

## **Anti Bullying Policy December 2024**

### **HEATHLANDS ACADEMY POLICY FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING**

#### **Definition**

Bullying can be described as being a deliberate act done to cause distress solely in order to give a feeling of power, status or other gratification to the bully. Bullying can range from ostracising, name-calling, teasing, threats and extortion, through to physical intimidation, assault on persons and/or their property. It can be an unresolved single frightening incident that casts a shadow over a child's life, or a series of such incidents. It may take place in the physical world, or more commonly these days, in the online world in the form of cyber-bullying.

At Heathlands Academy we use the term bullying to refer to a range of harmful behaviours, both physical and psychological.

We recognise that bullying behaviour usually has the following four features:

1. It is repetitive and persistent – though sometimes a single incident can have precisely the same impact as persistent behaviour over time, for it can be experienced as part of a continuous pattern and can be extremely threatening and intimidating. This is particularly the case with racist bullying.
2. It is intentionally harmful – though occasionally the distress it causes is not consciously intended by all of those who are responsible.
3. It involves an imbalance of power, leaving someone feeling helpless to prevent it or put a stop to it.
4. It causes feelings of distress, fear, loneliness and lack of confidence in those who are at the receiving end.

Staff, parents and children at Heathlands Academy work together to create a happy, caring and safe learning environment. Bullying, whether verbal, physical or indirect, is not tolerated. It is everyone's responsibility to try to prevent occurrences of bullying and to deal with any incidents quickly and effectively and in line with our school values.

Research has shown, repeatedly, that the extent of bullying in schools is greatly underestimated. Bullying may be brought to the attention of any member of staff by the victim(s), their friend(s), their parent(s) or other interested people.

#### **Aims**

- To provide a safe, caring environment for the whole school community, especially the children in our care.
- To instil in children that bullying is unacceptable and that reports of bullying will be taken seriously, recorded and acted upon.
- To educate all relevant parties about the different forms of bullying including cyberbullying.
- To reassure children that they will be listened to and will know that it is all right to tell.
- To listen to parents and keep them informed of actions taken in response to a complaint.
- A full investigation will follow any report of bullying with detailed records kept of incidents, reports and complaints.

To take appropriate action in line with the Behaviour Policy, in dealing with bullying, staff at Heathlands Academy follow these fundamental guidelines:

- Never ignore suspected bullying.
- Do not make premature assumptions.
- Listen carefully to all accounts – several pupils with the same version does not mean they are telling the truth.
- Adopt a problem-solving approach that moves pupils forward.
- Follow up proven cases to check bullying has not returned.
- Keep detailed records.

Strategies have been introduced at Heathlands to reduce bullying. These strategies cover raising awareness about bullying and the Anti-Bullying Policy, increased understanding for victims and teaching pupils how to manage relationships in a constructive way. Circle Time, visiting speakers and PSHE sessions are ideal opportunities for raising awareness of bullying, and procedures for dealing with it. Staff should apply one or more of the strategies below, depending on the perceived seriousness of the situation. The emphasis should always be one of showing a caring and listening approach.

In response to a complaint of bullying, the Heathlands Academy Behaviour Policy should be followed, with staff making a full investigation, keeping detailed records and applying sanctions as necessary. All incidents of bullying must be entered on the school's safeguarding system and details should be recorded for victim and perpetrator under the behaviour section of the child's individual record. The record must clearly indicate the nature of the incident(s) and the names of all children involved, this will enable senior staff to spot patterns quickly. A copy of these entries must be made available to teachers of the children involved.

Where a member of staff other than the child's teacher is dealing with a bullying incident, their teacher must be kept fully informed about the investigation and its outcomes.

A suspected case of bullying should always be referred directly to the Head Teacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. The senior member of staff will then:

1. Discuss the nature of the bullying with the "victim" at length, recording all the facts. This will require patience and understanding.
2. Identify the bully/bullies and any witnesses.
3. Interview witnesses.
4. Discuss the incident(s) with the alleged bully/ies. Confront them with the allegations and ask them to tell the truth about the situation/incident. Make it clear that this is only an investigation at this stage.
5. If the bully owns up, make it understood that bullying is not acceptable at Heathlands Academy and what effect it has on the well-being and education of the victim and the rest of the children in the class/school. Apply sanctions relevant to the type of bullying.
6. If the allegation of bullying is denied, investigate further. If there is sufficient evidence that the bullying occurred, apply relevant sanctions.
7. Hold separate discussions with parents of bully and victim.
8. Selective use of materials from the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning resources can be used.
9. Sanctions for the bully may include:

