

New Horizon Academy: Anti-Bullying Policy

Anti-Bullying Procedure and Guidance

INTRODUCTION

At New Horizon Academy we educate with purpose: to provide our pupils with the tools they need to become independent, achieve economic well-being, contribute to society, and always strive to do their best.

We provide a vibrant environment for the education of children with moderate and severe learning needs who are in the care of New Horizons Care Limited. We will be responsive enough in our teaching approach to consistently meet our pupils' needs and prepare them for the ever-changing world. For this reason, we take every action to remove barriers to learning such as bullying.

REGULATIONS AND RELEVANT GUIDANCE

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- The Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2021)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies

OUTCOME

Children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. Staff prevent and effectively intervene and address bullying

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1. Definition of Bullying and Underlying Principles

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs, or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Sometimes whole organisations can bully. Bullying can be overt and plain to see or can be subtle and insidious. Bullying can become part of the culture, recognised, or believed by all or a significant number of people as 'acceptable'; it can even be encouraged and rewarded, for instance, pupils may feel superior power by venting anger and can feel excited from the fear of others. This can be difficult to detect and challenge if it becomes the 'culture' of the school.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, threats, intimidation, or inciting others to do so, excluding, tormenting (e.g., hiding possessions, threatening gestures).
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, spitting, punching or any use of violence.
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- Disability - threats or actions relating to people's disability
- Homophobic - because of or focusing on the issue of sexual orientation.
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
- Cyberbullying e.g., using mobile phones or social networking sites to intimidate or bully others.

Staff and pupils are capable of bullying and of being bullied. The seriousness of any bullying will depend on several factors:

- How long has the bullying been going on?
- How is it personally affecting the bullied child?
- The number of children involved.
- The degree of planning and provocation.

Any pupil may be bullied but this often occurs where the pupil has been identified as being vulnerable or 'different' or inclined to spend more time on their own.

At New Horizon Academy we are committed to creating a safe, disciplined environment where pupils can learn and fulfil their potential by effectively preventing and tackling bullying.

2. Prevention

Prevention and early intervention are important because bullying which takes place at school does not only affect an individual during childhood but can have a lasting effect on their lives well into adulthood.

Bullying can start with apparently trivial events such as teasing and name calling which nevertheless rely on an abuse of power. Such abuses of power if left unchallenged, can lead to more serious forms of abuse such as domestic violence, racial attacks and sexual harassment.

A climate of openness will be established in which pupils are not afraid to talk about issues and incidents of bullying. This will be a regular agenda item in Key Working sessions, pupil's meetings, and staff meetings.

At New Horizon Academy, each young person has an individual risk assessment outlining concerning behaviours and strategies that staff should follow to minimise the risks. There is a section on bullying which must be completed and kept updated.

We will provide effective training to help staff understand the needs of their pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGB&T) pupils

Staff must be alert to the risk of bullying and should take all reasonable steps to prevent such behaviour. This includes:

- Understanding that even if there are no reports of bullying in the school it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported.
- Implementing a clear policy within the school that bullying is not acceptable.
- Challenging inappropriate behaviour between peers that hurts others physically or emotionally. Staff will not downplay these behaviours as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” because we know it can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.
- Identifying a key member of staff to regularly undertake monitoring of the anti-bullying procedures. It is essential to follow up the policy and procedures with reminders in staff and pupil's meetings; a low-profile policy can be easily forgotten.
- Ensuring that any admissions of children as well as new staff to the school are made aware of the policy and related procedures.
- Ensuring staff are aware of the link between bullying and child protection: When committed by pupils, bullying can be a form of peer-on-peer abuse. 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. Where this

is the case, the school staff should discuss with the school's designated safeguarding lead and report their concerns to their local authority children's social care and work with them to take appropriate action.

- Completing a bullying risk assessment which will highlight hotspots for potential bullying in the school
- Undertaking risk assessments on admission and updating these at appropriate stages thereafter.
- Providing information and guidance to children; openly discussing differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality, or appearance related difference. Also, children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities.
- Teaching children that using any prejudice-based language is unacceptable
- Providing clarity to pupils on acceptable behaviours.
- Providing opportunities for pupils to explore issues of bullying e.g., writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying.
- Reading stories about bullying or having them read to them.
- Making use of role-plays.
- Having discussions about bullying and why it matters.

We all have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Everyone involved in looking after children shares responsibility for countering bullying and for creating a culture which positively encourages acceptable behaviour and reduces or prevents the likelihood of bullying.

