



Policy Information Sheet

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1. Anti Bullying

This Anti-Bullying Policy outlines what Hartlepool Free School will do to prevent and tackle bullying. The policy will be made known to the whole school community.

Hartlepool Free School is committed to preventing and tackling bullying of all forms. This policy takes into account National Guidance and Advice. It forms part of the overall behaviour management strategy for pupils within the school.

This policy also adheres to legislation as set out in The Equality Act (2010), KCSIE, and Working Together to Safeguard Children. We aim to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation of any individual or group of people. This includes homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying. We aim to foster good relationships among all associated with the school. All children and young people placed within Hartlepool Free School are respected and treated as individuals with full access to the curriculum and other learning experiences, tailored to meet their individual needs in order that they will accrue the skills necessary for lifelong learning and development.

This policy and procedure is set out in the spirit of our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and takes account of the principles and steps to be taken where there is “reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer from significant harm”.

We take a strong stance against bullying of any type since it indicates a lack of appreciation for the feelings of others. Bullying will not be tolerated and will be addressed. Bullying can cause deep distress, to the extent of victims refusing to attend school or even, in extreme cases, attempting or committing suicide.

2. Aims of the policy

We aim to create an environment where pupils can grow and flourish without fear. Each pupil has the right to be safe in and out of school and to be protected when he/she is feeling vulnerable.

We aim:

- To ensure that children and young people learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment, without fear of being bullied.
- To demonstrate that the school takes bullying seriously and that it will not be tolerated.
- To take measures to prevent all forms of bullying in the school and during off-site activities.
- To support everyone to identify and protect those who might be bullied.
- To clarify for all pupils and staff that bullying is wholly and always unacceptable.
- To demonstrate to all that the safety and happiness of pupils is paramount.
- To promote an environment where children and young people feel they can trust and tell adults if they are being bullied or know about any bullying.

- To promote positive attitudes in pupils and address any situations in which child-on-child abuse is suspected (including conflict management training).
- To ensure that all staff are aware of their duty of care over those in their charge and the need to be alert to signs of bullying.
- To ensure that all staff are aware of procedures through regular training.

3. What is bullying (including definition, roles, styles, signs and symptoms)?

3.1. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually but not necessarily repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

At Hartlepool Free School we recognise that there is no “hierarchy” of bullying – all forms of bullying should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately. We understand that bullying can take place between pupils, between pupils and staff, or between staff; by individuals or groups; face-to-face, indirectly or using a range of cyberbullying methods. We understand that all children have disagreements with each other and friends fall out for a time. This is not usually bullying.

Four main types of bullying can be identified:

- Physical - hitting, kicking, taking, or hiding belongings.
- Verbal - name calling, teasing, insulting, writing, or sending unkind notes or messages, including cyber-bullying (see later in policy).
- Emotional - being intentionally unfriendly, excluding, tormenting looks, spreading rumours.
- Cyber - email and internet chat room misuse, mobile phone threats by text, calls, social websites.

Specific types of bullying include:

- Bullying related to race or colour, religion or belief or culture.
 - Bullying related to special education needs (SEN) or disabilities.
 - Bullying related to appearance or health conditions.
 - Bullying related to sexual orientation. homophobic, biophobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying.
 - Bullying of young carers or looked-after children or otherwise related to home circumstances.
 - Sexist or sexual bullying.
 - Bullying using electronic forms of contact or social media (cyber bullying) or using A.I.
- See Appendix 1**

3.2. Roles within Bullying

Different roles within bullying have been identified:

- Those relying on social power, dominating others, often with group support (ringleader).
- Others join in and therefore are afraid of the ringleader (associates).
- The awareness of a silent majority that bullying is taking place but feeling unable to do anything about it (bystanders).
- Those who try to stop bullying (defenders).

3.3. Styles of bullying include:

- Intimidation and rude gestures.
- The 'look' – this is given as an example of non-verbal bullying.
- Threats and extortion.
- Malicious gossip and exclusion from the group.
- Telling tales with the express purpose of causing trouble.
- Threatening texts or messages in chat rooms/online games.

3.4. Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and they should investigate if a child:

- Is unwilling to go to school.
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence.
- Starts stuttering.
- Attempts or threatens self-harm.
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares/ bedwetting.
- Regularly feel ill in the morning.
- Begins to do poorly in schoolwork.
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged.
- Has possessions that go missing.
- Has unexplained cuts and bruises.
- Stops eating.
- Is frightened to say what is wrong.
- Is frightened of walking to or from school.
- Changes their usual routine.

All staff should be aware of these possibilities and report promptly any suspicions of bullying to the appropriate person.

4. In any incident of bullying, staff are aware of the following principles:

- It is important that children who experience bullying can be heard.
- It is important to note that people react differently to bullying and it is often very difficult to tell if someone is upset or hurt.
- If children feel upset, they are encouraged to speak to their teacher or a responsible adult at an appropriate time.
- It must be emphasised to the children that they should NEVER take the law into their own hands and should remember that physical aggression is not acceptable.
- They should be reassured that the adult will try to sort out the problem as calmly as possible.
- The most serious incidents are referred to the safeguarding team.
- Parents would be requested to come and discuss matters.
- The incident would be noted down and put into the young person's file.
- Pupils will be told to always report incidents of bullying.

5. Reporting and Recording

- All incidents must be reported and recorded in full and the records kept in a central file (CPOMS/Serious Incident log and form).
- Reports of bullying will be logged by the staff.
- The incidents will be updated and the names of pupils and staff who are involved will be recorded. This record of bullying will enable patterns to be identified.

