



Anti-Bullying Policy 2025

Introduction:

This policy has been developed using the DfE Guidance documents 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (July 2017) and 'Behaviour and Discipline in Schools' (Jan 2016) and is mindful of the Equality Act 2010.

This policy relates to bullying between students only. Bullying between adults will be addressed using the staff bullying and harassment policy.

Hope Tree School believes that every young person has the right to live each day in school without fear. Bullying, threats, name-calling, racial or sexual harassment, interference with property and any other action designed to frighten, humiliate or embarrass are totally unacceptable. All stakeholders have a responsibility to work together as a community and to create an environment in which everyone feels accepted, valued and able to get on with learning and growing.

Aims:

- To ensure that all members of our community treat one another with respect and value and understand the Equality and Diversity Policy.
- To ensure that all members of the school community follow the agreed standards of behaviour outlined within the admissions policy and school behaviour policy.
- To ensure that there is good order and that the school is well-organised
- To ensure that adults who are responsible for supervising young people carry out their duties effectively.
- To promote learning about citizenship, rights and responsibilities so that it is clear that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour which cannot and will not be tolerated.

Links with other policies:

This document should be considered alongside the following policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Online safety and Acceptable use Policy
- Curriculum Policies (PHSE, Mobile phone)
- GDPR Policy

Equality and Diversity Statement:

At Hope Tree School we are committed to providing services and an environment for learning and developing which reflect the breadth and diversity of society. Throughout our work and relationships with referring agencies, parents and young people and between staff we aim at all times to ensure there is no discrimination relating to age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender reassignment or disability. All children and young people have a right to a broad and balanced range of experiences, both in terms of the school curriculum and the enhancement activities that reflect in a positive way the range of cultures and experiences of the whole community. Young people leaving Hope Tree School should do so with an understanding and respect for all members of their community.

Safeguarding children and young people:

Hope Tree School is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people. It recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect and prevent children from harm, abuse and exploitation. When there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern under the Children Act 1989. Please refer to the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for further information.

The school is committed to drawing on a range of services to support any student who is experiencing bullying, or to address any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

What is Bullying:

Bullying may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, it can be:

- Physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft)
- Verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name-calling)
- Emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of their peer group)
- Racist (racial taunts, graffiti, gestures)
- Sexual (unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments)
- Cyber bullying (via e-mail, text or on-line)
- Prejudice-based (bullying based on a protected characteristic)
- Bullying involves the use of power in a relationship – it can be seen in many interactions between students, parents and staff

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on a student. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. All staff will intervene early to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and isn't acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating.

Specific types of bullying:

Prejudice Related Bullying

Under the Equalities Act 2010 it is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- age
- gender reassignment
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or having a child
- disability
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, including Gypsy, Roma, Traveller heritage
- religion, belief or lack of religion/belief
- sex /gender
- sexual orientation

These are called 'protected characteristics'.

As part of the requirement on schools to promote fundamental British values, Hope Tree School will proactively challenge derogatory and discriminatory language and behaviour including that which is racist, homophobic, transphobic and disabilist in nature. The school will record these types of bullying, even that which represents a one-off incident.

Other vulnerable groups include:

- young carers
- looked after children
- bullying-related to home circumstances
- bullying-related to appearance or health

Although the above do not currently receive protection under the Equality Act 2010, bullying for these reasons is just as serious. There is no hierarchy of bullying - all forms should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately.

Prejudice Related Language:

Racist, homophobic, transphobic and disabilist language includes terms of abuse used towards people because of their race/ethnicity/nationality; because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans, or are perceived to be, or have a parent/carer, sibling, or friend who is; because they have a learning or physical disability. Such language is generally used to refer to something or someone as inferior. This may also be used to taunt young people who are perceived to be different in some way or their friends, family members or their parents/carers are perceived to be different.

Dismissing such language as banter is not helpful as it is being used to mean inferior, bad, broken or wrong. We will challenge the use of prejudice-related language in our school even if it appears that it is being used without any intent. Persistent use of prejudice-related language and/or bullying will be dealt with as with any other form of bullying.

Hate crime and bullying

There is no legal definition of a hate crime. However, the police and the CPS (Crown Prosecution Service) have an agreed definition of hate crime as:

"Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; disability or perceived disability and any crime motivated by hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender."

There is a distinction between a hate crime and a hate incident.

"A hate incident is any incident which the victim, or anyone else, thinks is based on someone's prejudice towards them because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or because they are transgender."

However, a hate incident does not necessarily break the law. Where a hate incident amounts to a criminal offence, and is based on one of the five protected characteristics, it is known as a hate crime.

The type of conduct which will be considered as a hate incident is wide ranging and includes the following:

- Verbal abuse;
- harassment;
- bullying or intimidation;
- physical attacks;
- threats of violence;
- hoax calls, abusive phone or text messages, hate mail;
- online abuse;
- displaying or circulating discriminatory literature or posters; ● graffiti;
- arson;
- throwing rubbish in a garden; and
- malicious complaints.

Any concerns about hate incidents/crimes should be discussed with The Head of Learning. Information on how to report a hate crime can be found at

<https://www.report-it.org.uk/home>

Bullying which occurs outside school premises:

Staff members have the power to discipline students for misbehaving outside the school premises. Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 say that a school's disciplinary powers can be used to address students' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff, but only if it would be reasonable for the school to regulate students' behaviour in those circumstances. Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted on in the same way as bullying in school. The Head of Learning will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or other external agency.

