

Anti-bullying policy

POLICY STATEMENT

At Herne Junior School we will not accept behaviour from any member of the school community that aims to cause pain or distress to others: it follows that harassment and bullying, in any form, is unacceptable. Central to this is the principle that **bullying is always unacceptable** and that **all pupils have a right not to be bullied**.

What is bullying?

Bullying is 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. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the target. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Child on child (peer on peer) abuse (from KCSiE 2023, p12)

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online. All staff should be clear as to the school's or college's policy and procedures with regard to child-on-child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

All staff should understand that even if there are no reports in their schools or colleges it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy).

It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children, many of which are listed below, that are abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as 'just banter', 'just having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys' can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- *Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).*
- *Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse').*
- *Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse).*
- *Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence).*
- *Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.*
- *Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.*
- *Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery).*
- *Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm.*
- *Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).*

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1181955/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2023.pdf

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations. It sets out the different ways in which it's unlawful to treat someone.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

Types of discrimination

It is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- Age.
- Gender reassignment.
- Being married or in a civil partnership.
- Being pregnant or on maternity leave.
- Disability.
- Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin.
- Religion or belief.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.

These constitute 'Protected Characteristics' as part of the Equalities Act 2010.

<https://www.gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights/types-of-discrimination>

Prejudice based abuse

Prejudice based abuse or hate crime is any criminal offence which is perceived by the target or any other person to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person's real or perceived:

- Disability.
- Race.
- Religion.
- Gender identity.
- Sexual orientation.

Although this sort of crime is collectively known as 'Hate Crime' the offender doesn't have to go as far as being motivated by 'hate', they only have to exhibit 'hostility'.

This can be evidenced by:

- Threatened or actual physical assault.
- Derogatory name calling, insults, for example racist jokes or homophobic language.
- Hate graffiti (e.g. on school furniture, walls or books).
- Provocative behaviour e.g. wearing of badges or symbols belonging to known right wing, or extremist organisations.
- Distributing literature that may be offensive in relation to a protected characteristic.
- Verbal abuse.
- Inciting hatred or bullying against pupils who share a protected characteristic.
- Prejudiced or hostile comments in the course of discussions within lessons.
- Teasing in relation to any protected characteristic e.g. sexuality, language, religion or cultural background.
- Refusal to co-operate with others because of their protected characteristic, whether real or perceived.
- Expressions of prejudice calculated to offend or influence the behaviour of others.
- Attempts to recruit other pupils to organisations and groups that sanction violence, terrorism or hatred.

As a school, we will respond by:

- Clearly identifying prejudice-based incidents and hate crimes and monitor the frequency and nature of them within the school.
- Taking preventative action to reduce the likelihood of such incidents occurring.
- Recognising the wider implications of such incidents for the school and local community.
- Ensuring that staff are familiar with formal procedures for recording and dealing with prejudice-based incidents and hate crimes.
- Dealing with perpetrators of prejudice-based abuse effectively.
- Supporting victims of prejudice-based incidents and hate crimes.
- Ensuring that staff are familiar with a range of restorative practices to address bullying and prevent it happening again.

Criminal law

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour - or communications - could be a criminal offence. If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police.

Bullying outside school premises

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises to such an extent as is reasonable. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The Headteacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying the teacher can only discipline the pupil on school premises or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the staff member.

Cyber-bullying

Central to the school's anti-bullying policy is the principle that *'bullying is always unacceptable'* and that *'all pupils have a right not to be bullied'*.

The school also recognises that it must take note of bullying perpetrated outside school which spills over into the school; therefore, once aware we will respond to any cyber-bullying we become aware of carried out by pupils when they are away from the site.

Cyber-bullying is defined as *'an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact repeatedly over time against a target who cannot easily defend himself/herself.'*

By cyber-bullying, we mean bullying by electronic media:

- Bullying by texts or messages or calls on mobile phones.
- The use of mobile phone cameras to cause distress, fear or humiliation.
- Posting threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating material on websites, to include blogs, personal websites, social networking sites.
- Using e-mail to message others.
- Hijacking/cloning e-mail accounts.
- Making threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating remarks in on-line forums.

Cyber-bullying may be at a level where it is criminal in character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information in any media including internet sites. Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by public means of a public electronic communications network, a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or one of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.

If we become aware of any incidents of cyberbullying, we will need to consider each case individually as to any criminal act that may have been committed. The school will pass on information to the police if it feels that it is appropriate or is required to do so.

Prevention

At Herne we aim to create an ethos of good behaviour, where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave. Our 'Harmony Values' promote respect for staff and other pupils, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others.

Our Harmony Values

- INDEPENDENCE - We can work effectively on our own and take responsibility when appropriate.
- COLLABORATION - We work together as a team to achieve more.
- ENJOYMENT - We enjoy our learning.
- RESPECT - We have the right to be respected.
- HONESTY - We are open and honest.
- MOTIVATION - We are motivated to succeed.

