

# **Horizons Independent School**

## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

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## **1.0 Purpose of policy**

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Horizons Independent School . If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING provider. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

## **2.0 What Is Bullying?**

There is no legal definition of bullying.

Many people think they know what is meant by 'bullying' but one person's idea might be different from someone else's view. In this guidance, bullying is defined as a behaviour that:

- happens on purpose
- happens more than once
- is meant to hurt or upset someone
- the targeted person feels powerless to stop.

There are many different ways people can be bullied. This could include:

- being called nasty names, teased, made fun of, threatened or put down
- being hit, kicked, punched, tripped up or knocked over
- having belongings stolen or damaged
- having rumours or gossip spread about you or people talking about you behind your back
- being left-out, excluded or isolated
- being forced to do something you don't want to do or know that is wrong.

Online bullying is bullying behaviour that happens through technology such as mobile/smart phones or the internet. This could include:

- hurtful, embarrassing or threatening material posted online (for example on social network websites)
- nasty messages sent as texts, e-mails or via other websites or apps
- being excluded from an online game
- fake profiles on a social network that make fun of others
- any misuse of intimate, explicit images of the person targeted.

Identity-based bullying is when the bullying is focused on what is different about a person's identity. It can be targeted at one or a whole group of people because they are thought to be different, whether this is true or not. This is known as prejudice.

Prejudice-related bullying involves aspects of a person's identity such as:

- race, religion or culture or your family background
- any special need or disability
- gender identity – the way you look or act
- sexual orientation – who you are attracted to (whether you are heterosexual, gay, lesbian or bisexual)
- sexism – because of your gender (often in the form of harassment).

Prejudice and stereotypes may be learned from what children see and hear around them. They may not always understand the deep hurt their words or actions have caused. Prejudice-related bullying is wrong and should not happen. All prejudice-related behaviour or discrimination should always be challenged.

### Is it banter or bullying?

People often try to excuse bullying by saying it was only a joke or banter. Those who bully (perpetrators) tend to say the targeted person simply cannot take a joke. It is banter when it is clearly understood by all those doing and receiving it and everyone finds it funny, for example when close friends regularly joke together, tease and enjoy it.

It is probably not banter if one person or a group is hurt or humiliated by it and/or if it is making fun of your identity (basic things about you which you cannot change). There is a boundary when banter becomes bad behaviour and, if it happens often, bad behaviour becomes bullying.

### When it is not bullying

The following examples are bad behaviour but not usually acts of bullying:

- a fight that happens once
- banter between you and your friends that goes wrong, but is not repeated
- an argument between you and someone else of equal power, such as with your friend
- a friendship problem. One person does not want to be friends any more.

The above examples might be the start of bullying if nothing is done to stop it. If you have found it scary or distressing and you have not sorted it out between you, it might be helpful if you tell someone so that your school can do something to stop it right away.

### When should you report an incident?

All bad or harmful behaviour should be reported whether it is bullying or not. It should be dealt with under your school's behaviour policy. If it seems minor at first, you may be able to sort it out on your own by finding the right time to discuss it calmly with the people who did it. You should be confident and firm, and explain to them how it made you feel and why you didn't like it. If you do not feel safe, do not take this step without the support of friends, a teacher or in a group activity aimed at dealing with bullying arranged at school. The following behaviours should always be reported to your school:

- all violence
- any unwanted sexual behaviour
- any racism
- any discriminatory behaviour which focuses on your identity – this describes who you are or your background, for example your race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or social status (such as if you are rich or poor)
- any bullying of people with special needs or disability
- any behaviour that threatens you or makes you feel scared
- anything that happens online that could harm you.

### Bullying can be physical, verbal, indirect:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic - because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber - all areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse
- Mobile - threats by text messaging & calls
- Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities
- Sexist and transphobic bullying

### The power of language

There is a debate about the language used when talking about bullying behaviour. Using language that includes bullying or aggressive words such as 'stamp out', 'kick out' or 'combat' bullying has been challenged. It has not been shown to reduce bullying effectively. Instead it entrenches the notion that the powerful have power over the weak, leading learners to aim to be one of the 'powerful' rather than a 'weak' group. This can encourage weaker members of a group to begin bullying

others weaker than themselves to assert some ascendance. In contrast, the aim is to create a respectful community whose members learn to live alongside one another with aggression reduced.

Referring to the roles played in bullying incidents it is preferable not to label children and young people as a 'victim' or 'bully' because:

- learners are often encouraged to 'hate bullying' which can then translate into hating individuals who bully. It is a label a child or young person can internalise and live up to, or it can impede their ability to change their behaviour. By not labelling someone a bully, space opens up to help them change their unacceptable behaviour and use their power or leadership in other ways. It is helpful to separate the person from the behaviour to allow the person to change. Their behaviour is disliked or unacceptable, but they are not hated as individuals
- similarly, labelling learners 'victims' can entrench their 'otherness' and ensure they are not accepted by their peers. They are seen as weak and many children avoid them for fear of being seen in the same way. Some targeted children begin to believe it is their fault they are bullied and see themselves as a victim.