Overall Approach:

There is no single solution to bullying which will suit all circumstances, however, we will:

- Establish and maintain a caring ethos so that bullying is less likely to occur
- Encourage discussion about bullying so that it does not become a hidden activity
- Listen to students when they talk about or report bullying
- Provide good adult role models, i.e. never misusing authority as power to humiliate or dominate

Prevention

Hope Tree School aims to create an environment that prevents bullying from being a serious problem in the first place. The best way of reducing or even eliminating bullying is through constantly expecting all members of the school community to treat each other with respect and understanding in line with the standards of behaviour outlined in the behaviour policy.

- All members of staff will help to promote a whole-school ethos of mutual respect and will encourage students to show care, politeness, respect and honesty that will teach and promote empathy.
- Within the curriculum the school will raise awareness of the nature of bullying in PHSE.
- Students are taught to celebrate differences of others and their families alongside an appreciation of differences in others.
- We highlight and value examples of kind behaviour, both in school and in the wider world, e.g. in the news, media, entertainment, etc.
- We openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality, gender reassignment or appearance related difference. Also children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities.
- We provide effective staff training on Anti-bullying laws, procedures and prevention.
- We make it easy for students to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on. This is done through message

boxes in class, safe and trusting relationships between students, rewards for displaying kindness.

Dealing with Incidents

- When bullying is suspected or reported the school will do all it can to ensure that there is no repeat of the behaviour, so that the person suffers no further distress.
- Each case of bullying will be dealt with individually, following the guidelines in this policy.
- If bullying or a hate crime is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached or witnessed the concern.
- The school will provide appropriate support for the person being targeted – making sure they are not at risk of immediate harm and will involve them in any decision-making, as appropriate.
- The Head of Learning will interview all parties involved.
- The designated safeguarding lead will be informed of all issues where there are safeguarding concerns.
- The school will inform other staff members, and parents/ carers, where appropriate.
- Support for individuals will be implemented, in consultation with all parties concerned.
- If necessary, other agencies may be consulted or involved, such as: the police (if a criminal offence has been committed) or other local services including Early Help or Children's Social Care (if a child is felt to be at risk of significant harm).
- Where the bullying/incident of hate takes place off the school site or outside of normal school hours (including cyberbullying), the school will ensure that the concern is fully investigated. Appropriate action will be taken, including providing support.
- A clear and precise account of the incident will be recorded by the school in accordance with existing procedures. This will include recording appropriate details regarding decisions and action taken.
- Where an incident of hate is reported/witnessed, the Head of Learning will discuss this incident with parties involved to determine if it is motivated by bias or prejudice.
- If the incident is bias or prejudice-motivated, this will be recorded as an 'incident of hate' and be reported to relevant agencies.
- Everyone involved will be informed about how the school plans to address the issues and they will receive regular updates until they feel confident that the behaviour, and any associated problems, have ceased to distress the person.

Cyberbullying

When responding to cyberbullying concerns, the school will:

- Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified.
- Provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again.
- Encourage the person being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation.
- Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. This may include:
 - looking at use of the school systems;
 - identifying and interviewing possible witnesses;
 - contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary.
- Work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation. This may include:
 - Submitting reports to a service provider to remove content if those involved are unable to be identified or if those involved refuse to or are unable to delete content.
 - Confiscating and searching students' electronic devices, such as mobile phones, in accordance with the law and also the school searching and confiscation policy. (**Note:** Schools should ensure they access the DfE's Searching, screening and confiscation at school and Childnet Cyberbullying guidance to ensure that the schools powers are used proportionately and lawfully).
 - Requesting the deletion of locally-held content and content posted online if they contravene the schools behaviour policy.

Education and Training:

The school will:

- Train all staff to identify all forms of bullying and take appropriate action, following the school's policies and procedures (including recording and reporting incidents).
- Consider a range of opportunities and approaches for addressing bullying throughout the curriculum and other activities e.g. displays, small group discussion etc.
- Publicise the details of internal support, as well as external helplines and websites.
- Provide systematic opportunities to develop students' social and emotional skills, including building resilience and self esteem.

Involvement of students:

The school will:

- Involve students in policy writing and decision making, to ensure that they understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they have to play to prevent bullying.
- Regularly canvas children and young people's views on the extent and nature of bullying.
- Ensure that all students know how to express any concerns they may have about bullying.
- Ensure that all students are aware of the range of outcomes which may be applied against those engaging in bullying.
- Involve students in anti-bullying, inclusive campaigns in schools and embed messages in the wider school curriculum.
- Offer support to all students involved in the bullying incident.

Involvement and Liaison with parents and carers:

The school will:

- Take steps to involve parents and carers in the development of policies and procedures, to ensure they are aware that the school does not tolerate any form of bullying.
- Make sure that key information about bullying (including policies and named points of contact) are available to parents/carers in a variety of formats.
- Ensure all parents and carers know who to contact if they are worried about bullying and where to access independent advice.
- Work with all parents/carers and the local community to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to bullying.

Monitoring and review:

- The school will ensure that they regularly monitor and evaluate mechanisms to ensure that the policy is being consistently applied.
- Any issues identified will be incorporated into the school's development plan.
- The Head of Learning will be informed of all bullying concerns.
- Any bullying incident will be reported and recorded during meetings with the advisory board.

Useful Links and supporting organisations:

- Anti-bullying Alliance: www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk
- Childline: www.childline.org.uk
- Family lives: www.familylives.org.uk
- Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk
- MindEd: www.minded.org.uk
- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- PHSE Association: www.phse-association.org.uk
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- Young Carers: www.youngcarers.net

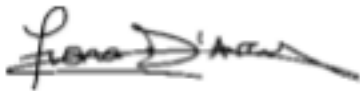
Cyberbullying:

- Childnet International: www.childnet.com
- Internet Watch Foundation: www.iwf.org.uk
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P. Sandf'.

Head of Learning

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lionel D. ...'.

Head of Pastoral Care

Date: October 2025

Review Date: October 2026