

## **HELSEBY HIGH SCHOOL**

### **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

#### **Anti-Bullying Policy Statement of Intent**

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils and staff so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

#### **Objectives of this Policy**

- All Governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is with regard to bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils, staff and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

#### **What Is Bullying?**

Definition: There is no legal definition of bullying. However, it is usually defined as behaviour that is:

1. repeated
2. intended to hurt someone, either physically or emotionally
3. often aimed at certain groups e.g. because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation

([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

The definition of bullying adopted at Helsby High School is - "*deliberately hurtful behaviour, whether physical or psychological, repeated over a period of time*"

Bullying can be:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homo/ bi/ trans phobic - because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal name - calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- On line - areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse. Mobile threats by text messaging & calls. Misuse of associated technology i.e. camera & video facilities

These behaviours could be from student to student, student to staff, or staff to student.

What is not seen as this type of bullying is the occasional cruel remark or action. Friendship groups are often 'in flux' and choosing new friends is not seen as bullying. Young people can often regard a situation which they provoked but which did not achieve a winning position as bullying. Non-bullying behaviour of this type can be very hurtful amongst young people and they are always encouraged to discuss it with someone in school so that a resolution can be sought.

### **When bullying is difficult to recognise**

The school recognises some difficulties involving bullying:

The bullying may originate and occur outside of school;

The bullying may be historical, dating back to time before joining our school community;

The bullying may form part of prejudices deeply embedded in a family's or community's views.

Bullying could go unnoticed unless staff are informed. Students are actively encouraged to discuss any difficulties with staff and the availability of such staff is advertised in school. Parents are also encouraged to contact the school.

### **Why is it Important to respond to bullying?**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying which occur within the school.

### **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 that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged

- has possessions which are damaged or " go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home very hungry (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber-message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

### **Prevention**

Anti-bullying is tackled through the assembly programme throughout the year. Assemblies are delivered by form groups, 6<sup>th</sup> form students and student leaders, the Student Support Co-ordinators and members of the Senior Leadership Team. Drama performances by students for students also feature. Sometimes the anti-bullying message may be subliminal with the assembly which may focus on, for example, empathy, equality and inclusion or being a good role model.

Anti-bullying week and Online safety week involve a series of events each year to raise awareness of the harmful impact of bullying.

Staff on duty wear high visibility vests to ensure that they can easily be seen, to reduce the risk of bullying behaviour during break time and lunch time and staff on duty patrol all parts of the school to ensure that there is a presence. CCTV inside and outside the building also provides further security for students.

Guidance is displayed around school so that students know what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of another student.

### **Procedures**

1. Students are encouraged to report bullying incidents to staff. It is not only the responsibility of the victim to report the situation to an adult, but also other students who have seen the behaviour. This can be done by speaking to any member of staff or using the 'SHARP' system accessible through the school website. The member of staff receiving this information (SHARP is checked for messages daily) should make the relevant Year Leader aware of the situation so that it can be dealt with promptly. Year Leaders will keep Key Stage Leaders and the Senior Leadership team link for the Year group informed. Year Leaders will advise parents of the situation and how the school has acted. Staff witnessing a potential bullying incident will initially deal with the situation and then advise pastoral staff as above.

There will always be action taken as a result of a reported incident. This action will depend very much on the wishes of the victim, the frequency of the bullying and the timeline of incidents involving the perpetrator of the bullying behaviour. All of this is outlined clearly in the Helsby High School Anti-Bullying Charter.

In dealing with any allegations of bullying, the primary focus will be the physical and psychological well-being of the victim. However, the circumstances of the incidents will also be investigated to achieve a fair and just view of the situation.

Parents are asked to inform the school of any situations of which they are aware through conversations in the home. This can be done via email to the relevant year team admin address or by telephone to the main school office who will ensure the message is communicated to the relevant Year Leader.