### **3.0 Prevention**

We will use proven methods for helping children to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying
- inclusion in our basic expectations.
- reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class
- making up role-plays
- having discussions about bullying and why it matters
- help pupils to understand what constitutes bullying in its different forms; its impact and the roles of those involved in bullying behavior including bystanders
- Develop personal and social education skills that help protect pupils from bullying and develop positive peer relationships.
- Address online safety with pupils and parents/carers
- Recognize and celebrate diversity
- Activities and events including Anti-Bullying Week
- Engaging with parents/carers through information held on the school website and school prospectus.

- Ensuring that parents/carers understand that complaints regarding bullying can be addressed through Horizons Independent School Complaints Policy.

#### **4.0 Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. We have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying. All pupils have the right to learn in a safe environment and at Horizons Independent School we will do our best to ensure that everyone is able to maximize their learning.

At Horizons Independent School we celebrate inclusion and diversity through Themes of the Week and assemblies. We recognise and value the differences of everyone and understand that it is these differences that give Horizons Independent School our unique richness and warmth.

#### **5.0 Objectives of this Policy**

- All teaching and non-teaching staff, carestaff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

#### **6.0 Signs and Symptoms**

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school
- begins to truant
- 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 do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises

- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone when permitted to do so.
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber-message is received

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

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAKEHOLDERS.**

### **The Responsibilities of Staff**

Our staff will

- Foster in our pupils self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils.
- Discuss bullying with all classes, so that every pupil learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is bullied and to the bully and the importance of telling a teacher about bullying when it happens.
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying.
- Listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them.
- Report suspected cases of bullying to Debbie Bentley or Nicola Griffiths and your account will be recorded in the Bullying log book.
- Director to follow up any complaint by a parent/carers about bullying, and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken to the.
- Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures.

### **The Responsibilities of Pupils**

We expect our pupils to:

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.

**Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should:**

- Not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.

**The Responsibilities of Parents/Carers**

We ask our parents/carers to support their children and the school by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying.
- Advising their children to report any bullying to the SLT and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils.
- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any forms of bullying.
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken;
- Keep a written record of any reported instances of bullying
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved;
- Co-operating with Horizons Independent School if their children are accused of bullying, try to ascertain the truth. And point out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are bullied and for the bullies themselves.

**The Responsibilities of All**

Everyone should:

- Work together to combat and, hopefully in time, to eradicate bullying.

**7.0 Procedures**

1. Pupils, carers /parents are to report bullying incidents to staff and they will be recorded in the Bullying Log.
2. In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
3. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted
4. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
5. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour and support given to the victim through therapy.

6. Procedures for reporting to pupils/parents/carers bullying incidents are through meetings with parents/carers and pupils involved. Outcomes and actions are also agreed.
7. The school will also respond to incidents that happen out of school and liaise with parents/carers.
8. Strategies are used to engage those who have bullied to acknowledge their responsibility to recognise harm caused and to support them to change their behaviour.

## **8.0 Outcomes**

The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise.

1. If possible, the pupils will be reconciled
2. After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored by staff to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

## **9.0 Training and Support**

- Staff to have training updated annually at INSET days (usually September INSET Day)
- Activities to cover anti-bullying awareness and support.

## Education Act 2002

The Education Act 2002 places a legal duty on maintained schools and local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

## The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 ('the 2010 Act') requires schools to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations

between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The characteristics which are protected by the 2010 Act are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership (in employment only)
- pregnancy and maternity

- race (including nationality and ethnic origin)
- religion or belief and
- sex.

The public sector equality duty applies to schools. To fulfil the three aims of the general duty, schools have three sets of specific duties which are to:

- collect, analyse and publish information about their progress in achieving the three aims of the 2010 Act
- decide on certain specific and measurable objectives that they will pursue over the coming years to achieve the three aims and publish these objectives

and when undertaking the first two sets of specific duties to:

- engage with people who have a legitimate interest – including all staff, all parents, carers and learners, and local groups, organisations and individuals as appropriate.

#### Criminal offences legislation.

Some online bullying activities could be criminal offences under a range of different laws, including the Malicious Communications Act 1988 and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997.

Under the Protection of Children Act 1978 (as amended) and the Criminal Justice Act 1988 it is illegal to make, circulate or possess indecent images of a child under the age of 18 years.

Section 67 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 inserts a new offence into the Sexual Offences Act 2003, at section 15A, criminalising sexual communication with a child.

Under the new law, it is illegal for anyone over 18 years of age in England and Wales to send a sexually explicit message to a child or attempt to encourage the child to send something explicit themselves.

