Anti-Bullying Policy

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Approved by	Trustee: Audit, Risk, Safeguarding and Health & Safety committee
Date approved	December 2024
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Related Trust policies	- Attendance - Behaviour - Child Protection - Complaints - Looked After Children - Online Safety - RSHE - Special Educational Needs & Disability - Supporting Children with Medical Needs
Related national guidance	- DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education - DfE: Preventing & tackling bullying - DfE: Promoting & supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges.
Availability	Accessible via individual school's website

Hull Collaborative Academy Trust (HCAT) Ethos

Our Trust is a learning family, building aspiration and resilience to deliver successes, and putting children and young people first in everything we do.

The Trust places high value on Restorative Practices, using its principles to support both pupils and staff to recognise that all their activities affect others, and that people are responsibilities for their own choices and actions, and can be held accountable for them. These principles can be used to prevent conflict, build relationships, and repair harm by enabling positive and effective communication.

At HCAT, we do not discriminate against any child or adult on the grounds of race, disability, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, marriage and civil partnership, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. We embrace the individuality of all our community members and comply fully with the Equality Act 2010.

Being subject to harassment, violence, and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach an individual's rights under the Human Rights Act 1998. Therefore, our schools will always act in a way that is compatible with the Convention.

Statement of Intent

Everyone within HCAT is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils and staff, so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

Overall aim of Policy

This policy to combat bullying provides a framework for individual work with perpetrators and victims and for dealing with reported incidents.

We acknowledge that the effects of bullying are far-reaching and may have lasting effects on pupils and on the atmosphere in the school. We also recognise that bullying exists in all schools and in all age groups, but at HCAT we believe bullying can be reduced by having in place a clear anti-bullying policy to which all pupils, staff and parents follow.

Our primary aim is to ensure every member of the school community, including staff, parents and pupils, feel valued and respected, and each person is treated fairly and well. We are a caring community, whose values are built on mutual trust and respect for all. All forms of harmful and/or bullying behaviour will not be tolerated.

Safeguarding

Keeping Children Safe in Education states that all staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child), and that child-on-child abuse includes bullying and cyberbullying. When staff have concerns about child-on-child abuse, this information is shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead in line with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

For further information about how our Relationships Education helps us fulfil our statutory duties, see the Relationships Education Policy.

What is bullying?

There is no legal definition of bullying, however, it is usually defined as behaviour that is:
- Repeated, although some incident may be one-off
- deliberately intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally
- aimed at certain groups, e.g. because of race, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation
- involves an imbalance of power

Bullying can be:
- **Emotional:** being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, ridicule, humiliation
- **Verbal:** name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, mimicry, making rude remarks, making fun of someone. This may be directed towards gender, ethnic origin, physical/social disability, personality etc.
- **Physical:** pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, throwing things at someone, spitting, or any other form of physical violence, taking or hiding someone's things
- **Damage to property or theft:** pupils may have their property stolen or damaged
- **Racist:** racist taunts or comments, graffiti, making fun of someone's culture or religion
- **Sexual and Sexist** inappropriate or unwanted physical contact, verbal comments or cyber messages of a sexual nature
- **Cyber bullying** is a different form of bullying and can happen all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories, as people forward on content at a click. Cyber-bullying is the use of technology such as smartphones, email, chat rooms, online gaming or social media sites such as Instagram, Twitter, TikTok and Snapchat to harass, threaten, embarrass, intimidate or target someone. It is an aggressive, intentional act often carried out repeatedly over time, and often against a victim who cannot easily defend themself. Out Trust acknowledges that cyberbullying may take place inside school, outside of school and at any time of the day. Unlike physical bullying, cyber-bullying can often be difficult to track as the cyber-bully (the person responsible for the acts of cyber-bullying) can remain anonymous when threatening others online, encouraging them to behave more aggressively than they might face-to-face.
- **Homophobic, transphobic, biophobic:** because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- **Any unfavourable** or negative comments, gestures or actions made to someone relating to their disability or special educational need.

Bullying is not:
- It is important to understand that bullying is **not** the odd occasion of falling out with friends, name calling, arguments or when the occasional trick or joke is played on someone. It is bullying if it is done several times on purpose.

