



HAILSHAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
ACADEMY TRUST

*'Be the very best you can be'*

# RELATIONSHIPS AND ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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<b>Ratified by Governors:</b>	n/a

# Relationships and Anti-Bullying Policy

## Objectives of this Policy

- For all governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents to have an understanding of what bullying is.
- For all governors and teaching and non-teaching staff to know what the college policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- For all students and parents to know what the college policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- For students and parents to be assured and shown that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- To develop a shared understanding that bullying will not be tolerated.
- To compliment government guidance in dealing with bullying behaviour e.g. 'Safe to Learn'.
- To support the college in building positive relationships between young people and young people with adults.

## Statement of Intent

Hailsham Community College Academy Trust is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our college. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively, with appropriate attention being given to emotional well-being of students where necessary. We are a *TELLING* college. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

The aim of the anti-bullying policy is to ensure that students learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will students be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at college.

## What Is Bullying?

We define bullying as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from college.

The college's teaching and support staff must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with college policy.

Bullying can take many forms such as:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, ethnic or cultural prejudice
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic and biphobic - focussing on the issue of sexuality.

- Transphobic bullying occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against people who identify as trans
- Disablist bullying occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against people with any form of disability.
- Sexist bullying occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against someone because of their gender
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Online - Instances where technology has been used to bully, such as email and internet chat room misuse

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

The potential effects of bullying can impact on a child's emotional well-being e.g self-esteem, self confidence, attainment and attendance.

### **Involving parents**

When a situation arises whereby it appears that a mentor or HL needs to involve key stakeholders from voluntary and statutory organisations students will be referred via the weekly HL meeting whereby support will be sign posted to ensure that the young person concerned receives the appropriate support and the outcome achieved.

Parental support is a key to success of our anti-bullying initiatives. The majority of parents support anti-bullying measures and are keen to participate. Consultation is important, helping create an ethos in which positive behaviour is encouraged, and bullying considered unacceptable.

The first point of contact for parents is likely to be the general office staff or a class teacher. All staff must know the college policy and when to refer parents to someone senior.

Good practice includes:

- recognising that the parent may be angry and upset
- listen carefully to the parent's point of view
- keeping an open mind - bullying can be difficult to detect, so a lack of staff awareness does not mean no bullying occurs
- remaining calm and understanding
- making clear that the college does care and that something will be done explaining the college policy, making sure procedures are followed

When a case is referred to them, senior teachers should also:

- ask for details and record the information
- make a further appointment to explain actions and find out if it has stopped
- follow up with staff to ensure that appropriate action has been taken and that the college policy has been implemented

Many of the same points apply when the college has to tell the parents that their child is involved in bullying. Parents are more likely to accept a calm approach, following the agreed guidelines of an anti-bullying policy they are familiar with. This helps to defuse anger and resentment.

## **Who is involved in bullying - and where**

Usually one student starts bullying a victim. There are often other students present. These may:

- help the bully by joining in
- help the bully by watching, laughing and shouting encouragement
- remain resolutely uninvolved
- help the victim directly, tell the bullies to stop, or fetch an adult.

Any child can be bullied, and although **none** of these characteristics can excuse it, certain factors can make bullying more likely:

- Changes in academic performance
- Appears anxious
- Regularly feeling sick or unwell. Wanting to visit the nurse regularly.
- Reluctance to come to school.
- Clothes/bags torn or damaged.
- lacking close friends in college
- being shy
- an over-protective family environment
- being from a different racial or ethnic group to the majority
- being different in some obvious respect - such as stammering, having Special Educational Needs or a disability, behaving inappropriately,
- intruding or being a 'nuisance'
- possessing expensive accessories such as mobile phones or computer games

## **What students should do if they are being bullied or reporting incidents of bullying behaviour**

(these are procedures we expect of staff, pupils and parents):

- Report bullying incidents to staff. The incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached
- In cases of bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff and the voice of the child recorded.
- The incident will be logged on the college safeguarding system 'Myconcern'. Bullying incidents are categorised by type e.g. racist, biphobic etc. – This is overseen by the DSL.
- In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come into a meeting to discuss the problem
- If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated, and the bullying stopped quickly
- An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour

Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a mentor or member of staff of their choice
- reassuring the student
- offering continuous support
- restoring self-esteem and confidence
- sign posting to relevant external support services

Students who have bullied will be helped by:

