

**Hexham First School
Anti Bullying Policy
2025**

Head Teachers must by law have a policy to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. This policy must comply with the Human Rights Act 2000/Equalities Act 2010.

Pupil Anti-Bullying Policy Hexham First School First School Contents:

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Statement of intent

Rationale

Hexham First School is completely opposed to bullying and it will not be tolerated.

We believe that children have the right to learn in an environment which is free from fear and intimidation.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and is not tolerated in our school. We take all incidents of bullying seriously. Bullying hurts. No-one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everyone has a right to be treated with respect and pupils who are bullying others need to learn different ways of behaving. When bullying does occur, everyone should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively in accordance with our anti-bullying policy aims and objectives. Our anti-bullying policy outlines how instances of bullying will be dealt with by the school and strategies put in place to prevent occurrences of bullying. These strategies, such as learning about tolerance and difference as part of the school's curriculum, aim to promote an inclusive, tolerant and supportive ethos at the school.

This policy document also takes into account duties and responsibilities that arise from the Equality Act 2010 and the statutory government document, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 outlines a number of legal obligations regarding the school's responses to bullying. Under section.89, our school must have measures in place encourage good

behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures should be part of the school's behaviour policy which must be communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents.

All staff, parents/carers and pupils will work together to prevent and reduce any instances of bullying at our school. There will be a zero tolerance policy in place at Hexham First School.

This policy has been written in accordance with guidance, including, but not limited to:

- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2018) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Our aim is to:

- Safeguard pupils by educating them how to protect themselves in both the real and virtual world and build resilience in this area. We do this through the computing curriculum, PSHE/RSE, Safer Internet day, Mental Health week, NSPCC assemblies, Operation Encompass, assemblies, all lessons where IT is used, visiting speakers e.g. police and informing parents via updates through newsletters parent talks and the website.

Our Aims:

- To ensure that all children and adults within school have a **common understanding of what bullying is** and act together on this issue
- To create an environment which fosters **positive relationships** and discourages bullying and all unpleasant behaviour towards others
- To ensure that all children **feel safe**, to learn, play and enjoy the company of others
- To ensure that all children are treated fairly with **respect** and **dignity**
- To **listen carefully** to what children have to say and treat all children's accounts with due seriousness
- To deal with all incidents of bullying and harassment **sensitively, fairly and appropriately**.
- To seek to involve and inform **parents** in all areas of its anti-bullying work
- To raise awareness of the need for **online safety** and inform children how to protect themselves.

At Hexham First School, we follow the Hexham Way. This underpins our school ethos and applies to bullying in the following ways:

Ambitious – our ambition is to make sure everyone has friends and no one is a victim of bullying

Resilient – we want our children to be resilient in the face of bullying and have the courage to speak out to protect themselves or others

Respectful – we are respectful of everyone in our school and celebrate differences

Confident- We give our children confidence to speak out and to know what is right and wrong and have the confidence to speak out against bullying.

Curious- We encourage our children to be curious thinkers and know how to respond in situations that may arise.

Kind- The Hexham Way is underpinned by kindness. We aim for all at Hexham First School to be kind, treat others with kindness and make kind choices in their lives.

Unique-We encourage children to be unique and make their own choices and live and learn in a way that is unique to them, accepting and celebrating difference.

What do we do to prevent bullying?

At Hexham First School, we work hard to prevent bullying occurring in the first place. Our Hexham Way' places respect and resilience at the heart of our school environment.

We have adopted the Anti-Bullying Alliance's 'Ten Key Principles' to prevent and respond to bullying.

- We are a **listening** school, in which children are encouraged to express their feelings, fears and concerns. This is facilitated through PHSE/RSE Curriculum, Assemblies, playtimes, circle time and role play.
- We **include** everybody and **celebrate difference** through our assemblies, RE and PSHE/RSE curriculum, specific religious celebration and PSHE 'days' and through the wider curriculum enhancement
- Promote and reward positive behaviour (class dojo), celebrate achievements and develop whole school and class rules – as highlighted in our Behaviour Policy – and **challenge** negative language or behaviours in response to an incident. We respond as a whole school to negative behaviours through: assemblies, PSHE circle times, 'open door policy' for all children and whole-school focused topics, to enable our school to continually evolve.
- We provide a positive learning environment and educate children, parents and staff so that all members of the school community are confident enough to **report bullying**.
- All staff members are trained and the pupils are regularly briefed on what bullying is, in order that the whole school community **understands** what bullying is and what it isn't
- Encourage the feeling of 'belonging' to a community and use peer group pressure to actively discourage bullying, especially through our work on the role of the 'defender and bystander'
- We **respect** each other with careful consideration of how adults in school talk to children and children know that they will be **believed** by staff, should they need to report a bullying incident.
- We **take action** and respond to all incidents quickly. We use CPOMS to record incidents, to ensure that all relevant staff members are aware and can take appropriate action.
- We use peer support systems: Buddies, Buddy Benches, as a point of contact for vulnerable children.
- We have a school and ECO council to encourage children to have a voice.
- We run Anti-Bullying Week annually and follow this up with termly Anti-Bullying focuses through our PSHE/RSE.