- No further action having spoken to child and parents
  - Withdrawal from favoured activities, for example school visit, activities day
  - Loss of break/lunchtime outdoor play/socialisation for a fixed period of time
  - Removal from class for fixed period of time (internal exclusion)
  - Lunchtime exclusion for fixed period of time
  - Exclusion from school for fixed period of time (fixed term exclusion)
10. Provide a Pastoral Support Programme for the victim with a named member of staff monitoring and observing at break times and lunchtimes, and through discussion to make sure there is no repetition.
  11. Provide a Pastoral Support Programme for the bully. This may include a Behaviour Support Programme and opportunities in circle time or groups for the child/ren to discuss relationships, feelings and the effect bullying can have on individuals. A named member of staff will support the child during this programme.
  12. Details of the incident should be recorded for each child, victim and bully, on the school's safeguarding system. Recorded information should include name of victim and perpetrator, and allow for easy cross-referencing. Copies of the report should be given to class teachers and Leaders of Learning for each child involved in the incident.
  13. In the case of cyberbullying outside of school, children should be encouraged to keep evidence of the bullying. If this involves grooming of any sort, the police should be notified. For incidences that require it e.g. sexting, the school's Child Protection Procedures should be followed. NB. No copies of inappropriate images of minors should be viewed, created or shared under any circumstances.

The emphasis must always be on achieving closure as opposed to punishment. Where the senior member of staff feels that discussions with the bully and his/her parents, together with the provision of a pastoral programme, have successfully concluded the episode, punitive measures need not be taken. The Head Teacher must be informed of the outcome of all bullying investigations.

In order to reduce incidents of bullying and to recognise where cases occur staff must watch for early signs of distress in pupils. At Heathlands Academy we LISTEN, BELIEVE and ACT.

School Council members or playground buddies are there as a child's first contact point if they feel that they cannot tell an adult. These pupils must discuss any disclosures of bullying with a senior member of school staff.

'Worry Monsters' are placed at key locations around the school, into which children can put written notes concerning bullying issues etc. Identified members of the school support staff are responsible for checking the contents of the boxes twice a week. Concerns are referred to the Head Teacher, or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

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There are posters around school advertising how children can report bullying and dissuading children from bullying. The Childline and DfES Bullying website addresses are displayed prominently and shared with parents through newsletters.

### **Bullying off the School Premises – Including cyber bullying**

Heathlands Academy is not directly responsible for bullying off the school premises; however, if incidents occur on the way to or from school and both the victim and the bully are from our school, action will be taken as if the incident had occurred within the school, and this includes informing parents.

Where possible, Heathlands Academy will support pupils who have been bullied, especially on their way to or from school, by pupils from another school or by other persons.

The following steps should be taken:

- Talk to the Head Teacher of another school whose pupils are bullying off school premises.
- Talk to the pupil(s) and parents involved from the other school.
- Talk to the Police about problems on the local streets.
- Talk to pupils about how to avoid or handle bullying situations.

### **Bullying Directed Towards Race, Gender, Sexual Orientation or Disability**

Heathlands Academy will not tolerate bullying against anyone because of his or her race, gender, sexual orientation or disability. The school will take preventative action to reduce the likelihood of bullying incidents of this nature occurring. Stereotypical views are challenged, and pupils learn to appreciate and view positively differences in others, whether arising from race, gender, ability or disability.

Racial bullying will not be tolerated in Heathlands Academy and will be treated severely. If a child receives verbal abuse, physical threats or attacks, or if a pupil brings racist literature into school, incites others to behave in a racist way or writes racist insults, a full investigation will be carried out in line with the above procedures and details will be recorded officially. Heathlands Academy has a duty to develop children's understanding of ethnic diversity issues and explore racial tolerance in PSHE, Circle Time, collective worship and in Religious Education lessons. Racial incidents are reported to the Governing Body, UWMAT and LEA as required.

Heathlands Academy guarantees confidentiality and support for those being bullied.

### **Sexual Bullying**

Sexual bullying has an impact on both genders. Sexual bullying is characterised by abusive name-calling, comments about appearance, attractiveness and emerging puberty, inappropriate and uninvited touching, sexual innuendoes and propositions (i.e. sexual harassment). Where incidents do occur the anti-bullying procedures as outlined above will be instigated. Staff should also refer to the school Safeguarding Policy with regards to these incidents and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019'.

### **Special Education Needs or Disabilities**

Pupils with special educational needs or disabilities might not be able to articulate experiences as fluently as other children. However, they are often at greater risk of being bullied, both

directly and indirectly, and usually about their specific disability. Where incidents do occur the anti-bullying procedures as outlined above will be instigated.

Heathlands Academy makes sure that the behaviour of staff does not trigger bullying unintentionally. They should avoid undue attention towards SEN children compared with others and should not make comments based on pupils' appearance or perceived character.

We try to make classroom activities and lessons sensitive to such children's needs. We teach assertiveness and other social skills and teach victims to say "No", to voice their worries and to get help.

We recognise that high attaining, gifted or talented pupils can also be affected by bullying.

Teachers should treat this as seriously as any other type of bullying.