- discussing what happened
- discovering why the student became involved
- establishing the wrong doing and need to change
- informing parents or guardians to help change the attitude of the student

The following disciplinary steps can be taken:

- official warnings to cease offending or withdrawal of certain school privileges
- subject detention or senior detention
- placed in 'IF' (Internal Intervention facility)
- Involvement of parent/carers
- involvement of the Home School Liaison Leader/Police
- exclusion from certain areas of college premises
- minor fixed-term exclusion
- major fixed-term exclusion
- permanent exclusion

### **Monitoring, evaluation and review**

Hailsham Community College Academy Trust will review its policy and procedures annually and assess the implementation and effectiveness of various strategies used. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the college and with parents/guardians

We ask the students to complete an annual anti-bullying questionnaire which seeks the views of learners about their experiences of bullying related activities. We encourage all students to complete the survey which is filled in online. The results of the survey are used to support the review of the development of our policy.

### **The risks of bullying to the victims**

Victims may be reluctant to attend college and are often absent. They may be more anxious and insecure than others, having fewer friends and often feeling unhappy and lonely. Victims can suffer from low self-esteem and negative self-image, looking upon themselves as failures - feeling stupid, ashamed and unattractive.

Victims may present a variety of symptoms to health professionals, including fits, faints, vomiting, limb pains, paralysis, hyperventilation, visual symptoms, headaches, stomach aches, bed wetting, sleeping difficulties and sadness. Being bullied may lead to depression or, in the most serious cases, attempted suicide. It may lead to anxiety, depression, loneliness and lack of trust in adult life.

### **Online bullying**

This is the use of technology particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else.

There are some features of Online bullying which are different from other forms of bullying:

- It can take place at any time and can invade home/personal space.
- The audience can be very large and reached rapidly.
- People believe it is easy to attempt to remain anonymous.
- Some instances are known to be unintentional.
- Some incidents can themselves act as evidence.

## **Preventing Online bullying**

The best way to deal with Online bullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. There is no single solution but there are five key areas to be addressed:

The whole college community will be aware of the impact of Online bullying through discussion via mentor time, ICT and Computing lessons and presentation via assembly. Students and their parents will be made aware of their responsibilities in their use of technology, and what the sanctions are for misuse. They will also know that the college can provide them with support if Online bullying takes place out of college.

The college will continually review its acceptable use policy for ICT and publicise these to students and parents. Incidents of Online bullying will be recorded and internet use will be continually monitored.

## **Supporting the person being bullied**

Students need to be reassured that they have done the right thing by telling someone.

The following advice should be given:

- Students must know not to retaliate or return the message
- The students should be helped to keep relevant evidence for an investigation (e.g text message, screen shots, etc.)
- Discuss ways in which the student can prevent the bullying from happening again, e.g changing contact details, blocking contacts or leaving a chat room.
- Parents will be advised to report the content/incident to the service provider
- When there is an out-of-college incident occurring, parents will be advised to report the incident to the police via 101
- Staff are expected to take appropriate action to contain an incident where content has been circulated:
  - If the person responsible is known, they should be expected to remove the content.
  - Staff may contact the host (e.g., the social networking site) to make a report to get the content removed.
  - Students who have been Online bullying may have their phones confiscated and presented to parents.
  - In cases of illegal content, the matter will be referred to the DSL with appropriate follow-up actions taken i.e. referred to police.

## **Key Safety Advice**

### **For children and young people**

1. Always respect others – be careful what you say online and what images you send.
2. Think before you send – whatever you send can be made very public very quickly.
3. Keep your password to yourself – only give mobile number or personal website address to trusted friends.
4. Block the bully – learn how to block or report someone behaving unacceptably.
5. Don't retaliate or reply.
6. Save the evidence – text messages, pictures, etc.
7. Make sure you tell an adult you trust.

## **For parents and carers**

1. Be aware, your child may as likely Online bully as be a target of Online bullying. Be alert to your child seeming upset after using the internet or mobile phone.
2. Talk to your child and understand the ways in which they are using the internet and their mobile phone.
3. Use the tools on the service and turn on the in-built internet safety features.
4. Remind your child not to retaliate.
5. Keep the evidence of offending emails, text messages or online conversations.
6. Report the Online bullying to a member of staff at the college where the issue involves another student. Depending on the severity of the problem, consider contacting the service provider and the local police.

