

## Anti-Bullying Policy

### Aim:

The aim of the anti-bullying policy is to ensure that students learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied and that staff are free from fear of bullying. Bullying is one of our 'Non-Negotiables' as it is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Only when all issues of bullying are reported and addressed will students be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at Heart of England School. Kindness is at the centre of our values driven culture.

### Scope of this policy:

- Bullying of students by students
- Bullying of staff by students

Allegations about bullying of students by staff will be dealt with under the school's Child Protection Policy. Allegations of staff bullying of staff will be dealt with under the school's Code of Conduct and Dignity at Work policies.



### Links to other policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Policy
- SEND Policy

### Definition:

Bullying occurs when a person or group of people deliberately deny the dignity of another individual or group who they perceive as vulnerable. Bullying is sustained or habitual behaviour by an individual or group that:

- Is meant to hurt or control – the person or people doing the bullying know what they are doing and mean to do it.
- happens more than once – there will be a pattern of behaviour, not just a 'one-off' incident
- Involves an imbalance of power – the person being bullied will usually find it very hard to defend themselves and often feel powerless

It can be:

- Physical, e.g. kicking, hitting, taking and damaging belongings, physical threats
- Verbal, e.g. name calling, taunting, threats, offensive/personal remarks, abuse that focuses on class, disability, sexual orientation, race or gender
- Relational, e.g. spreading stories, gossiping, excluding from social groups, coercion and control, sexual
- Cyber e.g. through texts, e-mails, picture/video clip bullying, Instant Messaging (IM)
- Indirect, e.g. graffiti, defacing of property

It can happen face to face or through cyberspace and may lead to:

- Physical and/or psychological harm
- Feeling unsafe, isolated and/or frightened
- Being unable to focus and achieve
- Feelings of being different, alone and unimportant
- Unable to see a happy and exciting future for yourself.

The above are not definitive lists. In order for Heart of England School to fulfil its vision of 'Creating Futures' for all, bullying must be reported and acted upon swiftly in a culture that promotes openness and challenges "by-standing" and incitement.

### **Who bullies?**

**Anyone** has the capacity to bully. There are no completely reliable predisposition diagnoses. However, those who perceive themselves as low status within a community, institution or group may use bullying in an attempt to artificially boost their status. Self-esteem is therefore a key factor in whether someone bullies or not. This puts equality and core values at the heart of all anti-bullying work in schools.

### **Who is bullied?**

**Anyone** can be bullied. People who suffer bullying are often perceived by others as being vulnerable. Sometimes the perceived difference is individual to that person – shyness, physical appearance, clothing and possessions, accent or perceived inappropriate behaviour.

Frequently the perceived difference comes from assigning an individual to a group. Such bullying targets race, class, disability, sexual grievance, religion or gender.

### **Identifying and reporting a concern about bullying:**

All concerns about bullying will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly. Students who are being bullied may not report it. However, there may be changes in their behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, unusual absence or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school. All school staff will be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with this policy and the school's Child Protection Policy.

Students who are bullying others also need support to help them understand and change their behaviour.

Students who are aware of bullying and report it can be a powerful force in helping to address it and will be encouraged to do so in a safe way.

All students will be encouraged to report bullying by:

- Talking to a member of staff of their choice
- Working with their Pastoral Manager
- Completing a student account form that outlines details of what has been happening, what has been said and how the student feels about the incidents
- Contacting local and national support agencies for advice/support

Parents should report concerns about bullying to their child's House Tutor or Pastoral Manager and support the school in tackling it. Trying to resolve bullying directly with the bully or their families without professional mediation can lead to problems escalating.

### **Responding to reports about bullying**

- If bullying is suspected or reported the student's Pastoral Manager should be contacted swiftly
- The Pastoral Manager will co-ordinate the support, intervention, resolution and review of the concerns raised and keep all parties informed
- Appropriate support and sanctions will be put in place

### **Students who have been bullied will be supported by:**

- Discussing what happened and establishing the full context
- Staff establishing the wrongdoing and its extent
- Working closely with parents and carers to resolve the issues raised
- Use of special interventions and/or referrals to other agencies where appropriate
- Peer or staff mentors
- Co-ordinated ongoing support as required which might involve mediation or restorative justice.

### **The Role of Parents and Carers:**

- Parents and carers are pivotal to successful outcomes and most concerns about bullying will be resolved through discussion and mediation between home and school
- Where a student is involved in bullying others outside school i.e. in the street or through the use of internet, parents support the school by addressing their child's behaviour
- Referral to external support agencies will be made where appropriate

### **Preventative measures**

The school will:

- Raise awareness of the nature of bullying through House Tutor time, assemblies, curriculum coverage and informal discussion in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour
- Give care and support to create and maintain a safe learning environment where all students feel safe, secure and valued; students should know they will be listened to and taken seriously in line with our school values
- Seek to develop links with the wider community and the Police that will support an inclusive, anti-bullying educational environment

#### **Monitoring, evaluation and review**

A senior member staff (**Assistant Principal: Welfare and Conduct**) will lead on the implementation of the policy and review its effectiveness alongside the school's Behaviour Policy.

The school will review the policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness.