

## **Holbrook Primary School Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy**

Written By: Tamara McCarthy  
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Bullying is among the top concerns that parents have about their children's safety and well-being at and on the way to and from school. Bullying is also a top concern of children and young people themselves. Bullying makes the lives of its victims a misery: it undermines their confidence and self esteem; and destroys their sense of security. Bullying impacts on its victims' attendance and attainment at school, marginalises those groups who may be particular targets for bullies and can have a life-long negative impact on some young people's lives. At worst, bullying has been a factor in pupil suicide. Tackling bullying in schools is a key priority and is clear that all forms of bullying must not be tolerated and should always incur a disciplinary sanction. No-one should suffer the pain and indignity that bullying can cause.

Bullying may be defined as "Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time- persistent, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally".

Pupils are bullied for a variety of reasons – and for no reason. Specific types of bullying include: bullying related to race, religion or culture; bullying related to special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities; bullying related to appearance or health conditions; bullying related to sexual orientation; bullying of young carers or looked-after children or otherwise related to home circumstances; sexist or sexual bullying.

Bullying can take place between pupils, between pupils and staff, or between staff; by individuals or groups; face-to-face, indirectly or using a range of cyberbullying methods.

### **The Law**

There are various legal requirements on and powers for schools that relate to bullying. In particular, the Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires that head teachers must determine measures on behaviour and discipline that form the school's behaviour policy, acting in accordance with the governing body's statement of principles in so doing. Measures, in this context, include rules, rewards, sanctions and behaviour management strategies. Holbrook Primary School Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy includes measures to be taken with a view to "encouraging good behaviour and respect for others on the part of pupils and, in particular, preventing all forms of bullying among pupils".

The law empowers head teachers, to such extent as is reasonable, to regulate the behaviour of pupils when they are off school site (which is particularly pertinent to regulating cyberbullying) and empowers members of school staff to impose disciplinary penalties for inappropriate behaviour.

At Holbrook school we use the principles from *Bullying – A Charter for Action* document to support our anti-bullying policy. The anti-bullying policy works alongside the school's behaviour policy which is based on assertive discipline. They have been developed to support each other.

This policy covers all forms of bullying and includes the bullying of school staff, whether by pupils, parents or other staff, as well as the bullying of pupils. Anti-Bullying week is an annual event at Holbrook school where pupils and staff work together against bullying in all forms.

### **Anti-bullying strategies**

The aims of Holbrook Primary Schools anti-bullying strategies and intervention systems are:

- To prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour.
- To react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way.
- To safeguard the pupil who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support for the pupil.
- To apply disciplinary sanctions to the pupil causing the bullying and ensure they learn from the experience, possibly through multi-agency support.

19. Preventative strategies include:

- Effective school leadership that promotes an open and honest antibullying ethos.
- Use of curriculum opportunities (PSHE and SEAL).
- Use of opportunities throughout the school calendar and at certain times of the school day to raise awareness of the negative consequences of bullying (e.g. Anti-Bullying Week in November of each year; and whole-school assemblies).
- Engaging pupils in the process of developing the school anti-bullying policy and promoting open and honest reporting.
- Improving the school environment, looking in particular at staff supervision patterns; the physical design of the building; working with pupils and staff to establish when and where vulnerable times and locations are.
- Sanctions be applied fairly, proportionately, consistently and reasonably, taking account of any special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities that pupils may have and taking into consideration the needs of vulnerable children. Disciplinary penalties have three main purposes, namely to:
  - impress on the perpetrator that what he/she has done is unacceptable;
  - deter him/her from repeating that behaviour; and
  - signal to other pupils that the behaviour is unacceptable and deter

them from doing it. Sanctions for bullying are intended to hold pupils who bully to account for their behaviour and ensure that they face up to the harm they have caused and learn from it. They also provide an opportunity for the pupil to put right the harm they have caused.

- Engaging with parents promptly when issues of bullying come to light, whether their child is the one being bullied or the one doing the bullying.
- When an incident of bullying or harassment occurs, the misbehaviour is dealt with outside the stages of Assertive Discipline.

The pupil is sent to either the Head teacher, Deputy Head Teacher or Assistant Head Teachers. The incident is recorded in the Harassment file. Initially, a warning is given. If a further incident occurs, a second warning is given. In the event of a third occurrence, parents are invited to school to discuss next steps and actions. Continued serious misbehaviour at this level will result in external exclusion from school. If the behaviour is at lunch times, then after the third serious incident, lunchtime exclusion will occur. If a child is excluded from school, they will be set work which should be completed during the exclusion. On return to school, a re-admittance interview will be held with pupil and parents where clear expectations of behaviour are set. Outside agencies may be invited to support the pupil.

### **Reporting and recording incidents of bullying**

Holbrook School encourages pupils to report bullying in confidence using a variety of methods.

The school records all incidents of bullying, including by type, and report the statistics to the local authority.

The purpose of reporting incidents to the local authority is to enable the gathering of information on the number and nature of bullying incidents and to identify any developing trends. The local authority can analyse the information gathered from schools to identify any issues of particular concern. This enables the authority to be better informed in the development of appropriate strategies to tackle bullying across their area. The data will also enable local authorities to support and challenge schools in their duties to promote the welfare of pupils.

Keeping records of bullying incidents also enables us to:

- manage individual cases effectively;
- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies;
- celebrate the anti-bullying work of the school;
- demonstrate defensible decision making in the event of complaints being made;
- engage and inform multi-agency teams as necessary.

## Understanding cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can be defined as *the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else*. It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing the bully with another route to harass their target. However, it differs in several significant ways from other kinds of bullying: the invasion of home and personal space; the difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages; the size of the audience; perceived anonymity; and even the profile of the person doing the bullying and their target.