What is bullying?

Bullying is persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another. It is often difficult for a victim to defend themselves against bullying.

Bullying is generally characterised by:

- Repetition: Incidents are not one-offs but frequent and happen over a period of time.
- Intent: The perpetrator means to cause verbal, physical, or emotional harm. It is not accidental.
- Targeting: Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.

- Power Imbalance: Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations. Vulnerable pupils are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. Vulnerable pupils may include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who are adopted
- Pupils suffering from a health problem
- Pupils with caring responsibilities 2.

What does bullying look/sound like?

2.1. Many different kinds of behaviours can be considered bullying. Bullying can be related to almost anything. Teasing another pupil because of their appearance / religion / ethnicity / gender / sexual-orientation / home life / culture / disability or special educational needs are all just some of the types of bullying which can occur. Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:

Verbal – name calling, mimicry, teasing, insulting, spreading rumours, swearing, and making threats.

Physical – any unwanted or inappropriate touching, physical intimidation, hitting, pushing, kicking, pinching, poking, damaging or taking of belongings, deliberate pushing and shoving, threats of violence and extortion.

Emotional – spreading rumours, deliberate exclusion from groups, tormenting, ridiculing, isolating, refusing to work with another pupil, revealing personal information, threatening, inciting or coercing others to treat an individual in a manner that could be considered bullying.

Cyber – threats and intimidation, harassment/‘cyber-stalking’, defamation, exclusion or peer rejection, impersonation and unauthorised publication of private information or images. (It can include messages intended as jokes, but which have a harmful or upsetting effect.)

Racist bullying: Bullying another person based on their ethnic background, religion or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.

Homophobic bullying: Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

Transphobic bullying: Bullying based on another person’s gender ‘variance’ or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.

Sexist bullying: Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.

Sexual bullying: Bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal or non-verbal sexual dimension/dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.

Prejudicial bullying: Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics, e.g. SEND or mental health issues.

Relational bullying: Bullying that primarily constitutes of excluding, isolating and ostracising someone – usually through verbal and emotional bullying.

Legal issues related to bullying

Education and Inspections Act 2006 3.2. Public Order Act 1986

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Duty (5 April 2011), the school has a responsibility to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Under the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, schools could have charges brought against them if they allow the rights of children and young people at their school to be breached by failing to take bullying seriously. The National Association of Head Teachers has acknowledged this, adding to their guidelines that head teachers must 'satisfy themselves' that their school's anti-bullying policy complies with the HRA 1998. Head teachers cannot do this without fully involving their teaching staff.

Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications could be considered criminal offences:

Under the Malicious Communications Act it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.

Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by public means of a public electronic communications network, a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or one of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information in any media including internet sites.

Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to police include: violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation and hate crimes.

Vulnerable Children

Children deemed vulnerable, as defined earlier, will meet with the head teacher once per week to ensure any problems can be actioned quickly. An open door policy for children to come and talk about problems will be promoted. Before a vulnerable pupil joins the school, the pupil's class teacher and the DSL will develop a strategy to prevent bullying from happening – this will include giving the pupil a buddy to help integrate them into the school. The school will be alert to, and address, any mental health and wellbeing issues amongst children, as these can be a cause of bullying behaviour. The school will ensure potential perpetrators are given support as required, so their educational, emotional and social development isn't negatively influenced by outside factors, e.g. mental health issues.

Staff guidance principles

The school will ensure that prevention is a prominent aspect of its anti-bullying vision. Staff will treat reports of bullying seriously and they will not ignore signs of suspected bullying. Unpleasantness from one child towards another is always challenged and never ignored. Staff act immediately when they become aware of a bullying incident; this applies to all staff, not solely teaching staff.

Staff always respect childrens' privacy, and information about specific instances of bullying are not discussed with others, unless it is in a setting that the victim has given consent to, or there is a safeguarding concern. If a member of staff believes a pupil is in danger, e.g. of being hurt, they will inform the DSL immediately. [Mrs Overton or Miss Noon] Follow-up support is given to both the victim and bully in the months following any incidents, to ensure all bullying has stopped.

Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all staff to be alert to possible harassment of pupils and deal with incidents of bullying as the highest priority.

The governors will (evaluate and review) the anti-bullying policy, and will ensure that it is non-discriminatory.

The head teacher will review and amend the policy, using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in the previous year to improve procedures and taking account of new legislation and government guidance. The head teacher will keep a record of all reported incidents and provide appropriate training for staff members.

The head teacher will correspond and/or meet with parents where necessary. They will also provide a point of contact when more serious bullying incidents occur.

Class teachers will be alert to social dynamics in their class and available for pupils who wish to report bullying. They will also provide follow-up support following bullying incidents.

Parents/carers should inform their child's teacher if they are concerned that their child may be being bullied/involved in bullying.

Pupils should inform a staff member if they witness bullying, or are a victim of bullying. They should not respond to bullying by making counter-threats, walking away from any dangerous situations and avoiding involving other pupils in incidents. Pupils should be advised to retain all evidence of cyber-bullying as evidence.

Signs of bullying

Staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil is a victim of bullying:

- Being frightened to travel to or from school
- Asking to be driven to school
- Unwillingness to attend school
- Truancy
- Becoming anxious or lacking confidence
- Saying that they feel ill in the morning
- Decreased involvement in school work
- Returning home with torn clothes or damaged possessions

- Missing possessions
- Missing dinner money
- Asking for extra money or stealing
- Cuts or bruises
- Lack of appetite
- Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices
- Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages
- Lack of eye contact
- Becoming short tempered
- Change in behaviour and attitude at home

Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental health issues, so are still worth investigating.

Pupils who display a significant number of these signs are approached by a member of staff, to determine the underlying issues, whether they are due to bullying or other issues.

In addition, staff will be aware of the potential factors that may indicate a person is likely to have bullying behaviours, including, but not limited to, the following:

- They have experienced mental health problems, which have led to the child becoming aggravated
- They have been the victim of domestic abuse
- Their academic performance has started to fall, which has meant they are stressed.

If staff become aware of any factors that could lead to bullying behaviours, they will notify the head teacher, who will investigate the matter and monitor the situation.

Procedures for dealing with bullying

What do we do when bullying occurs?

All incidents are taken seriously by staff, investigated and concerns are always acted upon.

The emphasis is on a caring, listening approach. Staff have been trained to look at bullying as a group activity, rarely is it simply a case of a bully and a target. Staff look holistically at the incident and identify the different roles played by the children concerned (ringleader, target, reinforcer, assistant, and defender).

Each case of bullying is dealt with individually and follow-up action is tailored to meet the individual needs of the children concerned. Whenever possible, the target will be involved in the decision making process around what happens next and how further bullying incidents can be avoided.

Following on from the incident, the circumstances of the bullying is shared with staff and a plan decided upon to take whole school action, to further the development and evolution of our school into a one where no bullying occurs.

When an allegation has been made, the following procedure is followed

Listen to what has been said. Establish the facts, gather evidence from relevant sources.

Reassure the child that he or she was right to tell us and that we are here to protect him/her.

Talk to all parties separately involved regarding the discussions.

Adopt a no-blame approach to encourage all children to talk about the events.

Both bullied and bullying parties are informed that the situation is being monitored. Record allegation on CPOMS. Inform parents of all parties and communicate with parents of victim after two weeks to review the situation and every 2-3 weeks until the situation is resolved.

If concerns remain after two weeks, inform Headteachert and alert via CPOMS

Decide on a course of action (preferably with the target) and decide what support is needed.

Types of support we may offer, could be allocating the target a key person (relevant member of staff), with whom they have regular check-ins to discuss developments/issues. Each case will be dealt with on an individual basis, in order to decide how regular these check-ins need to be.

Inform staff and decide upon further action that may be required as a whole school.

In cases of online bullying, in addition to the above procedure, we ask the child not to respond to the message, image or post and attempt to preserve the evidence of bullying where possible. Then, if necessary, inform the LA/MAT eSafety officer.

NB: any concerns about a child's safety are reported to the DSL immediately.

Record keeping:

The teacher who conducted the interviews should write out a brief summary of the incident and this would be recorded on CPOMS.

All incidents of bullying are recorded on CPOMS.

Conventional sanctions such as: loss of privileges, may be pursued. In addition to this however, the following actions should be taken. Discretion can be used.

