



# Heath Mount School

## Anti-Bullying Policy

Heath Mount wishes every pupil and member of staff to thrive within a community in which everyone respects, supports and cares for everyone else. It is the School's aim to ensure that this is always true. This policy has regard to 'Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies' (DfE 2014).

### Definition of Bullying

For the purpose of this policy, 'bullying' is defined as: "intentionally hurting another, physically, verbally or emotionally and/or intimidating or putting him/her under stress." The bullying behaviour can be and often is repeated and is usually carried out by those individuals or groups who are more powerful. Onlookers to incidents of bullying can be seen as complicit.

Bullying can include: name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, threatening behaviour, kicking, hitting, pushing, taking belongings, harassment, inappropriate text messaging and emailing, sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet, producing offensive graffiti, gossiping, excluding people from groups, spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours. Although sometimes occurring between two individuals in isolation, it quite often takes place in the presence of others.

Cyber bullying includes bullying by electronic means (social websites, mobile telephones, text messages, email, photographs etc.) and is equally unacceptable. The school recognises that bullying online, especially on social media, can be as dangerous and damaging for pupils as bullying in person.

Specific types of bullying may relate to race, religion or culture, gender, to learning differences and special educational needs, to disabilities or caring for others, to appearance or health conditions, to sexual orientation, to adoption or to homophobia. Bullying may also be sexist or sexual.

The serious consequences for the target of bullying can range from psychological damage and its related symptoms (loss of confidence, depression, etc.) to suicide.

### Anti-Bullying Policy: Aims

The expectation at Heath Mount School is that people will at all times behave in an appropriate, fair and friendly manner towards each other, in accordance with the school's central principles. The aim of this policy is to ensure that all pupils remain free from bullying and from the fear of bullying. The school's Aims in this respect are made clear in section 1 of the *Behaviour and Discipline Policy*.



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## Preventing Bullying: objectives to achieve our aim

The ethos at Heath Mount School should make bullying rare, but nonetheless obvious to community members. The school's values are made clear to pupils and to parents in the termly calendar, and associated positive behaviours identified as clearly understood objectives:

<b>Value (Aims)</b>	<b>Associated Behaviour (Objectives)</b>
<b>Integrity:</b>	be honest even when it is difficult; wear your uniform smartly – take pride in your school; be loyal to your friends; stand up for those in need of support, perhaps by seeking the help of prefects or teachers; your conduct should be a credit to you, your school and your family.
<b>Respect:</b>	be polite to adults; be polite to fellow pupils; be polite to your parents; stand to one side for adults to pass on stairs and in doorways; respect your opponents in matches; treat the building with care; look after your possessions.
<b>Tolerance:</b>	understand that others will make mistakes; encourage those who are less able than you; enjoy learning about the lives of other people; understand that it is fine for your friends to have different opinions to you.
<b>Industry:</b>	arrive to lessons on time and with the right equipment; settle to your work quickly; ask for help when you are stuck, never settle for a standard below that of which you are capable; take pride in your books.
<b>Achievement:</b>	know what you must do to improve in each subject or activity – keep a small list of targets; know what your teachers expect you to achieve – and deliver! Talk to your teachers about your learning so that they can better support you.

Assemblies, form time and the rewards system work to reinforce positive behaviour and to develop moral courage and judgement in our pupils. The roles of Community Prefects and House Captains are also vital to maintaining a happy school that is free from bullying (see section 4 *Rewards*). Staff should also model positive behaviour in their everyday professional lives (please see the school's *Staff Code of Conduct* and *Safeguarding Policy* for further information).



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## **Who to Tell:**

Pupils are encouraged to be open about concerns that they might have in respect of others' happiness and, as such may report these in any of the following ways:

- To the school counsellor, either in person or via a confidential post box in Reception in the Prep School;
- Putting them in the Headmaster's confidential "worry box", available in both the Prep and Pre-Prep School;
- In their responses to the regular happiness and concerns questionnaires, through which children are encouraged to give anonymous feedback regarding the happiness and well-being of others. These are distributed to Form groups periodically and their results collated to tease out any underlying concerns that pupils might have.
- In Circle Time, which offers an opportunity for pupils to be open about concerns;
- In Restorative Practice sessions, which may be carried out amongst groups of pupils to resolve or highlight bullying issues;
- In focused PHSEE lessons addressing bullying-related issues;

In addition, any pupil who is being bullied, witnesses the bullying of someone else or suspects that someone else is being bullied should tell someone who may be able to help. This may be a friend, form teacher, Head of Year, Deputy Head Pastoral, Matron, or anyone they feel able to confide in.