## **Bullying by text messages on mobile phones**

Children should be careful who they give their phone number to, and keep a record of the date and time of any offensive message. Teachers need to encourage victims to save messages they are concerned about and discuss them with the DSL or house leader. When students report bullying text messages the college needs to take the complaint seriously; the child's family might also need to contact the police by calling 101.

If such bullying has been carried out by one or more students on a persistent basis, or there has been a threat of violence, it will need to be dealt with firmly. The same also applies to malicious e-mails sent by other students.

## **Choosing strategies for reducing bullying**

The following outlines the range of **key strategies** used by Hailsham Community College Academy Trust to deal with bullying depending on the nature and severity of the incident. A single strategy may not provide a complete solution on its own to the problem.

### **1. Co-operative Group Work**

Within the curriculum the college will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in PSHE/Citizenship, mentor time, assemblies and subject areas, as appropriate, in an attempt to eradicate such behavior.

Students are encouraged to explore issues and controversies by;

- considering different points of view,
- be more tolerant of others and more willing to listen,
- trust those of the opposite gender and those from other ethnic groups,
- become better integrated into the peer group

### **2. Circle Time**

Time is set aside each week for teachers and students to sit in a circle and take part in enjoyable activities, games and discussion. The positive atmosphere generated in the well-managed circle usually spreads into other areas of class activity.

Circle Time:

- creates a safe space to explore issues of concern explores relationships with adults and peers enhances effective communication
- affirms the strengths and enhances the self-esteem of each member
- encourages students to feel confident to speak up through gentle discussion.

### **3. Circles of Friends**

Sometimes known as 'Circles of Support', they build relationships around a vulnerable student.

Circles aim to:

- improve the level of acceptance and inclusion of the student help the student make friends inside or outside the Circle
- increase insight into the student's feelings and behaviour

### **4. Befriending**

Befriending involves assigning selected student volunteers to 'be with' or 'befriend' peers whom teachers have referred.

Befrienders:

- need friendly personal qualities give support with emotional and social problems - newness to a college, difficulty making friends, upset at separation or loss, being bullied or socially excluded, run after-college clubs offering companionship and activities to peers who would otherwise be miserable and alone may share a common difficulty - for example bereavement - perhaps setting up a support group
- The befriended feel more positive about themselves having had someone to talk to about their problems. Befrienders feel more confident and value other people more.

### **5. Collegewatch**

A key objective is to prevent bullying, racism and other forms of anti-social behaviour.

The lead group is the college council which is supported by the police and a designated member of staff.

### **6. Mediation by peers**

The college has developed a team of trained peer mediators who can support in dealing with incidents of bullying by:

- enabling victim and bully to identify problems and solutions,
- defusing tension between peers ensure that all involved come away with a sense that the outcome is fair to both sides.

### **7. Assertiveness training groups**

In a safe, supportive environment, bullied students talk about their experiences, and learn and practise effective responses. They avoid either any use of threats or trying to manipulate or intimidate, and keep responses honest and transparent. Students feel more secure and in control, with less anger and despair. Responding in a neutral but direct way takes the heat out of the situation.

### **8. Developing a playground policy**

Effective supervision involves moving around the grounds, talking briefly with students and anticipating potential difficulties. A suspected problem should be quietly and promptly investigated. The playgrounds are monitored by staff who complete this task as part of the whole college duties.



## **Anti Bullying Week**

Hailsham Community College Academy Trust actively takes part in Anti Bullying Week. This is a National scheme that aims to raise the awareness of the effects of bullying on the lives of children and young people and to bring about positive change. The aims of the week were to:

- Raise awareness of the effects of bullying on the lives of children and young people - both in the short and long term.
- Encourage children and young people to challenge bullying wherever it happens - whether in school, in sport, in other activities or in Online. Make sure that all children and young people feel confident to take part without bullying or intimidation.
- Make sure that all schools, colleges, sports clubs and youth providers take active steps to prevent bullying and are inclusive of all children and young people
- Empower children and young people to take the lead in bullying prevention in all areas of school life including sports and extra-curricular activities
- Take active steps to support children and young people who may have been affected by bullying
- Create opportunities for children and young people to use their unique skills and talents to send a clear message that *we're better without bullying*.

This is a National initiative that we support through the curriculum, in assemblies and through the pastoral programme. The students also complete a Relationships Survey which explores the perceptions and experiences of bullying. The feedback received is used to review the HCC policy annually as well as ensuring our mentoring and PSHE programme covers key topics of student concern.