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# Horsmonden Primary School

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## *Anti-Bullying Policy*



## **School Statement**

Bullying in any form, by anyone, will not be tolerated at Horsmonden Primary School. We do not accept any form of behaviour which hurts, threatens or frightens any member of the school community. Every child has the right to feel safe and happy in the school environment. We believe in eradicating bullying without victimising the bully. Victims will be confident that support will be given and action will be taken against bullies.

## **Aims the policy**

- To recognise that it is everyone's responsibility to prevent bullying from occurring
- To offer an environment free from verbal and physical abuse
- To provide an education free from humiliation and oppression
- To know how and when to record incidents of bullying
- To promote a 'whole school' approach, where signals and signs are identified and swift and effective action is taken.

Horsmonden Primary School has developed whole school strategies for preventing bullying through PSHCE (Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education), Parent Information Evenings e.g. Internet Safety, Anti-Bullying Week and regular surveys to evaluate the current climate of the school.

## **Links with other policies**

- Behaviour Policy
- Single Equality Scheme
- Acceptable Use policy – Internet Safety
- Complaints Policy.

## **Roles and Responsibilities:**

### **The Governing Body**

Will regularly review the Behaviour Policy which the Headteacher must consider in determining measures to promote good behaviour and discipline. The Governing Body may also bring to the Headteacher's attention such further measures as they consider necessary, and offer guidance as they consider appropriate, to promote safeguarding and the welfare of pupils.

### **The Head teacher and senior leadership team:**

Have overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation. Cases will be managed according to the circumstances and will be recorded and analysed to see whether patterns emerge from the nature of the bullying or the identity of the perpetrators.

### **The Governing Body, Head teacher and Staff:**

Ensure that the policy is implemented equally in all cases, without regard to ethnic origin, cultural differences, gender, disability or sexuality issues. They will ensure that pupils are listened to and that their concerns are appropriately addressed.

### **All staff (teachers, support staff and volunteers):**

Share responsibility for ensuring that the policy and procedures are followed, and consistently and fairly applied. Mutual support amongst all staff is essential for

creating a high quality and safe learning environment promoting good behaviour and implementing the agreed policy and procedures consistently.

### **Parents and Carers:**

Will be encouraged to work in partnership with the school in order that high standards of behaviour are maintained both in and out of school, and that pupils respect both similarities and differences between themselves and other members of the school and the wider community.

### **Pupils**

Will be expected to take responsibility for their own behaviour and will be made fully aware of the school's anti-bullying policy, the procedures arising from cases of bullying and the rationale behind them. All pupils have a collective responsibility to ensure that they are considerate towards one another and respectful of each other's differences.

### **Definitions:**

**Bullying behaviour** can be defined as an action, or number of repeated actions, causing harm to people or relationships. This behaviour could be intentional or unintentional and may be on-going. The definition equally encompasses physical or non-physical actions, therefore the harm could be physical, emotional, or both. A paper for the Office of the Children's Commissioner (2006) outlined four key characteristics:

- repetitive and persistent
- intentionally harmful
- involving an imbalance of power
- causing feelings of distress, fear, loneliness or lack of confidence

A research review for the **NSPCC** produced a useful definition for the five essential components of bullying:

1. there is an intention to harm e.g. a person teasing another with the intention of deliberately upsetting them
2. there is a harmful outcome: a person or persons are hurt emotionally or physically
3. the act can be direct or indirect e.g. it could involve direct aggression such as kicking someone or it could be an indirect act such as spreading rumours via Facebook
4. there is usually repetition from the perpetrator. However, for vulnerable pupils in the school community, who may experience bullying, the repetition may be the repeat of the act by several individuals or groups of people
5. there is unequal power. A person or several persons who are (perceived as) more powerful due to, for example, their age or physical strength or size will abuse their power by bullying.

### **Bullying behaviour**

Can be direct or indirect, simple or complex.

**Direct bullying** includes physical threats, verbal insults or taunts and directly contacting a person with obscene or insulting messages by using, for example, a mobile phone.

**Indirect bullying** includes persistently ignoring a pupil so that they feel socially isolated, spreading malicious rumours, or insults, often via social network sites on the Internet, or writing offensive graffiti.

**Cyber-bullying** uses technology to harm a person, group of people or a relationship and can happen both inside and outside of school and at any time of the day or night.

Bullying differs from **'friendship fall-out'**, or other aggressive behaviour:

"If two children or young people of about the same strength have the odd fight or quarrel. It is not bullying." (Olweus 1989, 1993, 1999)

#### **Where there is bullying:**

- there is normally a power imbalance so that the victim does not feel able to defend him/herself
- it is usually persistent but could be an isolated incident
- it might relate to racism, homophobia, sexism, ageism
- it might relate to a disability or a special educational need (SEN). In these examples, victims may not be aware of being bullied
- there is normally an intention to cause harm, although there may be instances when there is a lack of awareness that the actions are harmful.

All bullying issues, whatever their nature, will be treated with equal importance and the response will be based upon the guidelines in the policy.