If school staff or parents/carers feel that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police.

#### Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on schools in relation to the Prevent agenda. Schools will need to demonstrate that they are protecting children and young people from being drawn into terrorism by having robust safeguarding policies in place to identify children and young people at risk and

intervening as soon as possible. This is relevant in the context of bullying because children who are isolated victimised or who otherwise feel they do not belong can be more likely to fall prey to recruitment and grooming.

Schools should have clear safeguarding procedures which deal with matters linked to Prevent.

## **Bullying**

### **Respecting Others – information for pupils**

#### **If you are being bullied**

- try to stay calm and look as confident as you can
- be firm and clear – look them in the eye and tell them to stop
- get away from the situation as quickly as possible
- tell an adult what has happened straight away.

#### **After you have been bullied**

- tell a teacher or another adult in your school
- tell your family
- if you are scared to tell an adult by yourself, ask a friend to come with you
- keep speaking up until someone listens and does something to stop the bullying
- don't blame yourself for what has happened.

#### **When you are talking to an adult about bullying, be clear about**

- what has happened to you
- how often it has happened
- who was involved
- who saw what was happening
- where it happened
- what you have done about it already.

If you find it difficult to talk to anyone at school or at home, ring **Childline**, Freephone 0800 1111, or write, Freepost 1111, London N1 0BR.

The phone call or letter is free. It is a confidential helpline.

### **Respecting Others – information for parents and families**

Every school is likely to have some problem with bullying at one time or another. Your child's school must by law have an anti-bullying policy, and use it to reduce and prevent bullying, as many schools have already successfully done.

#### **Bullying behaviour includes:**

- name calling and nasty teasing
- threats and extortion
- physical violence
- damage to belongings
- leaving pupils out of social activities deliberately and frequently
- spreading malicious rumours.

Parents and families have an important part to play in helping Every Lesson Counts deal with bullying.

- First, discourage your child from using bullying behaviour at home or elsewhere. Show to resolve difficult situations without using violence or aggression.
- Second, ask to see the school's anti-bullying policy. Each school must have an anti-bullying policy, which sets out how it deals with incidents of bullying. You have a right to know about this policy which is as much for parents as for staff and pupils.
- Third, watch out for signs that your child is being bullied, or is bullying others. Parents and families are often the first to detect symptoms of bullying, though sometimes a doctor may first suspect that a child has been bullied. Common symptoms include headaches, stomach aches, anxiety and irritability. It can be helpful to ask questions about progress and friends at school; how break times and lunchtimes are spent; and whether your child is facing problems or difficulties at school. Don't dismiss negative signs. Contact the school immediately if you are worried.

**If your child has been bullied:**

- Calmly talk to your child about it
- make a note of what your child says – particularly who was said to be involved; how often the bullying has occurred; where it happened, when it happened and what happened
- it is very important that accurate records are kept of the incidents of bullying and of the action taken when the bullying was reported
- reassure your child that telling you about the bullying was the right thing to do
- explain that any further incidents should be reported to a teacher immediately
- make an appointment to see your child's class teacher or form tutor
- explain to the teacher the problems your child is experiencing.

**Talking to teachers about bullying**

- try and stay calm – bear in mind that the teacher may have no idea that your child is being bullied or may have heard conflicting accounts of an incident
- be as specific as possible about what your child says has happened – give dates, places and names of other children involved
- make a note of what action the school intends to take
- ask if there is anything you can do to help your child or the school
- stay in touch with the school – let them know if things improve as well as if problems continue.

**If you think your concerns are not being addressed:**

- check the school anti-bullying policy to see if agreed procedures are being followed
- discuss your concerns with the parent governor or other parents
- make an appointment to meet the head teacher, keeping a record of the meeting
- contact local or national parent support groups for advice

- contact the Director of Education for your authority, who will be able to ensure that the Governors respond to your concerns
- contact the Parentline Plus helpline for support and information at any of these stages
- in the last resort, write to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning.

### **If your child is bullying other children**

Many children may be involved in bullying other pupils at some time or other. Often parents are not aware. Children sometimes bully others because:

- they don't know it is wrong
- they are copying older brothers or sisters or other people in the family they admire
- they haven't learnt other, better ways of mixing with their school friends
- their friends encourage them to bully
- they are going through a difficult time and are acting out aggressive feelings.

### **To stop your child bullying others:**

- talk to your child, explaining that bullying is unacceptable and makes others unhappy
- discourage other members of your family from bullying behaviour or from using aggression or force to get what they want
- show your child how to join in with other children without bullying
- make an appointment to see your child's class teacher or form tutor, explain to the teacher the problems your child is experiencing and discuss with the teacher how you and the school can stop them bullying others
- regularly check with your child how things are going at school
- give your child lots of praise and encouragement when they are co-operative or kind to other people.