CPOMS Bullying Incident Records

When recording incidents it is important to note:

- Time and dates of incidents
- Individuals involved (ideally within the framing of roles involved - target, defender, etc)
- Type of bullying e.g. physical, verbal, rumour spreading etc
- Whether or not it is a safeguarding issue
- Where bullying has happened.
- What has happened
- How the target/s have been affected (evidence if any injuries)
- Witnesses to the bullying
- If it was targeting something about them e.g. disability, race, faith, gender etc
- Action taken and led by
- What does the target want to happen?
- How effective action taken has been?
- Who knows? Have parents been informed?

Appropriate action to deal with the bully:

- If you are satisfied that bullying did take place, help the child to understand the consequences of their actions and warn them that there must be no further intimidation. Inform them of the type of sanction to be used in this instance: missed breaks etc and future sanctions if the bullying continues.
- If possible, try for reconciliation and a genuine apology from the child. This can be in writing to the victim (and/or witnesses if appropriate), or face-to face, but only with the victim's full consent. (Discretion should be used here; victims should never feel pressured into a face-to-face meeting with the bully.)
- Realise that some children do not appreciate the distress they are causing and are willing to change their behaviour.
- Try to reach agreement on reasonable long-term behaviour.
- Prepare the child to face their peer group - discuss what they will say to others.
- Inform parents about bullying incidents and what action is being taken. Face to-face meetings between the teacher/head teacher may be appropriate.
- Head teacher to informally monitor child over the next half term.

Appropriate actions to deal with the victim:

- The class teacher should check informally on a weekly basis for a month after the complaint of bullying.
- The head teacher should check formally the week after the bullying, and again during the same half term.
- If necessary, break up the group dynamics by asking staff to assign places and groupings differently.
- Encourage the victim to tell a trusted adult in school if bullying is repeated. Encourage the victim to broaden their friendship groups and play with others
- Ensure lunch time supervisors are aware of changes in grouping and are vigilant re bullying in all instances. Follow-up: The progress of both the bully and the victim should be monitored by their teacher/teachers. One-on-one sessions to discuss how they are getting on may be appropriate. If the incidence was sufficiently serious, follow-up correspondence with parents a month after the incidence may be necessary. This should be from the class teacher.

Children who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Being listened to (having an immediate opportunity to meet with the head teacher or the class teacher)
- Being reassured.
- Being offered continued support.
- Being offered counselling where appropriate.

Children who have bullied others will be supported by:

- Receiving a consequence to their actions.
- Being able to discuss what happened.
- Reflecting on why they became involved.
- Understanding what they did wrong and why they need to change.
- Appropriate assistance from parents/carers.

Preventing peer-on-peer sexual abuse

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of peer-on-peer sexual abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. The school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy outlines our stance on addressing peer-on-peer sexual abuse, and the procedures in place will be adhered to if any instances of sexual harassment or sexual violence be uncovered.

To prevent peer-on-peer abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate pupils about abuse, its forms and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum, assemblies and PSHE lessons. The school will also ensure that pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum in PSHE lessons, RSE and group sessions.

Such content will be age and stage of development specific, and tackle issues such as the following:

- Healthy relationships
- Respectful behaviour
- Gender roles, stereotyping and equality
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- Prejudiced behaviour
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong
- Addressing cultures of sexual harassment

CYBER-BULLYING (On-line bullying)

We believe that every single child should be taught how to protect themselves in the online world, including beyond the school environment. This policy works alongside our Acceptable Users Policy (AUP) e-Safety Policy, the Behaviour Policy and the Child Protection/Safeguarding policy Cyber-bullying (On-line bullying) will be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. The school has a zero tolerance approach to cyber bullying

Bullying outside of the school

Teachers have the power to discipline children for misbehaving outside the school premises. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre. Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. In all cases of misbehaviour

or bullying, the teacher can only discipline the child on school premises or elsewhere when the child is under the lawful control of the staff member.

Head teachers have a specific statutory power to discipline children for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives head teachers the power to regulate pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and therefore not under the lawful charge of a school staff member. The head teacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or antisocial behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

As a school we acknowledge that:

- Many mobile devices and games consoles offer broadband connections.
- Increasingly children have access to personal devices not covered by network protection and therefore the emphasis needs to be on educating all users as to the risks involved and their obligation to act responsibly while online.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Headteacher Justine Overton, Deputy Safeguarding Lead, Miss Barton and Safeguarding Governor Mrs F Armstrong on a termly basis. A report will be provided annually to Governors within the overall report on pastoral care provision. This policy will be evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis.

Review

This policy and procedures will be reviewed annually.

Reviewed September 2025