6. Action

Appropriate action will be decided by the Senior Leadership Team and Tutor, taking into consideration the circumstance, the needs of the young person involved, learner views and parent perspectives. Action may include:

- Sanctions (such as loss of privilege).
- Restorative work and mediation.
- Appropriate interventions including education or therapeutic interventions.
- Continued monitoring.

7. The curriculum: how we prevent and tackle bullying through our curriculum

7.1. Anti-Bullying Education in the Curriculum:

- The school will raise the awareness of the anti-social nature of bullying through the PSHE/SMSC and RSE programme, the school council and in the curriculum as appropriate.
- Teaching staff are responsible for introducing anti-bullying material in their programmes of study as appropriate.

- Changing the attitudes and behaviour of bullies will play a major part in the strategies used by the school.
- Children's emotional literacy is developed by teaching them a wide vocabulary of words for emotions. We believe that this makes them better able to express their feelings, helping them to resist attempts at bullying. We also consider that being able to understand and express emotions reduces conflict between children and makes them less inclined to misinterpret others' actions, which can be a factor in bullying.

8. Supporting pupils

Bullied Pupils: Staff who deal with pupils who have been bullied must always offer reassurance. Pupils who have been bullied will be given support.

Bullies: It is recognised that support must also be given to the perpetrator. Changing the attitude and behaviour of bullies will be part of the responsibility of the positive procedures used by the school. However, the school recognises that sanctions will also have to be used against bullies.

All the children concerned should be fully involved in the discussions leading up to the solution and should not be left feeling isolated. Honest group discussions that involve both bullied and bully with other children of their choice attendant and encouraged to participate, help the children to resolve the matter themselves with support and vigilance from the staff and is the most effective way. Parents/carers will need to be kept fully informed.

9. Sanctions/responses

Where pupils do not respond to preventative strategies to combat bullying, tougher action will be taken to deal with persistent and violent bullying. Sanctions are determined by the nature of the bullying on a case-to-case basis. Sanctions might include:

- Losing rewards.
- Writing a letter of apology.
- Removal from the group (in class).
- Withdrawal of break and lunchtime privileges.
- Withholding participation in any school trip or sports events that are not an essential part of the curriculum.
- Suspension or permanent exclusion from school. An exclusion would only be considered in a case of extreme and continuing bad behaviour, bullying, sexual harassment etc.

10. Involving parents/carers

- Parents/carers, as well as all staff and pupils, should know that the school will not tolerate bullying, and take a positive, active approach to educating pupils to combat it. Parents will be informed of the policy and procedures.
- Parents/carers of pupils who are being bullied and parents of the bullies will be involved

in the solution to the problem as appropriate.

11. Involving pupils

- Pupils will be involved in the positive strategies through the school council and class discussions. Pupils will have an input into the anti-bullying strategy.
- A major part of the strategy will consist of educating pupils in how to cope with bullying.
- Pupils must know to whom they should go if they are being bullied or if they are concerned about another child.

12. Monitoring the effectiveness of our approach

The Senior Leadership Team will consider reports of bullying to determine what can be learned from the incidents and how they were handled, with a view to improving the school's strategies. These reports will also enable patterns to be identified. Trustees will receive regular reports on the incidents of bullying alongside other behaviour and safeguarding information on a termly basis.

13. Other policies to refer to

Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy
Rewards And Sanctions
Child Protection and Safeguarding
Equalities Policy
Mobile Phone Policy

Appendix 1:

Cyber bullying

What is it?

- “Cyber-bullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend themselves.”

Types of Cyber Bullying

There are 7 identified categories of cyber bullying:

- Text messaging bullying
- Picture/video clip bullying via mobile phone
- Phone call bullying via mobile phone
- Email bullying
- Chat room bullying
- Bullying via websites
- Bullying through instant messaging

Combating cyber bullying

- Protection from Harassment Act '97
- Malicious Communications 1988
- Telecommunications Act 1984

School Policy on Cyber Bullying

No pupil mobile phones are allowed in school lessons (see Mobile Phone Policy).

However, the school recognises that many pupils have mobile phones outside school lessons and to that end:

- The school has developed a ‘cyber champion’ programme for all students to access as part of their curriculum.
- The school arranges for the community police officer to come into school to talk about safe use of the net and mobile phones.
- The Principal and DSL meets with groups of parents – as does the community police officer, to ensure that they, as well as their children understand how to use technology safely, as well as the risks and consequences of mobile phone use.
- Staff have a duty to make sure that they are familiar with their role in dealing with cyberbullying.
- Victims should keep emails and text as evidence for tracing and possible police action.

- The school has a code of conduct for use of the internet and access is screened by a variety of blocks which are updated regularly.
- Teachers must teach safe internet use and strictly apply all school policies.

Hartlepool Free School believes that parental/carer support and understanding in safe use of the net is an essential component in managing cyber bullying. The use of the web is an essential part of modern life and the young are the pioneers.

They use the web in a very different way.

- They upload → we download
- They create → we consume
- They use converged media → we use separate media
- They are truly interactive → we are static

Balance and perspective are essential as is a whole community approach to ensuring safe use of the internet. The responsibility for this is both the school's in educating their pupils for safe use on the net, and the parents in understanding that they need to monitor and manage their children's use of the web and social media.

At Hartlepool Free school we are working to equip every child to be a cyber champion for themselves, their peers and their families, and will ensure that through the curriculum they are taught in a detailed way about how to protect themselves and others.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard.

Hartlepool Free School recognises that AI has many uses to help pupils learn but may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

Hartlepool Free School will treat any use of AI to bully pupils in line with our policies.

Useful websites for community use:

www.childnet.com

www.digizen.org

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

www.beatbullying.org

www.respectme.org.uk

Children should understand that they must tell an adult if they are being bullied in these ways, that they should not delete any bullying messages or texts, but should never respond to these.