

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Table of Contents

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	3
DEFINITION OF BULLYING	4
CYBERBULLYING – DEFINITION	4
THE SCHOOL’S RESPONSE TO BULLYING.....	4
SIGNS OF BULLYING	6
PREVENTATIVE MEASURES.....	7
CYBERBULLYING – PREVENTATIVE MEASURES.....	9
PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH REPORTED BULLYING	10
EYFS CHILDREN.....	12
COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE	13

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

At Heathcote Preparatory School and Nursery, our community is based upon respect, good manners and fair play. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can develop his/her full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed; but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other.

Heathcote School prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting Heathcote School in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions. This policy is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils on our website and on request. It is also available and known to staff and recently appointed staff.

Bullying, harassment and victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is **unacceptable**. This policy applies to all pupils in the school, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person by physical (including sexual/sexist), verbal (including telephones), cyber (including email, chat room and SMS messages and photographs), and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and cause intimidation.

Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, sexual or sexist, homophobic, which focus on religion, cultural background, gender, disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve everyone- pupils, other young people, staff and parents.

CYBERBULLYING – DEFINITION

Mr Bill Belsey, the creator of the web site: <http://www.cyberbullying.org/> defined this unpleasant and particularly intrusive phenomenon in the following terms:

“Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.”

Cyberbullying can involve Social Networking Sites, such as Snapchat, Facebook and Instagram, emails and mobile phones, used for SMS messages and as cameras.

THE SCHOOL’S RESPONSE TO BULLYING

At Heathcote School, we always treat bullying, including allegations of bullying, very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the school’s policy on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles. Bullying can be so serious that it causes psychological damage, eating

disorders, self-harm and even suicide. Heathcote recognises that a person may be vulnerable to bullying with regard to a protected characteristic, these are defined as: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. At Heathcote we do not tolerate any form of bullying and we raise and develop our school community to respect others, showing kindness and tolerance.

SIGNS OF BULLYING

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to school
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoiled by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Diminished levels of self confidence
- Frequent visits to the Office with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiences nightmares
- Talking of suicide or running away

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers.

A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer, significant harm'.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

We take the following preventative measures:

- All pupils are briefed thoroughly on the school's expected standards of behaviour – through PSHRE, CRE, SRE lessons specifically, form time/ERIC and alongside this, assemblies/specific days e.g. enrichment days, trips and antibullying week. They are told what to do if they encounter bullying. We guarantee that whistle-blowers who act in good faith will not be penalised and will be supported.
- All staff are expected to be alert to children who are vulnerable and at risk from bullying. Relevant protected characteristics must be specifically considered.
- All new members of staff are given guidance on the school's anti-bullying policy and in how to react to allegations of bullying in their first week at Heathcote School. They are required to read the school's policy as part of their induction. We use appropriate Assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying. Our PSHRE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. The programme is structured to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other.
- Other lessons, particularly CRE, English and Drama highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing social skills. Lessons and our Heathcote Monthly Values are also used to demonstrate what is acceptable behaviour and how we should ensure respect for all is embraced throughout our school. These monthly values are taught through a specific four-year rolling program and utilised in assemblies, PSHRE and form time.
- We hold an annual antibullying week during the Autumn term and hold ongoing events throughout the year e.g. assemblies, specific lessons. This includes online bullying awareness and prevention lessons.
- All our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place. This is then passed to the relevant class teacher for investigation.
- A worry box is located in the entrance as well as on the website so children can communicate discreetly if they wish to.
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents. Records of any incidents are kept securely in the Headteacher's office in order that patterns of behaviour can be identified and monitored. We have a strong and experienced pastoral team of tutors/ class teachers who are experienced in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and are alert to possible signs of bullying. Staff complete worry logs and behaviour logs to enable the Headteacher and SLT to monitor patterns and concerns. We have a code that enables us to identify and flag bullying, this is also with regard to protected characteristics.