Research into the extent of cyberbullying indicates that it is a feature of many young people's lives. It also affects members of school staff and other adults; there are examples of staff being ridiculed, threatened and otherwise abused online by pupils.

Cyberbullying, like all bullying, should be taken very seriously. It is never acceptable, and a range of Education Acts and government guidance outline schools' duties and powers in relation to bullying. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006) includes legal powers that relate more directly to cyberbullying; it outlines the power of head teachers to regulate the conduct of pupils when they are off-site and provides a defence in relation to the confiscation of mobile phones and other items.

Although cyberbullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws that can apply in terms of harassment and threatening and menacing communications. Schools should contact the police if they feel that the law has been broken.

Cyberbullying takes different forms: threats and intimidation; harassment or "cyber-stalking" (e.g. repeatedly sending unwanted texts or instant messages); vilification / defamation; exclusion or peer rejection; impersonation; unauthorised publication of private information or images (including what are sometimes misleadingly referred to as 'happy slapping' images); and manipulation.

Some cyberbullying is clearly deliberate and aggressive, but it is important to recognise that some incidents of cyberbullying are known to be unintentional and the result of simply not thinking about the consequences. What may be sent as a joke, may not be received as one, and indeed the distance that technology allows in communication means the sender may not see the impact of the message on the receiver. There is also less opportunity for either party to resolve any misunderstanding or to feel empathy. It is important that pupils are made aware of the effects of their actions.

In cyberbullying, bystanders can easily become perpetrators – by

passing on or showing to others images designed to humiliate, for example, or by taking part in online polls or discussion groups. They may not recognise themselves as participating in bullying, but their involvement compounds the misery for the person targeted. It is recommended that anti-bullying policies refer to those ‘bystanders’ – better termed ‘accessories’ in this context – who actively support cyberbullying and set out sanctions for this behaviour. It is important that pupils are aware that their actions have severe and distressing consequences and that participating in such activity will not be tolerated.

Every child in every school has the right to learn free from the fear of bullying, whatever form that bullying may take. Everyone involved in a child’s education needs to work together to ensure that this is the case. Preventing and responding to homophobic bullying should be part of schools’ general strategies for tackling bullying. This guidance helps with the specifics around homophobic bullying.

### **Homophobic bullying**

Homophobic bullying occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against lesbian, gay or bisexual people.

Who experiences homophobic bullying?

- Young people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB).
- Young people who are thought to be lesbian, gay or bisexual.
- Young people who are different in some way - they may not act like the other boys or girls.
- Young people who have gay friends, or family, or their parents/carers are gay.
- Teachers, who may or may not be lesbian, gay or bisexual.

4. Who does the bullying?

- Anyone. Especially if they have not been told it’s wrong.
- They think that lesbian and gay people should be bullied, because they believe gay people are “wrong”.
- People who might be gay themselves, and are angry about that.
- People who think “boys should act like boys” and “girls should act like girls”.
- People who think gay people shouldn’t have the same rights as heterosexual people and use this as justification for bullying.
- People who think gay parenting is wrong and pupils should be treated differently because of it.

Schools have a legal duty to ensure homophobic bullying is dealt with in schools. This includes the prevention of homophobic bullying.

Homophobic bullying can have a negative impact on young people:

- Bullying can also be linked to poor attendance with studies showing a high degree of absenteeism.
- Seven out of ten young lesbian and gay people say homophobic bullying affects their work.
- Low self-esteem, including the increased likelihood of self-harm and the contemplation of suicide.

- Young people who experience homophobic bullying are unlikely to fulfil the objectives of Every Child Matters and Youth Matters.

### **Responding to homophobic bullying**

School staff interact with pupils on a daily basis and are more likely to see, and be told about, incidents of homophobic bullying. It is important that staff responses are, in line with Ofsted guidelines, 'swift, proportionate, discreet, influential and effective'. Staff should feel able to respond effectively to incidents of homophobic bullying, and instil confidence in pupils and parents/carers that issues will be dealt with.

### **Responding to homophobic language:**

Casual homophobic language is common in schools but, if it is not challenged, pupils may think that homophobic bullying is acceptable. It is therefore important to challenge homophobic language when it occurs:

- Ensure that pupils know that homophobic language will not be tolerated in schools.
- When an incident occurs, pupils should be informed that homophobic language is offensive, and will not be tolerated.
- If a pupil continues to make homophobic remarks, explain in detail the effects that homophobic bullying has on people.
- If a pupil makes persistent remarks, they should be removed from the classroom and teachers and staff should talk to him or her in more detail about why their comments are unacceptable.
- If the problem persists, senior managers should be involved. The pupil should be made to understand the sanctions that will apply if they continue to use homophobic language.
- Consider inviting the parents/carers to school to discuss the attitudes of the pupil.

Holbrook School offers a tolerant and diverse community. Racism and bullying no place. Every child deserves respect and a safe learning environment whatever their racial or religious background and every child needs to learn that modern British society values diversity and mutual respect.

Schools have a duty to promote race equality. Creating an ethos where racist bullying rarely happens, and is dealt with convincingly when it does, is one way in which schools fulfil that duty, and one aspect of the school's race equality policy.

### **What is racist bullying?**

We offer the following definition of racist bullying:

*"The term racist bullying refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, both physical and psychological, that makes a person feel unwelcome, marginalised, excluded, powerless or worthless because of their colour, ethnicity, culture, faith community, national origin or national status"*.

While all occurrences of racist bullying are racist incidents, not all of the latter necessarily amount to bullying.

**Key principles**

- Acknowledge that racism exists in wider society and that it can lead to racist bullying in schools
- Let the pupils know where you stand
- Listen to children and young people
- Involve children and young people in solutions
- Implement strategies for both prevention and intervention.