The Hall

THE HALL SCHOOL
Whole School Anti-Bullying Policy

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Policy ratified by: SLT

Date of publication: September 2018

Date of next review: September 2019

Governor responsible for policy: Patrick Derham

This policy is available on the School website and can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

Rationale

We do not tolerate bullying at The Hall School. Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everyone in the school community has the right to feel welcome, secure and happy. Only if this is the case will all members of the school community be able to achieve to their maximum potential. Bullying of any sort prevents this being able to happen. People who are bullies need to learn different ways of behaving as their actions could cause psychological damage or even suicide.

No matter how well a policy is embedded in a school, it will not eradicate bullying completely. Nevertheless, it is our aim to challenge attitudes about bullying behaviour, increase understanding for bullied pupils and continue to build an anti-bullying ethos in the school. When bullying occurs in school people should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

The school is aware that nationally bullying emerges as a major school concern for both parents and pupils. In recent years cyberbullying has increasingly become a problem for some young people and this area is regularly addressed through assemblies, assembly half termly themes, 'Friendship', themed days, guest speakers and Life Skills lessons (PSHEE) with the boys and through presentations to parents. The school will act promptly upon any information regarding external cyber-bullying as it will inevitably impact boys' behaviour, well-being and performance at school. The MS/SS school 'Respect campaign' initiative will on occasions adopt themes that will support this policy. This policy, which incorporates boys from our Reception Classes (EYFS) up to Year Eight, is expected to operate alongside the schools' policy to 'Promote Good Behaviour and Set out Sanctions' with a particular emphasis on highlighting examples of and opportunities for good behaviour.

Definitions of Bullying

Bullying is the result of an imbalance of power between two individual people or between a group of people and another that intentionally hurts either physically, psychologically or emotionally. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over a relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves.

Bullying is hurtful or thoughtless behaviour that is repeated over a period of time, making it difficult for the person concerned to defend themselves.

Bullying can be emotional, physical, verbal, sexual, sexist, gender based, racial, religious, cultural, homophobic, cyber (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and emails) or can involve a disability including a special educational need or a child who is adopted or a carer.

Bullying can include but is not limited to name-calling, violence, threatened violence, isolation, the misappropriation of property, ridicule, indirect action such as spreading unpleasant stories, racial taunts or misuse of modern technology.

The school works hard to ensure that all people know the difference between bullying and simply "falling out".

Bullying is treated with great seriousness within the school and within wider society and statistics support the fact that it can cause physical and emotional damage which may cause psychological damage. Though bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to communications, harassment and threatening behaviour. On occasions as part of a bullying incident, if a child has experienced significant harm or suffering, the incident might be treated as a child protection, safeguarding concern.

Bullying might also be motivated by actual differences between boys or perceived differences. All boys and staff need to be aware of boys with special education needs/disabilities and adjust their interactions and judgments accordingly.

Aims of the Policy

We take all reports of bullying seriously. All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is and the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and procedures. The policy is made available for all parties and can be found on the school website (parent's section). We make it clear to all pupils that staff will always be available to listen to their concerns but it will be more difficult for us to help if the victim does not inform staff and parents as incidents occur. Staff training opportunities are considered and discussed and the policy is circulated at the start of each year.

We involve the pupils as part of the solution to the bullying problem. We work towards educating pupils to seek help for themselves or another, should any incident or series of incidents make them feel insecure.

Regular feedback is sought from parents and boys on issues related to bullying incorporating the Pastoral Review, questionnaires and presentation evenings. Particular emphasis surrounding anti-bullying and the procedures outlined in this policy are a key focus at the start of each school year, highlighted at pre-term staff meetings, and an early assembly presentation for pupils as well as usually the first Life Skills session for each year group. Relevant situations are dealt with as they arise with concerns and situations to monitor outlined at weekly staff meetings. Related records are analysed on a yearly basis to identify patterns and to evaluate the success of the policy. Very few incidents come to light and are recorded.

Signs and Symptoms

A boy may exhibit signs or behaviours that he is being bullied. Adults should be aware and investigate if a boy does not want to come to school, complains of regular illness, tired through lack of sleep, under-performs at work, changes normal routine, starts to truant, exhibits anxiety or a lack of confidence, has torn clothes or sustains injuries, loses possessions or money, changes eating patterns, becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable or displays uncharacteristic behaviour. These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated. School Matrons can often be involved at an early stage.

Members of staff are made aware that bullying can occur anywhere within school, including especially those areas where boys might suspect that adults seldom go. These areas are well covered by the thorough break time duty roster. This includes areas such as changing rooms and lavatories, hidden corners of playgrounds and remote corridors and rooms. All staff must be alert to these, and ensure that pupils do not think that there are areas of the school where they would not expect to encounter a teacher or other adult. Staff also need to be aware that bullying incidents outside of school hours can occur and can impact behaviour at school. Aspects of cyber-bullying must be monitored closely. In some cases situations may well be categorized as an offence if electronic communication with the intent to cause stress or anxiety, convey a message which is indecent, grossly offensive or a threat or one that contains obvious lies has been transmitted. Form/class teachers usually act as the first point of contact for routine issues and senior staff for those of a more serious nature.

Safeguarding

All staff need to be aware and sensitive to the safeguarding issues that may emerge as a result of peer to peer abuse. This may be in the form of bullying (including cyber bullying), gender based violence, sexual assault and sexting. This form of abuse will be managed through the school Anti-Bullying Policy and disciplinary procedures. Victims of peer to peer abuse will be supported through the normal pastoral channels with the assistance of the School Counsellor and external agencies if required.

Most of our children will use mobile devices and computers at some time. They are important tools for communication and education as well as for recreation and socializing. However, we know that some men, women and young people will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts including sexting and emails (cyber bullying), to enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings.