- Children sometimes fall out or say things because they are upset. When occasional problems of this kind arise, it is not classed as bullying. It is an important part of a child's development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns, the odd name calling or childish prank. We all have to learn to deal with these situations and develop social skills and repair friendships.

- Any act of aggression is unacceptable, however, not all acts of aggression are bullying. Normally aggression that involves any two-way process of attack and counterattack as a result of relational conflict is not bullying. Particularly if the attack occurs between parties of equal power/strength/status and are part of a two-way attack retaliation process.

Signs of Bullying
Victims of bullying may be unusually secretive and reluctant to tell.
- **Physical Signs –** Physical injuries damaged clothing with no convincing explanation.
- **Emotional Signs –** Apparent changes in personality, constant anxiety/nervousness, depression or tearfulness for no apparent reason, lack of confidence, negative self-image, hostility and defensiveness.
- **Behavioural Signs –** Withdrawn, poor concentration, disruptive, challenging, bullying behaviour.
- **General**
  Frequently 'lose' money/possessions, appears tired and lethargic and avoids entering/leaving school without others.
  Potential victims may have certain characteristics that can be recognised by teachers, enabling them to intervene at the early stage of any situation.
- **Characteristics** of a victim/potential victim may include:-
  - being new to the school/class;

- being 'different' – background, speech, appearance;
- being successful educationally (particularly academically);
- having low self-esteem;
- being anxious, quiet, nervous, passive, losing control easily;
- being quick tempered;
- being an isolate, having no friends;
- being on the outside of groups;
- being over emotional, tearful;
- Lacking in concentration, causing deterioration of work.

We acknowledge that children with additional vulnerabilities such as Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) or Children Looked After (CLA), may be more susceptible to all forms of bullying and may face discrimination from other children at school or within the community, simply because they are looked after or because of their disabilities. Therefore, we make certain that SEND, and or CLA children are responded to carefully when they have or show signs of concern.

A child exhibiting any of these characteristics may or may not be a victim of bullying, but if bullying is recognised, early intervention is crucial.

Derogatory language
Derogatory or offensive language is not acceptable and will not be permitted. This type of language can take many forms of bullying listed in our definitions of bullying. It will be challenged by staff, recorded and monitored on CPOMS. Any incidents of derogatory language will be followed up and consequences, if appropriate, will be taken. Staff are also encouraged to record the casual use of derogatory language, in order to monitor any emerging patterns of concern.

Prejudice-based language
A prejudice-based incident is often a one-off incident of unkind or hurtful behaviour that is motivated by a prejudice or negative attitude, beliefs or views towards a protected characteristic or minority group. It can be targeted. All prejudice-based incidents are taken seriously, recorded and monitored, with the Head regularly reporting incidents to the Trust. This not only ensures that all incidents are dealt with accordingly, but also helps to prevent bullying, as it enables targeted anti-bullying strategies.

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed, as banter or horseplay, it can lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. Early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour and help stop negative behaviour escalating.

Sexual Harassment
Definition of Sexual Harassment
Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, which would include:
- Sexual comments
- Sexual "jokes" or taunting
- Physical behaviour
- Online conduct

Research shows that the most vulnerable groups at risk of sexual harassment include girls, LGBT+, children perceived as LGBT or SEND.
Sexual harassment creates an atmosphere that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviour. These behaviours should never be tolerated, passed off as 'banter' or part of growing up.
Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, make them feel intimated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Any reports of Sexual Harassment at any HCAT school will be taken seriously, and the academy will utilise appropriate sanctions, as outlined in the behaviour policy.

Identifying Bullying

Staff are trained to look out for signs/indicators that a child may be experiencing bullying, such as an unexplained change in a child's behaviour or attendance. Such concerns will always be followed up with a conversation with the child in which the child is given the opportunity to share their worries or name another member of staff they would like to talk with.

We are aware that bullying behaviour is often made up of a series of incidents. We use our definitions of bullying to assess situations as they arise and judge whether or not bullying had occurred. We will review behaviour records regularly to assess whether a pattern of potential bullying behaviour may be developing.

Preventative Work

At HCAT we aim to create an ethos of good behaviour where pupils and staff treat each other with respect because this is the right way to behave.

