



# Anti Bullying Policy

Date policy last reviewed: November 2024

Signed by:

\_\_\_\_\_ Headteacher Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Chair of governors Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. Statement of Intent

White Hall Academy believes pupils are entitled to learn in a safe and supportive environment; free from all forms of bullying behaviour.

This policy will outline how bullying is dealt with as well as strategies to prevent bullying. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 outlines several legal obligations regarding the school's response to bullying. Under s 89, schools must have measures in place to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures are part of the school's behaviour policy which is communicated to all pupils, staff and parents. There is zero tolerance for bullying in the school. This policy is written in accordance with the following guidance:

- DfE 2017 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental Health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE (2024) Keeping Children Safe in Education
- DfE (2014) 'Cyber Bullying advice for headteachers and school staff'

## 2. What Is Bullying?

There is no universally accepted definition of bullying and sometimes adults and children can get confused between what is bullying and what is a friendship fallout or relational conflict between children. It can be especially hard to define where there are additional needs in the 'alleged perpetrator' which may produce persistent undesirable behaviour but is not a result of an intent to harm though the effect is distressing on others. The impact of some actions that would not normally distress a 'typical child' may constitute bullying where the 'target' has additional needs.

Bullying is generally considered to be behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that **intentionally** hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

### Relational Conflict vs. Bullying

The following table provides a very simplistic guide to some of the differences between bullying and relational conflict.

Relational Conflict	Bullying
Happens Occasionally	Repeated Hurtful Behaviour
Accidental	Deliberate
Equal Power	Imbalance of Power
Remorseful	No Remorse
Effort to solve problem	No effort to solve problem

### 3. Shifting patterns

We recognise as a school that relationships can change within group dynamics and that even where an individual has been identified as a bully in the past the situation can change, and the bully can become a target.

#### Vulnerable Groups

Vulnerable pupils are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different than themselves.

Vulnerable groups include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils with SEND Pupils, those who are adopted or LAC (incl. SGO)
- Pupils suffering with a health problem
- Pupils with caring responsibilities
- Minority ethnic groups
- LGBTQ+ pupils

### 4. Types of Bullying

Many kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying and it can relate to almost anything. Teasing another pupil because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, home life, culture, disability, or SEND are some of the types that can occur.

Bullying is enacted through the following mediums:

- Verbally
- Physically
- Emotionally
- Online (Cyber)
- **Racist Bullying:** Bullying another person based on their ethnic background, religion and skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.
- **Homophobic Bullying:** Bullying because of perceived sexual orientation.
- **Transphobic bullying:** Bullying based on another person's gender 'variance' or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.
- **Prejudicial Bullying:** Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics including those with protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010 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.

### 5. Roles and Responsibilities

**The Governing Body is responsible for:**

- Evaluating and reviewing this policy to ensure it is not discriminatory.
- The overall implementation of this policy
- Ensuring the school adopts a tolerant and open-minded policy towards difference.
- Ensuring the school is inclusive.
- Analysing bullying data to establish patterns and reviewing policy in light of these.

**The Headteacher is responsible for:**

- Reviewing and amending this policy, accounting for new legislation and government guidance and using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in previous years to improve procedures.
- Keeping a bullying log of all reported incidents including which type of bullying has occurred to allow for proper analysis of the data collected.
- Analysing the data in the bullying log at termly intervals to identify trends, so that appropriate measures to tackle them can be implemented.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff members.

**Phase Leaders are responsible for:**

Corresponding and meeting with parents when necessary.

Providing a point of contact for pupils and parents, when more serious bullying incidents occur.

**Teachers are responsible for:**

- Being alert to the social dynamic of their class.
- Being available to pupils who wish to report bullying.
- Provide follow up support after bullying incidents.
- Being alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups and that they inform phase leader of such observations.
- Refrain from gender stereotyping when dealing with bullying.
- Understand the composition of pupil groups, showing sensitivity to those who have been targets of bullying.
- Reporting any instances of bullying once they have been approached by a pupil for support.

**Parents are responsible for:**

- Informing their child's class teacher if they have any concerns that their child is the target of bullying or involved in bullying in anyway.
- Be watchful of their child's behaviour, attitude and characteristics and informing the relevant staff member of changes.

**Pupils are responsible for:**

- Informing a member of staff if they witness bullying or are a target of bullying.
- Not making counter threats if they are /have been targets of bullying.
- Walking away from dangerous situations and avoiding involving other pupils in incidents.
- Keeping evidence of cyber bullying and informing a member of staff should they fall target to cyber bullying.

### **Statutory implications**

The school understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, it has a responsibility to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The school understands that under the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, it could have charges brought against it, if it allows the rights of children and young people to be breached by failing to take bullying seriously.

The Headteacher will ensure this policy complies with the HRA. The Headteacher understands that this cannot be done without fully involving the teaching staff.

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

- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or in a way which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat or contains information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
- The protection from harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- S.127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.

Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to the police include:

- Violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation or intimidation and hate crimes.

## **6. Prevention**

- All reported instances of bullying will be investigated by a member of staff and recorded on CPOMS including all actions.
- Staff will encourage pupil co-operation, work restoratively with groups/pairs to develop interpersonal skills.
- Diversity, difference and respect for others is promoted and celebrated through various lessons, collective worship and curriculum concepts.
- Seating plans /playground zones will be adjusted in a way that prevents bullying.
- Potential targets of bullying are put in groups with children who do not abuse/take advantage of others.