#### **Signs and Symptoms:**

A victim may indicate by **signs** or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. These may include:

- reluctance to attend school
- unwillingness to travel on the school bus/public transport
- truancy from specific lessons
- damage to clothing or possessions
- 'losing' more items than usual
- Unexplained bruises/swellings
- Deterioration of school work/academic performance
- Being afraid to use the Internet
- Becoming jittery about receiving text messages
- Unkempt uniform
- Bullying towards siblings
- Taking money without permission

**Symptoms** may include:

- Loss of appetite
- Headaches
- Stomach aches
- Stammering
- Sudden changes in behaviour
- Lack of confidence
- Signs of depression
- nervous/edginess
- difficulty in concentration
- lack of motivation to complete work

These are examples but this list is not exhaustive.

### **Reporting Bullying**

Pupils are encouraged to report all forms of bullying, whether carried out by another pupil or by an adult. The hope is that by reporting the problem in the first instance, this will become the first step in empowering the victim to overcome bullying through the defined stages that will then be put action. Whenever a pupil experiences bullying, it should be reported, whether by the victim, friends of the victim, bystanders or via parents, who would contact the school. Information can reported to a member of the Office staff, class teacher, Deputy Head and Headteacher. All staff should first immediately secure the safety of the young person before following the school's procedures.

When a problem occurs outside of school and immediate advice or support is required, Childline, for example, would provide an alternative, particularly if a child did not feel comfortable discussing the matter with a parent, family member or carer. The school would hope that the child would feel able to discuss the matter with a member of staff upon their return to school.

### **Action Against Bullying**

#### **Actively promoting desired behaviour**

- Praise
- Positive encouragement and providing good role models
- Rewarding non-aggressive behaviour
- Helping children to develop positive strategies and assertiveness
- A child seeking support may be provided with a named member of staff if appropriate.

#### **For the Adult**

- Take bullying seriously and investigate the facts of any incident with any third parties/witnesses
- Support children who are being bullied/bullies
- Encourage bullies/bullied to change their behaviour
- Encourage children to 'tell' and back them up when appropriate
- Meet with bullies and victims individually
- Encourage co-operative working/play
- Check hidden corners of school environment
- Take an active interest in children's social lives and watch for signs of distress

- Promote a shared approach with parents/guardians

### **For the Child**

- Tell yourself you don't deserve to be bullied
- Although it may be extremely upsetting, try hard not to show this and seek help immediately
- Try being assertive – shout 'go away' loudly, or walk quickly and confidently away
- Get your friends to support you
- Show that you and your friends disapprove
- Talk to an adult
- Give sympathy and support to children who may be bullied

### **PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING**

(including racial, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender harassment)

Procedure for staff and children to follow:

- An incident must be reported to an adult
- Every effort will be made to find a solution to the immediate problem. Strategies for the future will be given
- Discussion with all parties to establish what has occurred. Give children a fair chance to explain themselves, either verbally or written
- Provide support and reassurance for victim
- Provide counselling for both bullied and bully
- More serious incidents must be reported to the Headteacher or Deputy Head.
- Any bullying incident which is racist, sexual (including reference to sexual orientation), homophobic or which refers to disability must be reported to the Head or Deputy and the incident will be recorded in line with the TKAT recognised procedure. Inappropriate use of the word 'gay' or lesbian to upset will not be tolerated and will be reported
- Serious incidents will be recorded using the pro forma attached: details of time, place, people involved, the incident, inappropriate language, action taken and follow-up strategies
- Parents may be contacted: parents **will be** contacted if a racist or homophobic incident is reported
- Class teacher will be informed and will set small, achievable steps towards resolving the conflict
- Establish or continue positive home/school links
- Use sanctions where and when appropriate. This is at the school's discretion.
- Monitor and review the situation
- Ensure all adults involved in support of the child are kept informed
- Ensure that all incidents of bullying and any sanctions taken are recorded on appropriate forms – to be kept by the class teacher
- In some cases it may be considered appropriate to show the written recording of an incident to the child/children concerned

### **Five key points for staff to consider when dealing with bullying:**

1. Never ignore suspected or alleged bullying.

2. Don't make premature assumptions.
3. Listen carefully to all accounts – several pupils saying the same does not necessarily mean they are telling the truth.
4. Follow-up repeatedly, checking bullying has not resumed.
5. Incidents of racism or use of homophobic language including inappropriate use of the word 'gay' or lesbian **must be reported to the Head Teacher or Deputy Head.**

### **Sanctions and support for those involved in incidents of Bullying**

- Referral to senior management – in line with the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Withdrawal from playtime (which may involve writing a letter of apology).
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Request help from outside agencies, counselling and support (e.g. school nurse)
- Classroom strategies eg. re-grouping of children and special playtime activities.
- Exclusion from school.

Pupils involved in incidents will be informed of sanctions carried out. Staff associated with such pupils will also be informed. Parents should be informed and encouraged to take an active part in 'target making' in order to obtain acceptable behaviour.

### **Monitoring**

- The Head teacher will identify progress by including Bullying on staff meetings, senior leadership meetings and pupil meeting agendas. This will enable follow-ups and show whether the policy is really effective. Any records from these meetings will be used purely for monitoring purposes and will be kept for no longer than five years.
- The Head teacher will ensure that the policy is high profile throughout the year and especially at the beginning of a new school year through assemblies and PSHCE.
- The Head teacher will undertake an audit of 'hot spots' in the school, the grounds and in off-site facilities to identify areas and times where children feel vulnerable or at risk.

### **Evaluation**

The Head teacher will use data from monitoring and feedback from staff, governors, pupils and parents, to review and update the policy at least once every school year. A termly report to the Governors will be made.