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03 April 2018

Dear Parents/ Carers

At Helsby High School we regularly review and evaluate the effectiveness of our school procedures, particularly those around student welfare. As part of our review of our anti-bullying policy, I would like to invite interested parents to review our updated anti-bullying policy.

Schools reflect society and all schools have to deal with incidents of unpleasantness between peers and, when this is repeated, bullying. Bullying is deeply unpleasant, unnecessary and can have a long lasting impact on the victim. Unfortunately, having experienced bullying from a range of perspectives, I understand fully the impact that it can have on young people who are often the most vulnerable in our community.

We all have a responsibility to stop bullying; as a school, as parents, as students and as a community by:

- ensuring that young people understand right from wrong and the impact their behaviour can have on others; as one of our students said recently when doing some anti-bullying work in form time, one person's 'banter' is another person's bullying. We don't all react to the same situations in the same manner; an unkind word might be 'laughed off' by one student but may be the last straw for another, as a result of personal circumstances at a given time.
- supporting the development of resilience in our young people so that they can deal well with the challenges that modern life brings. The pressures of social media, it's instant nature and wide audience, add additional challenges to the age old difficulties of the teenage years.
- to ensure that unacceptable conduct of any type is challenged and reported.

Bullies rely on their behaviour being unchallenged, unreported and unsanctioned. It can be difficult as a victim to report incidents out of concern that the situation may worsen, as it may to begin with, or that there will be criticism by your peers for speaking out. However, the situation is unlikely to improve if the initial incident or subsequent issues are not reported.

At Helsby High School, we endeavour to treat all incidents of reported bullying with the seriousness they deserve. As a school we have to take an objective perspective, based on the evidence available, and ensure that proportionate sanctions are applied. Young people make mistakes and need to be given the opportunity to learn from these mistakes and move on, unless the situation has made their position in school untenable.

As parents we also need to consider how we respond when our child is the student responsible for the unpleasantness, particularly as children don't always give a balanced account of a situation they were personally involved in. Dismissing the situation or minimising the impact on another child is not helpful to anyone. If young people are to learn from the mistakes that they make, they have to accept responsibility for their role in a situation and accept the consequences that we, as a society, expect there to be.

Anti-bullying is an area of our work that is constantly being developed. Anti-bullying week this year launched our anti bullying campaign and this will continue throughout the school year through PSHCE, form time, assemblies and other forums. We have raised money for charities supporting children and young people, are currently reviewing our anti-bullying policy, working towards the Anti-Bullying Quality Mark supported by the Anti Bullying Alliance, and working towards the implementation of the PiXL 'Mind to be kind' strategy. These strategies all involve a lot of work, consultation with members of our community and take time to embed and, with support from all members of our community will, I believe, have a long lasting impact. I have two sons of high school age. My approach to student conflict is to consider what I would expect to be done if my children were on the receiving end of ill treatment at the hands of their peers, and ensure that colleagues at Helsby High School act accordingly.

If your child finds themselves to be the victim of any unpleasant behaviour from their peers, then please ensure that they, or you, report it. In the first instance this should be to their Form Tutor, Year Leader or Student Support Co-ordinator. The 'Sharp' system, an alternative method of reporting concerns (anonymously if you wish) can be accessed via the school website. For any reported incidents, action will be taken and you will be kept informed. If you do not feel that your concerns or the concerns of your child have been taken seriously, then raising the matter with the relevant a Key Stage Leader or myself would be an appropriate subsequent course of action. The school's complaints procedure is on the school website and outlines further steps you might wish to take in the unlikely event of an unsatisfactory resolution. This enables you to communicate with the Head teacher and Governing body when matters remain unresolved.

As always, the school will continue to strive to work with parents and carers. We intend to hold student welfare drop in sessions at school on specific evenings in the coming term. We will publicise the dates in advance and invite you to come and meet myself and other key pastoral staff to raise any concerns you have and make suggestions for improvement to our student support. In addition, we will be inviting some parents in to work with us to refine the latest version of our anti-bullying policy. If you would like to be involved in this process, please email me at [swarburton@helsbyhigh.org.uk](mailto:swarburton@helsbyhigh.org.uk) to express an interest, by 20th April 2018.

May I take this opportunity to wish you a pleasant Easter weekend and Spring break.

Yours sincerely



Mrs S Warburton  
Deputy Headteacher