



Anti-Bullying Policy

Date Published	September 2015
Version	10
Approved Date	October 2025
Review Cycle	Annual
Review Date	October 2026

An academy within:



“Learning together; to be the best we can be”



1. Introduction

- 1.1. Hilltop School recognises there is a need to safeguard the welfare of all those within the school community and to encourage co-operation, tolerance and harmony.
- 1.2. Hilltop School is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We have high expectations of all pupils and strive to create a climate in which all children can fulfil their potential.
- 1.3. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Hilltop School. If bullying does occur, all pupils should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Hilltop School is a telling school and anyone who knows that bullying is happening should be able to inform a member of staff in safety.

2. Aims and Objectives of the policy

- 2.1 The aim of this policy is to try and prevent and deal with any behaviour deemed as bullying. The implementation of this policy will create an ethos where bullying is regarded as unacceptable so that a safe and secure environment is created for everyone to learn and work in. All members of the school have a responsibility to recognise bullying when it occurs and take appropriate action in accordance with the school policy. This will happen in the following ways:
 - The school will meet the legal requirement for all schools to have an anti-bullying policy in place.
 - The school will work closely with other professional agencies to ensure that children stay safe as stated in The Children Act 1989, The SEN and Disability Act 2014, Equality Act 2010, and The Children Act 2004.
 - All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents/guardians will have an understanding of what bullying is.
 - All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff will know what the school policy is on bullying and will consistently and swiftly follow it when bullying is reported.
 - All pupils and parents/guardians will know what the school policy is on bullying and what they can do if bullying occurs.
 - Pupils and parents/guardians will be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.



- Whole school initiatives (staff training, celebration assemblies etc) and proactive teaching strategies (PHSE [Personal, Health & Social Education] lessons, circle time etc) will be used throughout the school to reduce the opportunities for bullying to occur.
- A positive, caring ethos will be created within the school environment where everyone can work, play and express themselves, free from the fear of being bullied.

3. What is bullying?

3.1. The school has adopted the following collaborative definition of bullying which is our shared understanding of what bullying is:

3.2. Bullying is any deliberate, hurtful, upsetting, frightening or threatening behaviour by an individual or a group towards other people. It is repeated over a period of time and it is very difficult for the victims to defend themselves (remember STOP – it happens Several Times on Purpose). Bullying is mean and results in worry, fear, pain and distress to the victims.

Bullying is recognised by the school as being a form of child on child abuse. It is recognised to be emotionally abusive and can cause severe and adverse effects on children's and young people's emotional development.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures), ridicule, humiliation
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, making rude remarks, making fun of someone
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, throwing stones, biting, spitting, punching or any other forms of violence, taking or hiding someone's things
- Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, making fun of culture and religion
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive or sexist comments
- Homophobic because of/or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Online/cyber setting up 'hate websites', sending offensive text messages, emails and abusing the victims via their mobile phones
- Any unfavourable or negative comments, gestures or actions made to someone relating to their disability or special educational needs.

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 (STOP). 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 children's development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns, the odd name calling or childish prank. We all have to learn how to deal with these situations and develop social skills to repair relationships.

Where does bullying happen?

It can happen anywhere – in the classroom, in the corridor, in the toilets, in the dining hall, in the playground. Bullying may also happen on the way to and from school. In such cases, the Head teacher is empowered by law to deal with such incidents but must do so in accordance with the school's policy.

At Hilltop School, we are concerned with our children's conduct and welfare outside as well as inside school and we will do what we can to address any bullying issues that occur off the school premises. The following steps may be taken:

- Talk to the local Community Police Officer about problems on the streets
- Talk to the transport companies about bullying on school buses and in school taxis
- Talk to the Head Teachers of other schools whose children may be involved in bullying off the premises
- Map out safe routes to school for children, linking them to the School Travel Plan

Discuss coping strategies with parents

Talk to the children about how to handle or avoid bullying outside the school premises

4. Child-on-Child Abuse

4.1 Child-on-child abuse refers to any form of physical, sexual, emotional, or discriminatory abuse perpetrated by children or young people towards others of a similar age. In a special school context, this may include behaviours that are influenced by additional needs, communication difficulties, or social understanding.