We use a restorative approach to address bullying behaviours; pupils are assured that they will be listened to and that any incidents reported will be dealt with sensitively and effectively. We use circle time to discuss concerns and restoratively address conflict.

As part of the PSHE curriculum, pupils will be taught about bullying, and prejudicial behaviour, plus what to do if they are being bullied. The curriculum will also help pupils discuss and debate why bullying is unacceptable, as well as develop empathy, understanding and tolerance.

Where necessary, we will work with external agencies to ensure we are effectively delivering the right messages to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying, or prejudicial behaviour.

Steps in dealing with an incident

Every disclosure about bullying shall be dealt with sensitively and in a timely manner. No bullying allegation will ever be ignored as to do so condones the bullying.
The following steps may be taken when dealing with all incidents of bullying reported to the school:
• If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached.
• A clear account of the incident will be recorded on CPOMS
• The nominated person will interview all parties involved and will record the incident in accordance with school procedures.
• Relevant members of staff will be kept informed as appropriate.
• When responding to cyberbullying concerns the school will take all available steps to identify the child using bullying behaviour, including looking at the school systems, identifying and interviewing possible witnesses, and contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary.
- If content posted online is offensive or inappropriate, and the person or people responsible are known, then the school will ensure that they understand why the material is unacceptable or offensive and will request that they remove it.
- If a criminal offence has been committed, then the police may need to be involved to enable the service provider to look into the data of another user or to respond to credible threats of harm.
• Where the bullying takes place outside of the school site (including cyberbullying) then the school will ensure that the concern is investigated, and that appropriate action is taken in accordance with the behaviour and discipline policy.
• Parents/carers of all children involved will be kept informed.
• Sanctions will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned.
• If necessary and appropriate, the police (if a criminal offence has been committed) or other local services (including children's social care where a child is felt to be at risk of significant harm) will be consulted or involved.

Taking a strong stance against bullying behaviour does not mean or lead to either the demonisation or criminalisation of children but instead ensures that both the perpetrators and victims of harmful behaviour

Restorative Approaches

All incidents of bullying will be responded to, taken seriously and the behaviour of those who have been bullying will be challenged.

Where appropriate, the school will initially consider the use of a restorative approach to resolve the situation. A restorative approach involves those who have displayed bullying behaviour focusing on their unacceptable behaviour, supporting them to develop empathy towards those involved and recognising their thoughts and feelings. This process ensures children causing harm are held to account for their behaviour by enabling them to:

- Accept responsibility for the harm caused to the individual being bullied
- Accept responsibility for the harm caused to others (e.g. staff, friends and family)
- Recognise the need to take action to begin to repair the harm caused
- Agree a range of helpful actions to repair the harm caused.

The impact of bullying

We acknowledge that in some circumstances, the consequences of bullying may lead to a child or young person experiencing pronounced social, emotional or mental health difficulties. We fully understand that only medical professionals can make a formal diagnosis of a mental health condition, but staff must remain vigilant to any warning signs, which indicates a pupil is experiencing mental health, or emotional wellbeing issues. Any signs should always be taken seriously, and concerns reported via CPOMS to either the SENCo or Pastoral Lead in a swift and timely manner, to determine the necessary course of supportive action, which may include referrals to specialist services.

Screening, Searching and Confiscation

Under article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, pupils have a right to respect for their private life. In the context of these particular powers, this means that pupils have the right to expect reasonable level of personal privacy. The right under Article 8 is not absolute, it can be interfered with but any interference with this right by a school must be justified and proportionate. The powers of search in the Education Act 1996 are compatible with Article 8. Therefore, staff have the right to confiscate, search and ultimately delete any media which they "reasonably suspect" is being used to bully or otherwise cause an individual harm. Depending on the seriousness of the media, information may also be reported to the Police.

Sanctions

If necessary, we will invoke the full range of sanctions that are detailed in the school's behaviour policy. These include:
- Removal from the group
- Withdrawal of break and/or lunchtime privileges
- Withholding participation in school events that are not an essential part of the curriculum.
- Fixed term and permanent exclusion from school.