- Our pastoral team gives support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies.
- Where necessary, and if requested by the parents, the school can provide details of external support services.
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site, particularly areas where bullying might occur. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour.
- Notices are displayed around the school with advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential help lines and web sites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline.
- All pupils have access to a telephone helpline, enabling them to call for support in private.
- Our Prefects help to support and look out for their younger peers.
- We have three trained mental health first aiders on our staff team. The pupils, parents and staff have access to these adults throughout the school day as needed.
- We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the school, involving our pupils
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.

CYBERBULLYING – PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

In addition to the preventative measures described above, Heathcote school:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its rules for the safe use of the internet. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department monitors pupils' use.
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- Access to social networking sites is not allowed.
- E-safety lessons are given across each Key Stage and set to be age appropriate.
- Offers guidance on cyberbullying in IT and PSHRE lessons, which covers blocking, removing contacts and sharing personal data.
- Termly updates to staff and pupils with regard to cyber safety and cyberbullying.
- Anti-bullying week is held annually in Autumn term and includes cyber bullying awareness.
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- Pupil mobile phones are not permitted in school.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH REPORTED BULLYING

If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedures are adopted:

- The member of staff to whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the pupils involved.
- He/she will inform an appropriate member of the pastoral team as soon as possible.
- The member of staff will calmly explain the range of disciplinary measures that are potentially involved.
- The victim will be interviewed on his/her own and asked to give an account of events.
- The bully, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually and asked to give an immediate account of events.
- The incident should be recorded, signed and dated before it is given to Designated Safeguarding Lead who is responsible for keeping all records of bullying and other serious disciplinary offences, securely in a locked cabinet in the office. The log will include whether this is considered to be physical bullying (code PB), cyber bullying (code CB), verbal bullying (code VB) or social bullying (code SB).
- All appropriate staff will be informed. The Headteacher will be informed.
- The victim will be interviewed at a later stage by the Headteacher, separately from the alleged perpetrator. It will be made clear to him/her why revenge is inappropriate. He/she will be offered support to develop a strategy to help him or herself.
- The alleged bully will be interviewed at a later stage by a Headteacher, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why his/her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. He/she will be offered guidance on modifying his or her behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions as set out in the school's Behaviour Policy; for example, detention, withdrawal of privileges or suspension.
- When necessary, the parents/guardians of all parties should be informed and invited into school to discuss the matter. Their support should be sought.
- A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling, should be agreed. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.
- A meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode.
- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place.
- In very serious cases it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to the Social Services. However, it is the policy of Heathcote School to attempt to resolve such issues internally under the school's own disciplinary procedures, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely.

- The school may exclude a pupil, either temporarily or permanently, in cases of severe and persistent bullying and in the event that the support put in place for the bully does not result in the modification of behaviour to an acceptable level.

EYFS CHILDREN

Even the youngest children are encouraged to behave towards each other with kindness and consideration. They have to learn to look after their own possessions and to respect other's possessions. We expect them to be honest, helpful and polite, and to work hard and to listen to others. They should respect everyone and learn to value differences and diversity. The PrePrep leader is in day-to-day charge of the management of behaviour in the Early Years.

We explain to children why some forms of behaviour are unacceptable and hurtful to others. We aim to deal with negative issues in a positive way and rarely impose sanctions; but sometimes, if deemed appropriate, we may remove a treat for hurtful behaviour. Parents are always informed via a note in the homework diary when any sanction or reproof is needed, and in cases of repeated instances of hurtful or inappropriate behaviour, they will be invited into the school to discuss the situation with their child's Teacher and the Preprep leader and to agree a joint way of handling the difficulty.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Parents and pupils are encouraged to use our complaints procedure (which is published on our web site) if they feel that their concerns about bullying (or anything else) are not being addressed properly. Parents of EYFS children should be aware that they have the right to refer a complaint directly to Ofsted, if they are unhappy with the way in which their complaint has been handled. (The complaints policy explains how to complain to Ofsted).