4.2 Types of Child-on-Child Abuse may include, but is not limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying)
- Physical abuse (e.g., hitting, kicking, biting)



- Sexual violence and harassment
- Upskirting or inappropriate sexualised behaviour
- Initiation/hazing-type violence and rituals
- Emotional abuse (e.g., threats, intimidation, exclusion)
- Discriminatory abuse (e.g., racist, sexist, homophobic, or ableist behaviour)

4.3 All staff are trained to recognise signs of child-on-child abuse and respond appropriately. All reports will be recorded using Behaviour Smart/CPOMS and investigated by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Parents/carers will be informed where appropriate, and external agencies may be involved.

4.4 Victims of child-on-child abuse will be supported through pastoral care, counselling, and safeguarding plans as appropriate and alleged perpetrators will be supported to understand and change their behaviour, with consideration of their individual needs. A restorative approach may be used where appropriate, alongside disciplinary measures.

5. Generative artificial intelligence (AI)

5.1 Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard.

5.2 Hilltop School recognises that AI has many uses to help pupils learn, but may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

5.3 Hilltop School will treat any use of AI to bully pupils in line with our Anti-Bullying, Behaviour and Safeguarding policies.

6. Signs and symptoms

6.1 A child may indicate, by different signs or behaviour, that they are being bullied.

6.2 Adults should be aware of these possible signs and investigate further if a child:



- is frightened of walking to or from school or being in parts of school
- doesn't want to go on the school/in the taxi
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine/route to school
- begins truanting
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to underperform in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions go "missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money/snack/sandwiches have been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- starts swearing or using aggressive language for no apparent reason
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

6.3 These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be taken seriously and investigated as soon as possible.

7. What can you do if you are being bullied?

7.1 Wherever you are in school, you have the right to feel safe. Nobody has the right to make you feel unhappy. If someone is bullying you, it is important to remember that it is not your fault and there are people who can help you.

7.2 The children were all asked this question and we have included some of their strategies in the list below:

- Try not to let the bully know that he/she is making you feel upset.



- Try to ignore them.
- Be assertive – stand up to them, look at them directly in the eye, tell them to stop and mean it.
- Stay in a group, bullies usually pick on individuals.
- Get away as quickly as you can.
- Tell someone you can trust – it can be an adult in school, e.g. a teacher, a teaching assistant, the wellbeing team, a parent or carer, a friend, a brother, a sister or a relative.
- If you are scared, ask a friend to go with you when you tell someone.
- If you don't feel you can talk to someone about it, write it down and post it in the school listen up box.
- When you tell an adult about the bullying give them as many facts as you can (What? Who? Where? When? Why? How?).
- Keep a diary of what's been happening and refer to it when you tell someone.
- Keep on speaking out until someone listens and helps you.
- Never be afraid to do something about it and quick.
- Don't suffer in silence.
- Don't blame yourself for what is happening.
- Call a helpline.

8. What Can You Do If You See Someone Else Being Bullied? (The Role of the Bystander)

8.1 Ignoring bullying is cowardly and unfair to the victim. Staying silent means the bully has won and gives them more power. There are ways you can help without putting yourself in danger. The children have also discussed this question in class and some of the strategies they suggested are listed below:

- Don't smile or laugh at the situation.
- Don't rush over and take the bully on yourself.
- Don't be made to join in.
- If safe to do so, encourage the bully to stop bullying.
- If you can, let the bully know you do not like his or her behaviour.
- Shout for help.
- Let the victim(s) know that you are going to get help.
- Tell a member of staff as soon as you can.
- Try and befriend the person being bullied.
- Encourage the person to talk to someone and get help.



- Ask someone you trust about what to do.
- If you don't feel you can talk to someone about it, write it down and post it in the 'Listen up' box.
- Call a helpline for some advice.

9. Bullying Of Children with Special Educational Needs

- 9.1 Hilltop School is an inclusive school. We provide a secure, accepting, safe and stimulating environment where everyone is valued for who they are.
- 9.2 Our children have learning disabilities and/or communication difficulties. Everyone involved in the school is very aware that these children can be especially vulnerable to bullying and we are therefore particularly vigilant at all times.
- 9.3 Higher attainers, gifted or talented pupils can also be affected by bullying. Staff will treat this type of bullying seriously and in the same way as any other type of bullying.

