are telling the truth.

Ensure that pupils' accounts are recorded.

Record the incident of bullying on the school intervention log on Behaviour Watch.

It is vital that the school maintains good communication. Teachers should ensure that the relevant Form Tutor and Head of Year fully aware of the situation. In turn, the Form Tutor, Head of Year or Student Services Manager should inform the parents of the both the bully and the victim. The Student Services Manager will also need to inform the relevant Head of Year who might in turn inform the Deputy Head if deemed necessary.

In addition to enforcing any appropriate sanctions the school should also try to adopt a restorative justice approach, which moves pupils on from justifying their actions. Dependent upon the situation this may involve a supported and restorative discussion between the perpetrator and victim, with a third person present, (usually the Student Services Manager) ensuring that a fair resolution is achieved.

Consider whether a restorative justice conference is an appropriate way forward.

Where appropriate it can be useful to refer the situation to an appropriate outside agency.

Provide the victim and perpetrator with the opportunity to have contact with a student mentor or adult mentor in school.

When dealing with more serious or repeated instances of bullying, the Student Services Manager should produce and carry out a Pastoral Support Programme.

It is vital that a member of staff, (usually the Form Tutor or Student Services Manager), repeatedly and frequently follows up, checking that bullying has not resumed.

In addition, sanctions may well need to be enforced against the perpetrator.

Examples of such sanctions include:

Placing the perpetrator on report, (this also helps the school and the perpetrator's family to monitor conduct in lessons).

Detaining the bully in their unstructured time through use of detentions.

A revised home-school-pupil contract written and enforced.

Internally excluding the bully for a period of time, including during morning breaks and lunchtimes.

Externally excluding the bully for a fixed period of time.

Where other strategies do not resolve the problem, permanent exclusion may be justified in the most serious and persistent cases, particularly where violence is involved.

This is not an exhaustive list and it may be felt that other sanctions would be more effective if the incident demands a particular approach.

The Responsibilities of Staff

Our staff will:

- Foster in our pupils self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils.
- Discuss bullying with all classes, so that every pupil learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is bullied and to the bully and the importance of telling a teacher about bullying when it happens.
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying.

- Listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them.
- Report suspected cases of bullying to the designated DSL.
- Follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying, and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken.
- Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures.

The Responsibilities of Pupils

We expect our pupils to:

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- Intervene to protect the pupil who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.

The Responsibilities of Parents

We ask our parents to support their children and the school by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying.
- Advising their children to report any bullying to a trusted member of staff and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils.
- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any forms of bullying.
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken;
- Keep a written record of any reported instances of bullying
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved;
- Co-operating with the school, if their children are accused of bullying, try to ascertain the truth. And point out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are bullied and for the bullies themselves.

The Responsibilities of All

Everyone should:

- Work together to combat and, hopefully in time, to eradicate bullying.

If you are a student being bullied:

Do not blame yourself.

Try to stay calm and look as confident as you can.

Try to be firm and clear, e.g. look the bully in the eye and tell them to stop.

Get away from the situation as soon as possible.

Do not be scared that telling an adult will make things worse – bullies are cowards.

Tell an adult as soon as you can. You should tell your Form Tutor, Head of Year or any other adult in school who you feel comfortable talking to. You should also tell your family when you get home.

If you are too scared to tell an adult yourself, either ask a friend to come with you or go to the staffroom and ask to put a note in the teacher's pigeonhole.

When talking to an adult about bullying, be clear about: what has happened, where it has happened, how often it has happened, who was involved, who saw it and what you have already done about it.

If it happens again, keep telling adults about it: don't suffer in silence.

If you are a student/ student prefect who witnesses bullying:

If you feel confident enough, tell the bully to stop.

Talk to the person being bullied and make sure that they are okay. Advise them to tell an adult and offer to go with them to see a teacher.

Tell an adult or school prefect as soon as you can.

If you see it happening again keep telling adults about it: don't let others suffer in silence. If a bully thinks that they can get away with it, they will keep on bullying.

If you are bullying someone else:

Stop what you are doing.

Think about what it would be like for you to be bullied.

Tell an adult right away.

Realise that if you have been bullying someone else you are likely to be punished. However, you will almost always be punished far more severely if you do not own up.

If a parent suspects that their child is being bullied:

Calmly talk to your child about it.

Make a note of what your child says, including what has happened and how often, who else is involved, where it has happened and what has happened.

Reassure your child that telling you was the right thing to do and that they should report any further incidents to a teacher immediately.

If problems occur travelling to and from school advise your child to, if possible take a different route and try to travel with other pupils. Please also see the additional information at the end of this policy.

Do not be scared that telling the school will make things worse – bullies are cowards.

Contact the school and ask to speak to the relevant Form Tutor or Head of Year. Please remember that the school may not know about the incident or may have conflicting accounts. Try to provide as much clear information as possible in order to help the school.

Stay in contact with us: let us know if the problems continue or if the situation improves.

If a parent who suspects that your child has been bullying others:

Talk to your child, explaining that bullying is unacceptable and makes others unhappy. Show your child how to join in with others without bullying. Also discourage other members of your family from displaying bullying behaviour.

Contact the school and arrange to speak to your child's Form Tutor or Head of Year. Explain the problems that your child is experiencing and try to work with the school to find a solution, (but accept that the school may still have to enforce sanctions).

Regularly check with your child how things are going at school. Praise and encourage positive and cooperative conduct.

Stay in contact with us: let us know if you suspect that the problems are continuing or if the situation improves.

Additional information.

If parents feel that their concerns are repeatedly not being addressed by the school, they should first check this policy. If they still have concerns parents should contact the Head of School and if need be write to the school's Chair of Governors.

School bullying can also occur off of the premises. The school should be contacted if this occurs and will try to support in such instances, especially if the bully is in school uniform at the time. However, legally the school is not liable for bullying off of the school site or outside of supervised school trips. In cases of physical assault, intimidation or threatening behaviour outside of school, parents are advised to contact the police.

If students find it difficult to talk to anyone at school or at home, they can contact:

NSPCC Childline – 0800 1111

Anti-Bullying Alliance (www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)

Links with other school policies

Pastoral Care Policy; Child Protection Policy; Behaviour & Discipline Policies; Acceptable Use of IT Policy.

Revised:

12th May 2019

Holcombe Grammar School

Bullying Incident Report Form

This form should be completed by any colleague to whom a bullying incident is reported. The completed form should be given to the Pastoral Manager or Head of House responsible for the bullying victim.

Name(s) of bullying victim(s)

Name(s) of accused bully(s)

Date of incident

Date incident reported

Nature of incident

Names of witnesses to the incident

Name of colleague completing this form

Date of completion of this form