Anti-Bullying Week

At Herne we actively promote 'Anti-Bullying Week' in our assemblies and through communications to parents and the children. This is usually in November. The link below takes you to more information and is updated regularly.

<http://www.antibullyingweek.co.uk/>

Intervention

At Herne we apply disciplinary or restorative measures to pupils who bully in order to show clearly that their behaviour is wrong. Disciplinary measures will be applied fairly, consistently and reasonably taking account of any special educational needs or disabilities that the pupils may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable pupils.

Restorative measures will centre around enabling pupils, both perpetrators and victims, to gain a better understanding of the impact of unkind acts and/or bullying. We will also consider the motivations behind bullying behaviour and whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is the case the child engaging in bullying may need support themselves.

Dealing with bullying at Herne

- Any child who feels that they are being bullied or harassed should be encouraged to tell an adult in school as soon as possible. **We have placed 'Anti-Bullying Boxes in two key places in the school, for pupils to anonymously let staff know of any concerns. These are locked ballot boxes, so cannot be opened by pupils. These are monitored regularly by Senior Leadership.**
- If the targeted child is distressed and/or hurt, the first priority is to take them somewhere where they will be safe from any further aggravation and to offer comfort and/or first aid as appropriate. When the child is calm, they should be questioned using TED (Tell, Explain, Describe) about what has led to their distress.
- Any member of staff to whom an incident of bullying or harassment is reported should make the time to listen to the targeted child(ren) in order to clarify details. Other children involved, including witnesses, should also be questioned. If it is impossible for a member of staff to deal with an incident immediately, they should refer the incident to someone who can deal with it, preferably someone the targeted child knows and trusts. Support staff must pass on all information about incidents reported to them to the child's class teacher.
- If the member of staff dealing with an incident is satisfied, after full investigation, that bullying is involved (as opposed to the incident being a playground dispute or an accident) they should record full details of the incident on CPOMS and assign to a DSL.
- Incidents involving any kind of racism/prejudice should also be recorded on CPOMS and assign this to a DSL.

- Each incident involving bullying and/or harassment will be evaluated and dealt with individually. Emphasis will be placed on the fact that it is the behaviour that is not acceptable, not the person or persons involved in carrying it out. Sanctions will be applied in accordance with the seriousness of each individual incident, but are likely to include one or more detentions and/or the placing of the antagonist(s) on report. More serious/repeat offences are likely to result in exclusion, which includes internal exclusions, where the pupil is kept in school but is separate from the rest of their class. In some cases, it may be necessary to involve the police.
- The parents of both parties should be informed about all incidents where the school is satisfied that bullying and/or harassment has occurred. Antagonists should be made aware of the seriousness of what they have done and the likely sanctions to be applied if the unacceptable behaviour does not stop.
- Pastoral support should be made available to both parties involved in more serious incidents and alternative strategies that could be used by both antagonist and target should be discussed with them in order to avoid the same behaviour patterns recurring in the future.
- The member of staff who has dealt with a particular incident will be responsible for monitoring the parties concerned until such time as they are satisfied that the unacceptable behaviour has ceased.
- Some children prefer to leave it until they go home before reporting that they have experienced bullying or harassment in school. Parents should be encouraged to report to the school any such incidents and give the school the chance to investigate the incident thoroughly by speaking to all parties. After investigation, the member of staff dealing with the incident should report back on the outcomes to the parents concerned as soon as possible, preferably within 3 working days.

We will also:

- Involve parents to ensure that they are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied. Parents feel confident that the school will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child, and they reinforce the value of good behaviour at home.
- Involve pupils. All pupils should understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders
- Regularly evaluate and update our approach to take account of developments in technology (e.g. cyber-bullying), for instance updating 'acceptable use' policies for computers.
- Implement disciplinary sanctions. The consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable.
- Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender or sexuality. Also children with different family situations, such as Looked After Children or those with caring responsibilities. We will teach children that using any prejudice based language is unacceptable.
- Use specific organisations or resources for help with particular problems. Schools can draw on the experience and expertise of anti-bullying organisations with a proven track record and/or specialised expertise in dealing with certain forms of bullying.
- Provide effective staff training. Ensuring that all school staff understand the principles and purpose of the school's policy, its legal responsibilities regarding bullying, how to resolve problems, and where to seek support.

- Work with the wider community, such as the police and Children’s Services, where bullying is particularly serious or persistent and where a criminal offence may have been committed.
- Make it easy for pupils to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on. Pupils should feel that they can report bullying which may have occurred outside school including cyber-bullying.
- Create an inclusive environment. We will create a safe environment where pupils can openly discuss the cause of their bullying, without fear of further bullying or discrimination
- Celebrate success. Celebrating success is an important way of creating a positive school ethos around the issue (see ‘Harmony Weeks’ above).

Useful Links & Information

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>

Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be monitored by the Headteacher and Home School Link Worker.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually in line with relevant statutory guidance.

Review Date September 2024