10. Procedures For Reporting and Responding to Bullying Incidents

Where a student reports/alleges a bullying incident or an adult witnesses an incident we should:

- Have a nominated member of staff, e.g. Head teacher, Deputy or Assistant Head Teacher is informed in writing (usually through an incident form on Behaviour Smart/CPOMS).
- Staff will ensure the immediate safety of all other staff, pupils and property. It maybe that in exceptional circumstances there is a risk of injury to an individual such that physical intervention is required. In which case the member of staff would follow the school's policy on Positive Handling.
- Any injured child/children or staff will receive appropriate medical attention as soon as is practicable.



- All incidents will be recorded, including the facts of the incident, action taken and a report of the follow up interviews.
- Both the victim(s) and bully(ies) should be interviewed separately to establish the facts without apportioning blame.
- A decision should be taken regarding whether to contact the parents of both the victim(s) and bully(ies).
- In the light of the incident it may be appropriate to review existing behaviour policy and/or procedures.
- Appropriate sanctions and support will be discussed and agreed upon.
- Follow up discussions will take place within 1 week.
- The opportunity should be available after the incident for both the victim(s) and bully(ies) together to discuss their difficulties with a responsible and confident adult.

10.1 Interviewing the victim

- The pupil will be informed that notes will be taken of the conversation and both will agree at the end that what has been written is a true record.
- Staff will be aware at all times of possible Child Protection issues. Confidentiality will not be promised.
- Staff will listen objectively and without favour to what is being said. The pupil(s) will be encouraged to share what they are feeling.
- Staff will ascertain who has been involved, including bystanders.
- Staff will discuss the victim(s) what they would like to see happen and arrangements for the future if they are able.
- Staff may offer coping/preventative strategies if appropriate.
- Discussions around reparation will take place if property is damaged/destroyed.
- A realistic time scale for investigating and reporting back to the victim(s) will be given.

10.2 Interviewing the bully/bystander

- Research suggests that by telling the bully(ies)/bystanders will not apportion blame, but rather approach the pupils in a non-confrontational manner with the emphasis on problem solving helps resolve the situation.
- Staff will explain they would like to talk to the student(s) as they are aware the student has been unkind to/causing problems for (name of victim). Staff will ask the student(s) if they know how (name of victim) is feeling right now.
- Staff will explain that the bully(ies)/bystanders are responsible for those feelings and this is not acceptable. Staff will be clear this is not acceptable



- The staff member will ask for suggestions to help the victim(s) feel better and to help solve the problem.
- Staff will agree to meet with all the students involved again after an appropriate time to see how the situation has changed.
- The nominated member of staff for bullying issues should be given a record of the interviews for the student files.
- School may wish to send copies of the reports to the parents/carers of those students involved.
- Appropriate contact will be maintained with both sets of parents/carers until the situation has been resolved.

11. Aims Of Our Anti-Bullying Work

11.1 At Hilltop School we endeavour:

- To ensure all staff, pupils and parents understand bullying and its consequences.
- To emphasise through all aspects of our curriculum that bullying will not be tolerated.
- To ensure that there are clear procedures and systems for reporting and recording bullying, which are understood and followed by all staff.
- To ensure pupils and staff learn to keep themselves and others safe.
- To ensure that students learn to recognise and respect the differences between groups of people within the school community.
- To help students develop self-confidence, self-esteem and to fulfil their potential within school.
- To support and re-educate those pupils who are both the victims and perpetrators of bullying, providing them with a range of strategies they can use if they are at risk of bullying others or are being bullied themselves.
- To create a school which all members of the community can come to without fear of violence, aggression or intimidation of any kind.

11.2 Pupils are taught that any kind of aggressive behaviour, either verbal or physical is unacceptable. Incidents of bullying are always treated seriously.

11.3 All staff are vigilant in school and within the grounds to identify actual or potential cases of bullying. Victims are asked not to retaliate, but to inform a member of staff immediately.



