

## Statement of Intent

At Hornchurch High School we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a *TELLING* school. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

## What Is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- **Emotional excluding** (e.g. exclusion of one pupil from a friendship group), tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures).
- **Physical pushing**, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence against another.
- **Racist** racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- **Sexual** unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- **Homophobic** because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality.
- **Verbal name-calling**, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
- **'Difference'**-focused often targeted against children and young people perceived to be 'different' through being ,for example: Special Educational Needs (SEN), gifted, having social communication issues, disabled, from a Traveller background, English as an Additional Language (EAL), a carer, from different social or economic background isolating them from peers, etc.
- **Cyber bullying** is bullying through the use of communication technology like mobile phone text messages, e-mails and social networking sites. Examples are: Sending threatening or abusive texts, BBM messages, (including 'personal status') or e-mails, personally or posting insulting comments about someone on a website, social networking site (eg: MySpace, Facebook) or online diary (blog). Making or sharing derogatory or embarrassing videos or pictures of someone via mobile phone or email (such as 'Happy slapping videos').

## 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. Students who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

### Objectives of this Policy

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, students 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 on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All students 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. Students and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

### Guiding Principles

The Department For Education defines bullying as described in the 2006 Education and Inspections Act:

**‘Behaviour by an individual or group usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally’.**

**‘Don’t Suffer in Silence’**, 2000.

This definition is broken down into three elements for sharing with pupils and parents and for recording and monitoring purposes, to differentiate bullying from other aggressive and antisocial behaviour where it happens inside and outside school.

Hornchurch High School defines bullying behaviour as:

**Deliberate** – not accidental, although it may be thoughtless

**Repeated** – not a ‘one-off’ fight or falling out between friends, for instance.

**An Imbalance of Power** – often drawing in bystanders, for instance, to provide an audience or augment the effect through many voices. Sometimes the imbalance is age or height related; sometimes social, by encouraging a group of friends to isolate a targeted student, for instance. This also describes cyber and emotional bullying, which can lead to low self esteem and self-harm, on the part of the target.

Only when all three of these elements are present is an incident logged as bullying. There is a process for all staff to follow in recording, responding, resolving and reporting outcomes, below.

We are aware of the obligation to pass on details of particularly predatory behaviour to the police as part of our responsibility for preventing abuse and providing a safe environment for all of our pupils.

### **We actively oppose bullying because:**

We are helping children to achieve more, in our school. Bullying is a barrier to learning for all concerned and impacts upon healthy relationships, well-being, teaching and learning for whole class groups and ultimately, if unchallenged, upon all of our pupils' attainment.

- Everyone has the right to feel welcome, secure and happy
- Model consideration and respect for others
- Responsibility to ensure that school is a safe place to be
- Feeling unsafe or at risk is a barrier to learning and working effectively
- We have an obligation to intervene if a child's safety is compromised

### **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 starving (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. (See appendix A for further advice and guidance).

### **Procedures**

1. Report bullying incidents to staff
2. In cases of bullying requiring intervention, the incidents will be recorded by staff
3. In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem
4. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour

### **Outcomes**

- 1) The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place.
- 2) In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered
- 3) If possible, the students will be reconciled through the process of mediation. 4) After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

### **Involvement of students**

We will:

- Regularly canvas young people's views on the extent and nature of bullying.
- Ensure students know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying.
- Ensure all students are aware of the range of sanctions which may be applied against those engaging in bullying.
- Involve students in anti-bullying campaigns.
- Publicise the details of helplines and websites.
- Offer support to students who have bullied.
- Work with students who have been bullying in order to address their problems.

**Prevention** We will use KIDSCAPE methods for helping children to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- Writing a set of school rules
- Signing a behaviour contract

- Writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying
- Reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly
- Making up role-plays
- Having discussions about bullying and why it matters
- Using National Anti-bullying week events to raise awareness
- The Albany School is against bullying publicity in all classrooms
- Tutorial tasks relating to bullying
- The student planner contains anti bullying card information
- Worry Box- this is a confidential online posting service, which is found on our website

## **Guidance and Advice**

### **For students**

These ideas about what you can do have been suggested by students.

If you are being bullied:

- Tell someone you trust
- Remember you are not the one with the problem!
- If you can, ignore the bully
- If you can, do not show you are upset
- If possible, avoid being alone in the places bullying happens
- Be assertive, if you can
- Walk away quickly and confidently, even if you do not feel that way inside
- If you are different in some way, be proud of who you are.

### **Friends**

- Listen and talk it through
- Try to be sensitive
- Try not to leave them on their own
- Persuade the person being bullied to talk to an adult

### **Bystanders**

- Even if you don't take part in bullying but see it and walk away, you are ignoring your responsibilities
- Get help
- Give sympathy to the person being bullied

## Parents and carers

Someone who is being bullied may display the signs above (see signs and symptoms). Any of the behaviour above may indicate other problems. But, if you become aware of and are concerned by any of this behaviour, and think your child is being bullied:

- Encourage him/her to talk about the problem
- Reassure him/her of your support
- Try to listen calmly and not overreact
- Attempt to find out when and where the bullying takes place. Is there a pattern?
- Contact the Head of Year to discuss the problem
- Work with the Head of Year to support your child within or outside school
- If the bullying takes place outside school, report the matter to the police

## For Staff

All members of staff, teaching and non-teaching, should deal with any incident of suspected or observed bullying by:

- Talking to the student and giving reassurance
- Taking action appropriate at the time
- Producing a written statement of what has happened and the action taken
- Reporting the incident to the Head of Year

## Social Networking Sites and Cyber Bullying

Social networking is part of a social and technological revolution. Used responsibly, these sites provide users with a very powerful network for sharing ideas and influencing opinion. Commonly used sites such as Facebook, Twitter and My Space encourage users to post information and comments commonly known as 'blogging'.

However, there are occasions when social networking is used inappropriately and this is where parents should be concerned regarding the content of these websites: some information posted is harmless; however some can be cruel and at times incite hatred. The sites are not rigorously censored by the providers in terms of content, e.g. on YouTube, there are photos and video clips that can encourage "cyber bullying". Facebook, Twitter and My Space sites allow "members" to write about themselves and other people. At times some of this material is not pleasant and can be hurtful. There are very real risks to children and young people, not just from predators who might wish to contact them through these sites, but more commonly from young people themselves who can use these sites to "cyberbully" and harass their peers.

Facebook, is a popular medium for social networking and also has its own Terms of use that do not allow those under the age of 13 years to have an account and those who are aged 13 – 18 are supposed to have an account with parental consent. It is important that their communication is being monitored in some way if they are to continue to use the social networking site.

New technology is blurring the distinction between what is “in school” and “out of school” and although it is not the school’s responsibility to monitor what our students are doing on the internet, outside the jurisdiction of our school, we are compelled to ensure that you are aware of your child’s internet activity. Parents are therefore encouraged to visit one or more of the sites and see for themselves what material is available, encourage their children to use these sites in responsible fashion and monitor their child’s use of the sites by having the computer screen visible to parents/guardians when in use in the home.

If a child is being bullied via a social networking site we would recommend you take the following action should your child experience problems;

- It is important to save any evidence of bullying so that it can be reported to the provider of the service and if appropriate the police.
- Encourage your child to remove the ‘bullies’ from their site once the issues has been reported
- Inform the school of any action taken
- Closely monitor any further use of these sites

Further information about bullying and prevention is available on line at [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)