As part of this ethos, everyone must understand what bullying means and what measures should be taken within the school and by individual staff to counter it. Staff must also understand that there is a fine line between aggressive or intimidating behaviours between pupils and what is normal acting out.

The Headteacher and staff should discuss each child in staff meetings to identify whether behaviours constitute bullying. For instance, 2 young people who are involved in an altercation which involves name calling or even fighting may or may not be deemed as bullying depending on the age, vulnerability and relationship between them and the impact that the altercation has on each young person.

Having an argument and addressing these issues is an important part of growing up and staff should encourage and support young people to finding a resolution to conflict situations. The timing of this is important as young people need to have had the time and space necessary following an altercation in order to be in the right mind-set for resolution. In these instances, the young person's resolution form needs to be completed.

Everyone should also be clear what measures they should take if they suspect bullying or it is reported to them which will need to be recorded on the Anti-bullying initial concern form.

Pupils should be able to approach any member of staff with personal concerns and not just their keyworker.

Staff should be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. Victims should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting bullying. They should never be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

In this respect, everyone should be alert to the fact that bullying may constitute Significant Harm and, if so, must be reported under the school's Reporting Concerns of Abuse Procedure (Safeguarding Policy).

3. Managing Bullying

In order to maintain an effective strategy for dealing with bullying, staff meetings should challenge misconceptions about bullying e.g.

- It's only a bit of harmless fun.
- It's all part of growing up.
- Children just must put up with it.
- Adults getting involved will make it worse.

Clear messages must be given that bullying is not acceptable, and pupils must be reassured that staff deal with bullying seriously. At New Horizon Academy the consequences of bullying will reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable

We will focus on the bullying behaviour rather than the child and explore and where possible deal with the reasons for the behaviour. We will give a clear explanation of the extent of the upset the bullying has caused, encourage them to see the bullied child's point of view and reward good behaviour towards other children.

If staff have any concerns, they must discuss them with colleagues and the Headteacher, who should take what actions are necessary to reduce or prevent it.

Any bullying concern must be taken seriously and reported using the initial concern form. If a pupil has been physically bullied, consideration needs to be given to what medical assistance is required and whether police involvement is necessary. Any injuries should be recorded on the accident form.

Young people should be assured that it is not their fault and supported in their feelings. Staff should be aware of any underlying issues in relation to the protected characteristics which should be addressed and challenged accordingly.

At New Horizon Academy we take seriously our responsibility to support children who are bullied and make appropriate provision for their needs. The nature and level of support will depend on the individual circumstances and the level of need. These can include a quiet word from a teacher that knows the pupil well, providing formal counselling, engaging with the Registered Manager of the home or where possible - parents, referring to local authority children's services, completing a

Common Assessment Framework or referring to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

It may be appropriate to convene a meeting, preferably with the pupils concerned, to discuss strategies to prevent or reduce the bullying. This may include the following:

- The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise.
- In serious cases (see next paragraph), some form of sanction or exclusion will be considered.
- If possible, the pupils will be reconciled.
- After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be continuously monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.
- The young person's resolution form needs to be completed.

If the pupil is not satisfied following the resolution meeting, the pupil may make a complaint which should be recorded as such. The pupil should be told of other avenues open to them which may include contacting children's rights.

All incidents should be recorded clearly and concisely on the daily record and on the initial concern form and resolution form, a copy of which should be filed in the young person's file.

If the Headteacher is unavailable, staff may take what immediate actions are necessary to reduce or prevent bullying from occurring and then inform the Headteacher as soon as practicable.

4. Notifications and Management Review

There are different notifications procedures depending on the persistence and seriousness of the bullying. Any incidents of bullying reported to staff, which may have occurred at the care home, should be acted on immediately and notifications made to relevant personnel within home.

Parents should also, where applicable, be involved in supporting programmes devised to challenge bullying behaviour. Any concerns of bullying should also be reported to the child's teacher so they can monitor the child during the day.

If the bullying is persistent or serious, it is deemed to be an Incident which must be notified to the Headteacher, the Registered Manager, parents where applicable and relevant Social Worker within 24 hours or as soon as practicable thereafter.

The Headteacher and Social Worker should consider whether the bullying may constitute Significant Harm; if this is likely, a referral should be made under the Reporting Concerns of Abuse Procedure

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to changes in relevant legislation.

Policy reviewed by Katie Davis (Headteacher) November 2023

Policy next to be reviewed November 2024