



Anti-Bullying Policy for Holywell School

Author	MG Simpson
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Overview

As a Church of England School, our Anti-Bullying Policy is underpinned by our Behaviour for Learning Policy. Both policies are rooted in our distinctively Christian character and our core beliefs which are Gospel inspired and which support the school's Vision.

At Holywell, our vision is that everyone in our community chooses to "Live Life in all its Fullness" (John 10:10).

Inspired by the teaching of Jesus, the Good Shepherd,

we choose to live our values,

being the best we can be

in community."

At Holywell School, we value everyone as a unique individual. Our values, including love, service, compassion, tolerance, forgiveness, kindness, dignity, joy and a commitment to community permeate our school's ethos.

Our students speak very proudly of the impact of these values on both themselves and the school. "They say that the school's values make them think and act more thoughtfully and positively as well as making the school a better place." (Ofsted 2018).

Our primary concern is the safety, wellbeing and education of all students; actions taken in cases of bad behaviour are with the intention of upholding their wellbeing and academic progress, as well as fulfilling our safeguarding responsibilities. We have a zero-tolerance approach to bullying.

The Holywell Behaviour Principles

So that everyone in our community can 'live life in all its fullness', we expect behaviour which enables all students to be "the best that they can be", treating others as we wish to be treated. We do this through our high expectations, promoting positive and active engagement with learning. Students' pride in themselves as an individual and as part of the wider school community is shown by:

1. Respecting everyone in the school community,
2. Being kind, respectful and caring towards all members of the school community, and
3. Keeping themselves and others safe at all times.

Aims

The specific aims of the Anti-Bullying Policy are:

- To ensure that we have a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying
- To ensure that practices and processes for dealing with bullying behaviours are clear, just and fair
- To ensure that practices and processes are consistently, insistently and persistently applied.

We aim to work towards the prevention of bullying by creating a safe environment in which everyone feels safe and is able to enjoy and achieve. We aim to create an environment which promotes trust, confidence, justice and fairness for all, by:

- Promoting effective and positive models of behaviour
- Ensuring a clear understanding of what bullying is (and knowing the difference between disagreements, conflict, disharmony and bullying)
- Explicitly teaching about bullying and how to address it in PSHE lessons, visiting speakers and in assemblies
- Providing students with strategies for dealing with bullying / intimidating situations
- Noticing when bullying happens
- Creating an environment where students and adults can raise bullying issues confidently and safely and where students are encouraged to talk about concerns
- Reporting all incidents of bullying
- Dealing with bullying quickly and effectively when it occurs
- Adhering to the school agreed procedures for monitoring and recording of incidents of bullying.
- Involving parents actively in solutions and outcomes
- Identifying appropriate support programmes for students and their parents/carers.
- Actively implementing the school's equal opportunities policy

DEFINITIONS: Disagreements, Conflict and Bullying

Sometimes, things go wrong and, as in all communities, there are times of disagreements, conflict and disharmony. We always seek peaceful solutions to difficult situations and aim for reconciliation and forgiveness. Where there are issues, we deal with these as unique incidents and act firmly and fairly to resolve the issue. We do however, make a distinction between disagreements, conflict and bullying. We take bullying seriously and have a zero-tolerance to bullying behaviour. We believe it is everybody's responsibility to deal with incidents of bullying in line with this policy, when they occur.

At Holywell School we use the following definition of Bullying:

Bullying
is behaviour which is:
intentional and targeted,
deliberately designed to be hurtful
and repeated systematically over a period of time.

There is also often a power imbalance generally based on unequal power relations in bullying relationships, whether real or perceived.

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

Vulnerable students may include, but are not limited to:

- Students who are adopted.
- Students suffering from a health problem.
- Students with caring responsibilities.
- Students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Students with certain characteristics are also more likely to be targets of bullying, including, but not limited to:

- Students who are LGBTQ+, or perceived to be LGBTQ+.
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) students.
- Students with SEND.