The school also recognises the importance of developing emotionally intelligent pupils and believes that pupils with such skills are likely to have greater self-awareness and empathy for others. This, we believe, is a key factor in reducing the incidence of bullying within a school community.

In the Pre-Prep, the school's expectations regarding behaviour are introduced through the management of pupils, the Golden Rules, assemblies and by catching children doing the right thing and rewarding them.

## **Procedure if a child or parent reports alleged bullying to a member of staff:**

1. The member of staff investigates by meeting with and questioning the alleged victim. A written record of the incidents leading up to the report of bullying should be compiled by the member of staff, including what was asked and what was said. The written record should be completed during or immediately after the meeting has taken place with the alleged victim of bullying. The other children involved in the incident(s) or who witnessed it/them must also be questioned and their viewpoints and evidence taken into consideration.

2. A bullying incident will be addressed as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Where this is the case, the member of staff will report his/her concerns in



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accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures to the DSL and/or the Headmaster as appropriate. In such instances, the School will not investigate further before advice has been sought from children's social care services and/or the police.

For all other cases in which bullying is suspected:

3. At the earliest possible opportunity, the member of staff should discuss the incident with the alleged victim's Form Teacher and provide a copy of the notes for the Form Teacher and the relevant Head of Year.

4. The Form Teacher discusses the incident with the Head of Year and a decision is made as to whether the Form Teacher investigates further or whether the incident is sufficiently serious that the Head of Year should investigate personally. If this is the case, the Deputy Head should be informed. If the case is deemed serious enough then the Deputy Head would deal with the investigation from the outset.

5. The investigation should be carried out in a sensitive and timely manner. Written records of all meetings with pupils should be kept.

6. Once the investigation is complete, a decision needs to be taken by the member of staff investigating as to what happened, for example, whether bullying has taken place, or whether both parties were at fault or the incident was not as serious as initially described. The definition of bullying in the introduction to the policy should be used to make this judgement. If bullying is not judged to have taken place, then the Form Teacher should take charge of the incident and resolve it amicably with both parties.

7. If bullying is judged to have taken place, then:

a) A record should be made on the bullying register which is held within the management drive. The Headmaster will be informed and consulted on possible further action.

b) If appropriate, the perpetrator and the victim may be encouraged to meet in a Restorative Practice Circle (Section 3 Behaviour and Discipline Policy) as RP may be a highly effective measure with which to deal with bullying. It may allow the victim the opportunity to tell the bully how he or she has been made to feel as a result of the bully's actions, and give the bully the opportunity to apologise in person. Both should be told that, now the incident has been resolved, there must not be a repeat of the bullying behaviour: if there is, the victim must report it and the bully will be dealt with extremely severely (see section 8 below).

c) Disciplinary sanctions should be considered in line with the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy to discourage any further bullying behaviour. The Head of Year will liaise



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with the Deputy Head (Pastoral) on this matter. For very serious cases of bullying, see section 8 below.

d) The parents of both/all parties should be kept informed of what is happening and told of any action taken.

e) The respective Form Teachers should follow the situation up with both parties after a few days and later (probably after a couple of weeks) to monitor progress. The Head of Year and Deputy Head (Pastoral) should be kept informed.

8. For particularly serious cases of bullying, or where a child continues to bully the victim after a previous incident has been addressed:

a) The Head of Year will inform the Deputy Head (Pastoral) who will in turn brief the Headmaster.

b) Serious disciplinary sanctions will be employed in accordance with the Behaviour and Discipline Policy; if necessary, the Headmaster will permanently exclude the individual from the School.

c) Further consideration should be given as to whether there is an issue relating to child protection in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy. If in doubt, advice should be sought from children's services.

## **Sanctions**

In the Prep School, where a pupil has not responded to the initial intervention, detentions may be issued. Ultimately, suspension or exclusion may be used if bullying behaviour persists. A less formal process may be employed with Pre-Prep children.

Staff are careful to follow the guidelines in the *Staff Code of Conduct* when dealing with complaints of bullying. The *Safeguarding Policy* also contains information on keeping pupils safe.

## **Record Keeping**

In addition to recording any bullying incident on the Bullying Register in accordance with section 7 a) above, all copies of notes of any incident investigated in accordance with this policy should be placed on the files of the pupils involved on the School's management database (currently School Manager) and copies e-mailed to the Heads of Year and Deputy Head (Pastoral). This essential record keeping is necessary so that patterns of behaviour, including bullying, can be identified and also to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy.

