



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Most of our pupils are autistic and this shapes our positive approach to managing behaviour and empowering our children to function appropriately at school, at home and in the community.

Hedgewood School belongs to every member of the school community. We are all entitled to feel safe, valued respected. We have the responsibility to manage our own behaviour. For pupils this often means a journey to understanding over time. For staff this means we model positive and acceptable behaviour at all times and work hard to improve our own capacity to understand and respond positively to challenging behaviour. Bullying at Hedgewood is fortunately an extreme rare occurrence. However as most of pupils are autistic this can lead to social misunderstanding and confusions particularly when pupils are searching for words to explain a situation. Our focus on **Being nice, Working hard** and **Being happy** along with our powerful positive relationships and investment in emotional wellbeing, ensure that we can all grow and thrive, happily together.

AIM

Our aim is to create an atmosphere which is caring, protective and supportive where **no one feels humiliated, intimidated or abused**. Recognising bullying in all its forms is a vital part of this process.

DEFINITIONS

- ⤴ Bullying is the use of aggression with intent to hurt another person which may result in distress or pain to the victim.
- ⤴ The behaviour is often repeated over a period of time making it difficult for the person concerned to defend themselves.
- ⤴ Bullying may take on different forms and may be subtle.
- ⤴ Bullying may be physical, which includes the use or threat of physical violence.
- ⤴ Bullying may be in verbal form, e.g., name calling, ridicule, sarcasm, rumour, teasing, etc.
- ⤴ Bullying may be emotional, e.g., deliberate unfriendliness, racial or gender based taunting, exclusion, deliberate isolation.
- ⤴ Bullying may be sexual, such as unwanted comments or contact.
- ⤴ Bullying can be carried out by individuals or groups.
- ⤴ Bullies often try to include on-lookers into their activities.
- ⤴ Accepting and complying with bullying is the same as bullying itself.

Staff must remain vigilant about bullying behaviours and approach this in the same way as any other category of Child Abuse; that is, do not wait to be told before you raise concerns with senior staff who can deal with the matter. Children may not be aware that they are being bullied or are bullying especially in our school where all students have additional needs for most have autism which means that they may be

unable to realise what others may be doing to them or conversely, the impact of their behaviours.

Staff must also be aware of those children who may be vulnerable pupils; those coming from troubled families, or those responding to emotional problems or mental health issues which may bring about a propensity to be unkind to others, or may make them more likely to fall victim to the behaviour of others.

PREVENTION

The ethos and working philosophy of Hedgewood School means that all staff actively encourage children to have respect for each other and for other people's property. Good and kind/polite behaviour is regularly acknowledged and rewarded.

Staff reflect on helpful and unhelpful behaviour in the context of developing social skills, social understanding and this includes bullying; this informs children that we are serious about dealing with bullying and lead to open conversations and increased confidence to report any incidents and concerns about children's behaviour.

Staff always reinforce and model expectations of behaviour daily in line with our and expectations of social interactions.

CHALLENGE

- ⤴ By challenging in a supportive and non-confrontational way any unacceptable behaviours, will reduce incidence of bullying and help create an atmosphere of tolerance and acceptance.
- ⤴ We need to support pupils in their response to bullying.
- ⤴ Hedgewood operate a simple recording and reporting procedure.*
- ⤴ We take an account of any evidence and all points of view.
- ⤴ We offer support to the victim and will be mindful of the fact that many of our pupils are vulnerable to bullying behaviours outside of school.
- ⤴ We will offer support and advice to the person exhibiting bullying behaviours.
- ⤴ We ensure that all parties are kept informed.
- ⤴ We operate a system of rewards in line with the school policy on behaviour and discipline (Positive Behaviour Policy).

PROCEDURES

- ⤴ At the first report of an incident, the persons directly involved will be debriefed by class staff (all key staff should be made aware of what is happening). The class teacher should then investigate to determine the facts behind any arising issue.
- ⤴ Any bullying behaviours should be written up on a behaviour or Safeguarding form and handed to the Head teacher, Deputy Head Teacher, or Deputy DSL who will ensure Behavioural recording is entered into the behaviour reporting system.
- ⤴ It should be made clear that behaviours described as bullying are unacceptable. Follow up actions should be devised, recorded and aimed at addressing bullying behaviours.

*the anti-bullying file in the office is very empty

- ⤴ In the event that there is a victim of bullying behaviour the class teacher should assess for any levels of distress and as appropriate take positive action to ensure the child/young person feels safe in the short term.
- ⤴ In serious cases the parents or carers will be informed and asked to come into school to discuss the situation. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted.
- ⤴ A strategy will be developed with the consent of all parties.
- ⤴ Any agreed strategy will be shared with all staff. It is expected, through the behaviour support systems, that the Head Teacher would be kept informed of bullying-related issues.
- ⤴ External support may be sought if the behaviour continues.
- ⤴ In extreme cases, exclusion will be considered.
- ⤴ Incidents of bullying will be discussed with the Governing Body (named Safeguarding Governors)

Advice to Parents

As the parent of a child whom you suspect is being bullied-

1. Report bullying incidents to the class teacher
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff and the Headteacher notified.
3. In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem
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 child using unacceptable behaviour towards others, to change their behaviour.

This policy is available on the school website, the shared staff area on the school network and on request from the Head teacher or Deputy in hard copy. It should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Behaviour and Safety Policy
- PSHE Policy and Schemes of Work