The school's Professional Code of Conduct and Safer Working Practice and the ICT Acceptable Use Policy explain the responsibilities of staff in relation to keeping children safe in school.

Pupils receive guidance on safe use of the web (including anti bullying) through computing lessons and the Life Skills curriculum and in year group assemblies. Cyber bullying by children, via texts including sexting, direct messages, social media or email, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through the School Anti Bullying Policy and disciplinary procedures.

Chat rooms and social networking sites are sources of risk of inappropriate and harmful behavior including the potential for radicalisation in the digital arena. Some children will undoubtedly be 'chatting' on mobile or social networking sites at home. The School runs parent information evenings to help parents understand the possible risks.

Filtering and monitoring systems are in place on the IT system as part of the School's online safety policy. The School also has a clear policy on the use of mobile technology and while pupils may bring phones into school they are to be turned off during the day and only used with permission of a member of staff. Their main purpose is for safe travel to and from school.

Strategy

The school maintains a policy of shared concern

1) Early in each academic year class and form teachers use Circle Time, Life Skills and Form Time to cover bullying related issues to remind pupils that The Hall School will not tolerate bullying. Assemblies support this theme, particularly using the half termly themes eg: Friendship. There are a variety of resources available for staff. Anti-bullying posters are displayed in many classrooms in the Middle School and Senior School and other sensitive areas where bullying may occur (changing areas, corridors etc). Clear guidelines for the Middle School and Senior School are also included in the boys' Prep Diary. In the Junior School considerable time is spent focusing on The Golden Rules, which are displayed throughout the school.

2) If a pupil tells an adult that he thinks that he is being bullied, the pupil's class or form teacher becomes involved. Some situations may involve another pupil informing a teacher that a boy is being bullied, and pupils must be encouraged to pass any such information on. Once the victim has been consulted, it may be appropriate for a senior member of staff to become involved at this stage and parents may be contacted, if appropriate. The senior member of staff will normally be the Head of the Junior School, Head of Middle School or the Deputy Head (Pastoral).

3) Once an allegation of bullying has been established both parties are given the opportunity to present their account of the events individually usually in written form and then verbally. If necessary, third party evidence is collected. Then both aggressor and victim will usually be brought together to discuss the situation. It is important for both parties to be able to talk uninterrupted until they feel they have told their side of the story. This allows the bully to become aware of the victim's distress and provides him with an opportunity to become responsible for his actions.

4) Both aggressor and victim are involved in discussion until a solution to end the bullying is agreed upon. The aggressor is encouraged to apologise. Contact is made with both sets of parents, usually by the senior member of staff involved. The aggressor is issued with a strong warning about his future conduct and is monitored closely. The incident and the solution are logged and recorded in writing and where appropriate may be signed by both parties. The record will be kept in a file by either the Head of the Junior School, Head of Middle School or the Deputy Head (Pastoral) for internal purposes only. Details must be entered in the central file /log. A Conduct File and incident related worksheets are available for follow-up work.

5) The class or form teacher and/or senior members of staff follows up the solution on a regular basis in the initial weeks as well as the following term to assess progress and provides feedback to the senior member of staff involved. It is essential that regular monitoring continues in addition to regular guidance and advice for the victim and support for the bully with regard to future progress. Through discussion, focus areas can include alternative methods of dealing with situations, greater use of empathy, further self-analysis, repairing of friendships, role play situations or direct honesty – such as 'this is how I feel when'……

6) If bullying persists after the initial warning, all situations and incidents must be recorded in writing. The Headmaster will be informed and parents of both parties are contacted again. A record of all incidents and discussions are retained, filed and entered in the central file/log.

7) Steps 3) and 4) can be repeated and if the members of staff involved feel it is appropriate, the school's behaviour and discipline procedures may be used. In serious or repeated cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered, as detailed in the school's 'Policy to Promote Good Behaviour and Set Out Sanctions'.

Prevention

Increasingly greater focus has been directed towards preventing bullying situations in the first place. Numerous methods are available to prevent boys bullying. When appropriate, these may include -

- Assemblies or presentations
- Writing out a set of school -guidelines (Prep Diary)
- Signing a behaviour contract
- Writing stories or poems or drawing pictures on related issues
- Reading stories related to bullying
- Strong Form Teacher relationship with boys and all staff modeling 'best practice' behaviours
- Discussions on bullying after an incident within appropriate groups
- Using role-play, drama, projects, current affairs or historical events
- Regular updates and presentations around modern technology to include advice on the use of mobile telephones, photographs, text messaging, e-mail, social chat rooms and the internet
- Highly structured duty supervision of boys. Supervision schedule takes into account areas of 'high risk' and includes two staff each on playground duty and two others in and around changing rooms, classrooms, lunch halls and all spare time fully supervised by adults
- Regular presentations to parents, in addition to boys, on a range of topics eg: internet safety, cyber bullying, transition between departments

Gauging success of policy

The methods for evaluating the success of this policy will include:
- Responses in pupil questionnaire/'bungalow house meetings'
- Responses in parent questionnaire/Pastoral Review (every three years)
- Feedback from Parent Rep meetings
- Information received from Life Skills (PSHEE)focus lessons
- Feedback from senior boys
- Number of recorded bullying incidents
- Success of follow-up action to bullying incidents
- Reviewing success of policy in order for any patterns of bullying to be identified
- School atmosphere and ethos
- Feedback on various induction procedures

Documentation consulted

Bullying – A Charter for Action

Equality Act 2010

DfE Guidance 2017 Prevention and Tackling Bullying

DfE Guidance 2016 Behaviour and Discipline in Schools

External Agencies - details available

Childline   www.childline.org.uk   0800 1111

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
                          www.nspcc.org.uk   0808 800 5000