The school uses a management database to track all incidents, pastoral concerns and academic progress. If a member of staff has any concerns regarding the welfare of a child, bullying or otherwise, they should record these concerns or incidents on the management database system. Notes should be written up after an investigation has



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taken place and conclusions have been drawn. This will allow staff to monitor and track patterns of behaviour.

## **Boarding**

The boarding team keep a record of daily incidents, pastoral concerns and other observations about a boarder in the boarding house diary. This document is kept in the Houseparent's file. Any information that boarding staff feel needs to be shared with the day staff will be emailed to the Form Teachers in the first instance and, if appropriate, added to the management database. Should a more serious incident occur in boarding, the relevant Houseparent will add a note to School Manager under the boarding section.

## **Staff Training**

All staff are aware of the need to be vigilant for incidents of bullying. During Inset, all staff must take part in regular safeguarding training, which incorporates anti-bullying training, the forms that bullying can take and how to spot bullying. All staff must sign a register to say that they have read and understood KCSIE (September 2016) Part 1, as part of the school's requirement for staff members to be fully compliant in safeguarding matters.

## **Monitoring and Review**

Form Teachers conduct regular meetings with their Head of Year in order to discuss any concerns that they may have about children in their Forms, which Heads of Year in turn raise at WMT meetings. The DSL is appropriately trained in anti-bullying practices and disseminates this knowledge to staff as appropriate. All staff are aware of the procedures for reporting a suspected case of bullying.

## **Parents**

Any parent who has concerns about their son/daughter or about any other pupil in the School should inform an appropriate member of staff (in most cases this will be the Heads of Year for the relevant section of the School for that pupil, but may also be the Form Teacher in the first instance).

## **The role of Prefects in Preventing Bullying**

Heath Mount School believes that it is vital for children to develop an understanding of what types of behaviour constitute bullying and how their own behaviour may be misperceived by others, even if the intent was not to bully.

Prefects are chosen on the basis of their upstanding characters, to act as models for other children and also because they already possess a sound moral compass and the



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necessary good judgement to decide when it is appropriate to elevate any problems amongst their peers to a trusted member of staff.

## **Use of External Agencies**

Where a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of bullying, it should be addressed as a safeguarding issue (see the Safeguarding Policy). In serious cases, bullying may need to be reported to external agencies such as children's services or the police.

Anti-bullying activity is an integrated part of the school's approach to promoting good behaviour and is enforced through Heath Mount's *Behaviour and Discipline Policy*, as well as the *Safeguarding Policy*. All staff members are expected to have read and understood these policies and to have raised any subsequent queries over anti-bullying protocol with their line manager, a senior member of staff or the DSL.

## **Further Resources**

Further information is available online:

- Preventing and tackling bullying (DfE, October 2014)
- Supporting children and young people who are bullied: advice for schools (DfE, March 2014)
- Cyberbullying: advice for Headteachers and school staff (DfE, November 2014)
- Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying (DfE, November 2014)





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## **Appendix 1 Statutory Framework**

### ***What does the law say and what do I have to do?***

Every school must have measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying.

### ***The Education and Inspections Act 2006***

Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides that maintained schools must have measures to 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.

### ***Independent School Standard Regulations 2014***

The Independent School Standards Regulations 2014 provide that the proprietor of an Academy or other independent school is required to ensure that an effective anti-bullying strategy is drawn up and implemented.

### ***The Equality Act 2010***

The Equality Act 2010 replaces previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. A key provision is a new public sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5 April 2011. It replaces the three previous public sector equality duties for race, disability and gender, and covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Duty has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need 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.

Maintained schools and Academies are required to comply with the new Equality Duty. Part 6 of the Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to admissions, the way it provides education for pupils, provision of pupil access to any benefit, facility or service, or by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment. In England and Wales Part 6 of the Act applies to maintained schools and Academies and to other independent schools.

### ***Safeguarding children and young people***

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, the school staff should report their concerns to their local authority children's social care. Even where safeguarding is not





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considered to be an issue, schools may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

## ***Criminal Law***

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication 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.

## ***Cyber bullying***

The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones. Separate advice on teachers' powers to search (including statutory guidance on dealing with electronic devices) is available – see below for a link to this document.

For more information on how to respond to cyber-bullying and how pupils can keep themselves safe, please refer to the Childnet International link under 'further resources'.