TYPES OF BULLYING

Bullying can take many forms, but the main types are:

- Physical – hitting, kicking, taking belongings, any use of violence
- Verbal – name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks, sarcasm, spreading rumours
- Emotional – tormenting, manipulation, bribery, threatening gestures
- Indirect – spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion from social groups, intimidating looks or gestures, being made the subject of malicious rumours,
- Cyber - Setting up malicious websites, sending malicious emails or text messages on mobile phones.

Specific targeted types of bullying:

Racist bullying: Bullying another person based on their ethnic background or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.

Homophobic and biphobic bullying: Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

Transphobic bullying: Bullying based on another person's gender identity or gender presentation, or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.

Sexist bullying: Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.

Sexual bullying: Bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal or non-verbal sexual dimension or dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.

Ableist bullying: Bullying behaviour that focuses on another person's disability or support needs; this can include mocking the individual's disability or their needs, using derogatory words or slurs in relation to an individual's disability, or deliberately excluding an individual because of their disability.

Prejudicial bullying: Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics or experiences, e.g. religion or mental health issues.

Relational bullying: Bullying that primarily consists of excluding, isolating and ostracising someone – usually through verbal and emotional bullying.

Socioeconomic bullying: Bullying based on prejudices against the perceived social status of the victim, including, but not limited to, their economic status, their parents' occupations, their health or nutrition level, or the perceived "quality" of their clothing or belongings.

Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying may be defined as 'the use of electronic communication, particularly mobile phones and the internet, to bully a person'. This typically involves sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature. Children and adults may be reluctant to admit to being the victims of cyberbullying. It can take a number of different forms:

- threats and intimidation, harassment or 'cyberstalking' (e.g. repeatedly sending unwanted texts or instant messages)
- sexting (e.g. sending and receiving sexually explicit messages, primarily between mobile phones)
- vilification/defamation, exclusion/peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorised publication of private information/images
- 'trolling' (abusing the internet to provoke or offend others online).

It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing the bully with another route to harass their target.

In general, cyber-bullying is bullying via electronic communication devices, however it differs from other forms of bullying in several significant ways:

- Cyber-bullying can facilitate a far more extreme invasion of personal space.
- Cyberbullying can take place at any time and intrude into spaces that have previously been regarded as safe and personal.
- The potential for anonymity on the part of the bully. This can be extremely distressing for the victim.
- The potential for the bully to play very rapidly to a larger audience so the scale and scope of cyberbullying can be greater than for other forms of bullying.
- Through the knowledge that the data is in the world-wide domain, disproportionately amplifying the negative effect on the victim, even though the bully may feel his / her actual actions had been no worse than conventional forms of bullying.

- The difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages as more people get drawn in as accessories. By passing on a humiliating picture or message a bystander becomes an accessory to the bullying.
- The profile of the bully and target can be different to other forms of bullying as cyberbullying can take place between peers and across generations.
- Teachers can be victims and age and size are not important.
- Many cyberbullying incidents can themselves act as evidence so it is important the victim saves the information.

If cyber-bullying occurs, we use the simple mantra: STOP, BLOCK and TELL:

- STOP the communication and take a screenshot of the bullying behaviours online.
- BLOCK the person being offensive – unfriend them, close the link down, delete them from your social media group, leave the group.
- TELL an adult immediately – students should tell parents immediately, show the screenshots and then report the inappropriate behaviour. This can be done directly with the person via an adult (and some parents have had very successful conversations and outcomes where they have worked together) or it can be reported. Abusive messages can be reported to the App provider. The Safer Internet website also has some really good links and advice:
<https://saferinternet.org.uk/online-issue/online-bullying>.
Abusive messages/posts can also be reported through CEOP – Child Exploitation and Online Protection Service: <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>.