Bullying outside school premises

Head teachers have a specific statutory power to discipline pupils 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 are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, online, outside the local shops, or in the local area.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted on. The head teacher will consider whether it is appropriate to notify the Police. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will always be informed.

Rights and Responsibilities
All pupils and staff have the right to:
- Feel safe, cared for and respected
- Be valued and treated with respect
- Be free from threat and intimidation
- Have an enjoyable day at school
- Have a pleasant, healthy and safe environment

Responsibility of Pupils
- Not to bully others
- *Pupils must recognise that being a "bystander" is not acceptable and understand how their silence supports bullying and makes them in part responsible for what happens to the victim of bullying.*
- To tell a trusted adult, for example a member of staff or parent/carer if they are 'bullied' both at school and on the way to or from school
- To tell a trusted adult if someone else is being 'bullied' both at school and/or on the way to or from school
- Pupils involved in the incident will be required to discuss the incident with a member of staff
- Parents and pupils are expected to adhere to the anti-bullying policy

Responsibility of the Headteacher
The Headteacher is responsible for implementing the anti-bullying policy and will ensure that:
- bullying is addressed as an issue in the curriculum
- all staff receive training that addresses bullying behaviour
- the Trust is regularly provided with information regarding issues concerning behaviour management including bullying
- a senior staff member is appointed to be responsible for the monitoring of the policy and anti-bullying strategies.

Responsibility of Trustees
The Trustees are responsible for the Anti-Bullying Policy, and for ensuring that it is regularly monitored and reviewed. Trustees will:
- Support the Head and the staff in the implementation of this policy.
- Be fully informed on matters concerning anti-bullying.
- Regularly monitor incident reports and actions taken to be aware of the effectiveness of this policy
- Appoint a member of the Trust to have a specific responsibility for bullying

Responsibilities of Staff
- To model appropriate behaviours
- Provide a safe, secure learning environment for our pupils
- Watch for early signs of distress in pupils. Offer support to the pupil and outline what will happen
- Encourage all pupils to be a positive resource in countering bullying and take time to discuss problems at circle time
- To promote a climate of trust and respect for all

Role of Parents
Parents have an important role to play, we ask parents to:
- Understand, as per the definition that real bullying is an action that is **usually** repeated, ongoing and involves an imbalance of power.
- To watch for signs that their child may be being bullied signs may include: an unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches of or stomach aches. Early contact with the school is essential at this point.

- If you think your child is being bullied inform your child's class teacher to ensure a co-operative approach that includes home and school. It is unacceptable for a parent to independently take the correction of another child into their own hands.
- **DO NOT** encourage your child to hit back or respond verbally
- Take a balanced and informed approach, keeping in mind that it may be a complex or ongoing issue.
- Encourage their child, if they are being bullied, to tell a responsible adult in school and to report the incident as soon as it occurs.

Bullying of school staff

Adults are entitled to the same consideration and protection as the pupils in the school. This includes adult to adult behaviour and pupil to adult behaviour. The Senior Leadership Team, including members of the Trust's Central Team are responsible for preventing and dealing with bullying and harassing behaviour. It is in the school's interests to make it clear to everyone that such behaviour will not be tolerated – the costs to the school may include poor employee relations, low morale, in efficiency and potentially the loss of staff.

Monitoring

Class teachers have a responsibility to monitor incidents of bullying and the success, or otherwise, of action taken in response to bullying. This information must be fed back to Designated Safeguarding Lead who, along with senior management will be responsible for the overall monitoring of the strategies in place.

This policy will be monitored and reviewed by members of the academy trust and senior leader on a regular basis, but at least every two years.

Complaints

If parents/carers are not satisfied with the response to any reports of bullying, they should contact the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead. Should the issues not be resolved, and they remain dissatisfied, the school's complaints procedures should be followed.

Date	Change or inclusion
September 2022	Added the following section: • Safeguarding – *DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education: Sept 2022* • Identifying bullying • Steps to dealing with bullying • Restorative Approaches • Impact of bullying • Screen, Searching and Confiscation – *DfE Screen, Searching and Confiscation: July 2022* • Bullying of school staff
September 2023	No change required.
September 2024	Added paragraph which outlines that victims and perpetrators of incidents of bullying will both receive the necessary support.