12. Strategies For The Prevention and Reduction of Bullying

12.1 Whole school initiatives and proactive teaching strategies will be used throughout the school to develop a positive learning environment with the aim of reducing the opportunities for bullying to occur.

These can include:

- Planning and promoting teaching and school routines which encourage learning and positive behaviour.
- Encouraging the whole school community to model appropriate behaviour towards one another
- Regular training for all staff to raise and maintain awareness, to alert them to indicators which may suggest bullying and to equip them with ways of responding to it.
- Using a restorative approach to help students understand the impact their actions have on others.
- Undertaking regular questionnaires and surveys to monitor the extent of bullying in the school and the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy
- Producing a 'child speak' version of the policy for the children
- Each class agreeing on their own set of class rules where appropriate
- Engaging in national anti-bullying week each year
- PHSE (Personal, Health & Social Education) scheme of work from year 1 to year 14 used to support this policy
- Children writing stories and poems and drawing pictures about bullying
- Children being read stories about bullying
- Prominently displaying anti-bullying posters produced by the children around the school
- Independent listeners, including older pupils and adults, other than school staff, to whom victims of bullying may turn.
- Introducing playground improvements and initiatives including adequate supervision of the school site, especially toilets, lunch times and distant areas.
- Increased supervision levels and, as appropriate safe areas, for pupils who feel threatened at break times
- Using praise and rewards to reinforce good behaviour

13. Working with Parents and Carers



- 13.1 We will work with parents/carers to minimise the likelihood of further bullying regardless of whether one is talking about the child who has bullied or the one who has been bullied.
- 13.2 We will endeavour to give parents every opportunity to discuss their concerns as soon as practicable. We will emphasise the importance of working together to solve problems and create realistic solutions that are acceptable to all concerned. A lack of parental support can make conflict resolution much more difficult and is regrettable, particularly if children then mirror the negativity and unhelpful attitude that they may have seen.
- 13.3 Hilltop School appreciates there will be occasions when the parents and carers of one or both sets of students involved will feel the school has not sanctioned appropriately. Parents or carers will be given the opportunity to share their concerns and if appropriate, staff will discuss the decisions to impose the particular sanction(s) with them.
- 13.4 Where a parent is dis-satisfied with the school's handling of a situation then the head teacher will seek to resolve the situation informally. In the event of a formal complaint then the agreed complaints procedure for the school will be used. Should the press be contacted regarding the bullying incident then school should work with Nexus and RMBC publicity office.
- 13.5 Hilltop School actively encourages and welcomes comments, questions and suggestions regarding our anti-bullying policy. Please contact us on 01709 813386 or Hilltopschool@nexusmat.org

14. Monitoring And Evaluation of the Policy

- 14.1 To ensure this policy is effective, it will be regularly monitored and evaluated.

15. Sources Of Further Information, Support And Help



15.1 There is a vast amount of information and guidance available about bullying that can provide a wide range of support and help. The following list is just a small selection of the support available that teachers, parents and children have found useful.

Name of organisation	Telephone number	Website
Act Against Bullying	0845 230 2560	https://actagainstbullying.org/
Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)	0300 0115 142	www.ace-ed.org.uk
Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA)	0207 843 1901	www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
Anti-bullying Network	0131 651 6103	www.antibullying.net
Beat bullying	0845 338 5060	www.beatbullying.org.uk
Bullying Online	020 7378 1446	www.familylives.org.uk
BBC	not available	www.bbc.co.uk
Childline	0800 1111	www.childline.org.uk
Kidscape	020 7730 3300 (general enquiry number)	www.kidscape.org.uk
	08451 205 204 (helpline for adults only)	www.beyondbullying.com
NSPCC	0207 825 2500	www.nspcc.org.uk
The Children's Legal Centre	0800 783 2187	www.childrenslegalcentre.com
The Office of the Children's Commissioner	0844 800 9113	www.childrenscommissioner.org.uk
UK Government Website	Not Available	www.direct.gov.uk
Internet Watch Foundation:	01223 20 30 30	www.iwf.org.uk
Think U Know:	03704967622	www.thinkuknow.co.uk
Show Racism the Red Card	0191 257 8519	www.srtrc.org/educational
Changing Faces	0300 012 0275	www.changingfaces.org.uk