Child-on-child abuse

- The school has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.
- To prevent child-on-child abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate students about abuse, its forms, and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum, assemblies and PSHE lessons, in line with the Prevention section of this policy.
- All staff will be aware that students of any age and gender are capable of abusing their peers. Staff will take all instances of child-on-child abuse equally seriously regardless of the characteristics of the perpetrators or victims, will never tolerate abuse as “banter” or “part of growing up”, and will never justify sexual harassment, e.g. as “boys being boys”, as this can foster a culture of unacceptable behaviours. Staff will also be aware that child-on-child abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting, sexual harassment and assault, and hazing- or initiation-type violence.
- Students will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled – this includes the process for reporting concerns about friends or peers. If a student has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral may be made to children’s social care services (CSCS), where the DSL deems this appropriate in the circumstances.

PREVENTION

Holywell communicates clearly in our policies, practices and publications (inc. Student Organiser) our whole-school commitment to addressing bullying and our fundamental Christian values of kindness and respect (as well as our other core values) are regularly promoted across the whole school.

All members of the school are made aware of this policy and their responsibilities in relation to it. All staff members receive updates on identifying and dealing with the different types of bullying.

All types of bullying are discussed as part of the PSHE curriculum - with a specific focus during the annual Anti-Bullying week in November. This curriculum explores and discusses issues at age-appropriate stages such as:

- Healthy and respectful relationships.
- Boundaries and consent.
- Stereotyping, prejudice and equality.
- Body confidence and self-esteem.
- How to recognise abusive relationships and coercive control.
- Harmful sexual behaviour, the concepts involved and why they are always unacceptable, and the laws relating to it.

Staff encourage student cooperation and the development of interpersonal skills using group and pair work. Diversity, difference and respect for others will be promoted and celebrated through various lessons. Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills will be provided through participation in special events, e.g. drama productions, sporting activities and cultural groups.

Where there are known tensions between students, or where there have been issues, seating plans and/or student groupings can be organised and altered in a way that prevents (further) instances of bullying.

Specific support for students will be organised where necessary. This is usually coordinated either by a member of the pastoral team or by the safeguarding and wellbeing team. Students are encouraged to identify 5 adults in school with whom they can talk and who could advocate for them if necessary.

If a new student joins the school, particularly when this happens in-year, the student's form tutor and the DSL will discuss reasons for the move and, if there were previous issues of bullying, will ensure the student is aware of school practices and facilitate a 'buddy' to help the student settle into school.

The school will be alert to, and address, any mental health and wellbeing issues amongst students, as these can be a cause, or a result, of bullying behaviour.

The school will ensure potential perpetrators are given support as required, so their educational, emotional and social development is not negatively influenced by outside factors, e.g. mental health issues.

PROCESS FOR ADDRESSING BULLYING – STUDENTS

Advice for students if they believe they are being bullied in school:

- Talk to an adult you trust, and take a friend if it helps.
- What is said will be passed on to an appropriate adult. **YOU WILL BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY.**
- **DON'T** listen to the bully when they say that you will be in trouble if you **TALK TO SOMEONE.** You aren't doing anything wrong – **THEY ARE.**
- If you need somewhere to be safe, there will be a place for you to go while the problem is being sorted out. The appropriate adult will organise this for you.

Advice for students who see bullying happening:

- The best thing you can do to help is to **TALK TO SOMEONE.**
- **DON'T** listen to the bully when they say that you will be in trouble if you **TALK TO SOMEONE.** You aren't doing anything wrong – **THEY ARE.**
- **IF YOU ARE NOT OPEN THE BULLY HAS ALL THE POWER**

Remember: “Everyone has the right to feel safe all of the time” and “We can talk with someone about anything even if it feels awful or small.”

PROCESS FOR ADDRESSING BULLYING – PARENTS / CARERS

Be aware of the signs of bullying and check in regularly with the student. Encourage them to talk to you or to a trusted adult in the family – they need adults in school and outside of school and should develop a network of trusted adults. Once reported, take the following steps:

- **LISTEN** to what the student has said.
- **TAKE IT SERIOUSLY.**
- **RECORD** what they have said and record the incident.
- Establish whether the behaviour is actually bullying (i.e. is it intentional and targeted, deliberately designed to be hurtful and repeated systematically over a period of time?)
- Make it clear that they have made the **RIGHT** decision to tell. They have done nothing wrong – the bully **HAS.**
- Explain that the information will have to be shared and that it cannot be kept a secret.
- Contact the Form Tutor or the Head of Year and share the statement from the student.
- Offer support.
- School will investigate further and keep you informed of the outcome of investigations in line with this policy.