- Staff will encourage children to take opportunities to extend their friendship groups.
- Class teachers will have an open-door policy allowing pupils to discuss concerns about bullying, whether they are targets or have witnessed an incident.
- The school will be alert to any wellbeing issues amongst pupils as this can be a cause of bullying behaviour

## **7. Signs and Symptoms**

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

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- feels ill in the morning
- decreased involvement in school work
- has torn clothes or damaged books
- has possessions that go "missing"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- becomes short tempered
- lack of appetite
- change in behaviour and attitude at home.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, they may be due to deeper social and emotional or mental health issues but are worth investigating. Children who display a range of these issues are to be approached by staff to determine the likely underlying issues. Additionally, staff will consider why children display bullying behaviours, which may include (but is not exhaustive):

- They have experienced mental health problems which lead to a pupil becoming aggravated.
- They have been a target of domestic abuse
- Their academic performance has started to fall, which has meant they are stressed.

If staff are aware of any of these factors that could lead to bullying behaviours they will notify the pupil's phase leader, who will investigate the situation.

## **8. Staff 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 pupil to 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 to teaching staff.
- Staff will always respect pupils' privacy, and information about specific instances of bullying are not discussed with others unless it is in a setting the target has consented to, or there is a safeguarding concern.
- If a staff member believes a pupil is in danger. E.g. of being hurt, they will inform Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

- Follow up support is given to both the target and the bully in the following months to ensure the bullying has stopped.

## **9. Preventing Child on Child Abuse**

The school's Child protection policy outlines our stance on Child on Child sexual abuse and the procedures will be adhered to if any instance of sexual harassment or sexual violence is uncovered.

## **10. Cyber Bullying**

The school views cyber bullying in the same light as any other form of bullying and will follow the sanctions set out in this policy if they become aware of any incidents.

The school will support pupils who have been targets of cyber bullying by holding formal and informal discussions with the pupil about their feelings and whether the bullying has stopped, in accordance with sections 13 and 14 of this policy.

In accordance with the Education Act 2011, the school has the right to examine and delete files from pupils' personal devices e.g. where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile device. Where there is a suspicion that there may be images on the device of child sexual abuse (including that which has been self-generated) the staff will not search the device, but notify the police.

## **11. Procedures**

Minor incidents are reported to the target's class teacher, who investigates and records the incident on CPOMS, sets appropriate sanctions for the perpetrator and informs the phase leader.

When investigating a bullying incident, the following procedures are to be adopted:

- The target and alleged bully to be interviewed separately.
- Member of staff to make all reasonable efforts to ensure there is no possibility of contact between pupils being interviewed.
- If a pupil is injured, members of staff are to take the pupil immediately to the office.
- Interviews should be done in a place that allows for privacy.
- A witness is sought, especially for serious incidents.
- If appropriate, the alleged bully, target and witnesses are asked to write down details of the incident. Verbal accounts can be scribed where appropriate.
- Premature assumptions are not made. It is important not to be judgemental at any stage.
- Member of staff listen to all accounts, be non-confrontational and not attach blame until investigation is complete.
- All concerned pupils are to be told they must not discuss the interview with other pupils.

## 12. Sanctions

If the Headteacher is satisfied on the balance of probabilities, that bullying (major incidents – continuing incidents) did take place, the pupil will be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and be warned that there must be no further incidents. The Headteacher will inform the pupil of the sanction in this instance and future incidences if bullying persists. Sanctions may include:

- A period of lost lunches and/ or breaks – reflection time in ‘Think it Through’ as appropriate. With the aim of using a restorative approach between each party, so the situation can result in closure for each party.
- Internal exclusion (alternative classroom/ SENCo/Headteacher’s Office)
- Suspension (including lunchtime suspensions)- stepped approach
- Permanent exclusion - in the most persistent and serious cases – where all other support and options have failed to improve the situation (for example: a move to another school or alternative provision – with the agreement of the bully’s parents).

If possible, the Headteacher will attempt reconciliation and obtain a genuine apology from the bully. Parents are informed of bullying incidents and what action is being taken. The Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher monitors the situation over the next half term.

## 13. Follow up Support

The progress of both the target and the bully are monitored by the HT/DHT. If appropriate follow up correspondence is arranged with the parents one month after the incident.

Pupils who have been bullied are supported in the following ways:

- Being listened to
- Have and immediate opportunity to meet with their class teacher/adult of their choice
- Being reassured
- Being offered continued support from school staff including internal Pastoral Support/referral to outside agencies for support.
- In some cases where the child has developed complex needs alternative provision will be discussed with the parents

Pupils who have bullied others:

- Receive a consequence for their actions
- Being able to discuss what has happened
- Being helped to reflect on why they became involved
- Being helped to understand what they did wrong and why they need to change their behaviour.
- Appropriate assistance from parents.
- In some cases where the child has developed complex needs alternative provision will be discussed with the parents



#### **14. Bullying outside of school**

The Headteacher has specific statutory power to discipline pupils for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. S89(5) Education and Inspections Act 2006 give the Headteacher power to regulate pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and therefore not under the lawful charge of a school staff member. Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises, where the school can be identified – for example school trips. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as, on public transport, outside the local shops or in a town centre. Where bullying outside of school is reported to school staff it is investigated and acted on.

In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, members of staff can only discipline the pupil on the school premises, or elsewhere where the child is under the lawful control of the member of staff, e.g. school trip.

It is for the Headteacher to decide whether it is appropriate to notify the police of the action against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be of a criminal nature or poses a serious threat to a member of the public the police are always informed.