NB. If the student does not want to talk about this, please contact the Form Tutor and/or Head of Year anyway – “We can talk with someone about anything even if it feels awful or small.” It may not be anything, however, it may be that the student is being put under pressure not to talk / does not want to share.

PROCESS FOR ADDRESSING BULLYING – STAFF

Staff will treat reports of bullying seriously and will not ignore signs of suspected bullying. Staff will act immediately when they become aware of a bullying incident. Unpleasantness from one student towards another will always be challenged and will never be ignored.

Staff will always respect students' privacy, and information about specific instances of bullying is not discussed with others, unless the student has given consent, or there is a safeguarding concern. If a member of staff believes a student is in danger, e.g. of being hurt, they will inform the DSL immediately.

Once reported, staff will:

- LISTEN to what the student has said.
- TAKE IT SERIOUSLY.
- RECORD what they have said and record the incident.
- Establish whether the behaviour is actually bullying (i.e. is it intentional and targeted, deliberately designed to be hurtful and repeated systematically over a period of time?) NB. all unpleasantness from one student towards another will always be challenged and will never be ignored.
- Pass the information on to the student's Head of Year.
- Make it clear that they have made the RIGHT decision to tell. They have done nothing wrong – the bully HAS.
- Explain that the information will have to be shared and that it cannot be kept a secret.
- Offer the support of a safe room/area if it is necessary.
- Interview the bully and any witnesses.
- Where unkind behaviours have taken place and the alleged bully is unaware of the impact of their behaviours, put a behaviour agreement in place and apply sanctions in line with the Behaviour for Learning Policy.
- Consequences: Where bullying incidents are proved, they are always logged as a C8 – our most serious type of misconduct and there will always be a high-level consequence - internal or fixed-term exclusion.
- Where bullying is established, put a behaviour agreement in place whereby the bullying behaviours will stop and apply sanctions in line with the Behaviour for Learning Policy. NB. All proven and confirmed incidents of bullying must be recorded and logged on SIMS.
- Bullying incidents will be followed up with some form of reconciliation/mediation between the bully and the victim to ensure there is no further incidence and could include:
 - Student apology (verbal, written) and guarantee that the bullying will cease.
 - Help for the bully to understand the consequences of their actions and warned that there must be no further incidents.
 - Reconciliation between bully and victim and genuine apology from the bully. This will either be in writing to the victim (and/or witnesses if appropriate), or face-to-face, but only with the victim's full consent. Discretion is used here; victims will never feel pressured into a face-to-face meeting with the bully. However, restorative practices and empathy are very effective ways of ensuring that the bully does not repeat the same unacceptable behaviours.
 - "Voluntarily" completing an act of kindness towards the "victim".
 - Withdrawal of privileges.
- Monitor the students involved. If the behaviour stops then no further action will be taken. If bullying continues, further actions will be taken.
- Where bullying continues, sanctions will be repeated and/or further extended.
- The progress of both the bully and the victim are monitored by their form tutors.

One-on-one sessions to discuss how they are progressing may be appropriate. If appropriate, follow-up correspondence is arranged with parents/carers one month after the incident.

Follow-up support

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

- Being listened to
- Having an immediate opportunity to meet with their Head of Year or a member of staff of their choice
- Being reassured
- Being offered continued support
- Being offered counselling, where appropriate.

Students who have bullied others are supported in the following ways:

- Receiving a consequence for their actions
- Being able to discuss what happened
- Reflecting on why they became involved
- Understanding what they did wrong and why they need to change their behaviour
- Appropriate assistance from parents/carers.

Where bullying has taken place, the following processes take place:

- Use peer mediation and restorative practices to resolve conflict between students and establish a behaviour agreement where the bully guarantees no further antagonism or intimidation.
- Involve parents.
- Provide individual support and practical advice.
- Monitor the situation and ensure that there are no further incidents or repercussions.
- Due to the potential for sexist, homophobic, transphobic and sexual bullying to be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviour, staff members involved in dealing with the incident are required to consider whether there is a need for safeguarding processes to be implemented.

How to spot bullying

We hope that all students at Holywell School have at least 5 trusted adults in school with whom they could talk if they were being bullied. These adults would then act on their behalf and be their advocates for a rapid and peaceful solution. Sometimes however, students are frightened to come forward. We may notice some of the following behaviours:

- Being frightened of walking/travelling to or from school
- Not wanting to go on the school / public bus
- Unwillingness to attend school
- Repeated or persistent absence from school
- Becoming anxious or lacking confidence
- Saying that they feel ill repeatedly
- Decreased involvement in school work
- Change to their usual routine
- Beg to be driven to school
- Being anxious and withdrawn
- Attempting or threatening suicide
- Crying themselves to sleep at night / nightmares.
- Feeling ill in the mornings
- Truanting
- Beginning to do poorly at school

- Coming home with books / clothes torn
- Having possessions go missing
- Asking for money or stealing money
- Continually losing pocket money
- Unexplained cuts / bruises
- Coming home starving (money / lunch has been stolen)
- Becoming withdrawn, lacking in confidence
- Becoming aggressive and unreasonable
- Bullying other children / siblings
- Giving improbable excuses for any of the above.
- Lack of appetite
- Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices
- Lack of eye contact
- Becoming short tempered
- Change in behaviour and attitude at home

These behaviours may be indicators of bullying; however, they may also be indicators of other issues. They should always be investigated and never ignored. Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental health issues, so are still worth investigating. Students who display a significant number of these signs will be approached by a member of staff to determine the underlying issues causing this behaviour.

Staff will be aware of the potential factors that may indicate a student is likely to exhibit bullying behaviours, including, but not limited to, the following:

- They have experienced mental health problems, which have led to them becoming more easily aggravated
- They have been the victim of abuse
- Their academic performance has started to fall and they are showing signs of stress

If staff become aware of any factors that could lead to bullying behaviours, they will notify the student's Form Tutor, who will investigate the matter and monitor the situation.

Bullying outside of school

Bullying (inc. Cyberbullying) outside of school must be reported to relevant authorities (police, app provider, CEOP, etc). Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted upon to ensure that there are no repercussions in school, however, in all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, members of staff can only discipline the student on school premises, or elsewhere when the student is under the lawful control of the member of staff, e.g. on a school trip.

Holywell School students are ambassadors for our school at all times. This includes when they are outside school. As with our general Behaviour for Learning Policy, we will take action where incidents of bullying outside of school could have repercussions for student relationships in school, where it is part of a series of bullying behaviours and/or where the bullying poses a threat to a Holywell student. The headteacher has a specific statutory power to discipline students for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives the headteacher the power to regulate students' 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 students for misbehaving outside of the school premises. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

The headteacher is responsible for determining whether it is appropriate to notify the police of the action taken against a student. If the misbehaviour could be of a criminal nature, or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will be informed.

Support for Staff

Support for staff is available through:

- The Induction Programme – with a nominated mentor.
- Continuing Professional Development – in-house and external.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every year by SLT and the Ethos Committee of the Board of Governors. The governing body may, however, review the policy earlier than this if they receive recommendations on how the policy may be improved.

Cross reference this policy with the following policies:

- 1) Behaviour for Learning Policy
- 2) Complaints Policy
- 3) Curriculum Policy
- 4) Equality, Access and Community Cohesion
- 5) Exclusion Policy
- 6) Marking and Feedback Policy
- 7) Child-on-child Abuse Policy
- 8) Safeguarding Policy

This policy has due regard to legislation, including, but not limited to the following:

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Communications Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Education Act 2011
- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2021) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education' (updated annually)
- DfE (2020) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'