

The Hermitage School

Anti-bullying Policy

Purpose of this policy

To raise achievement by providing a safe and secure environment for the whole (school) community that ensures the protection of the individual from abuse of any kind. It is important to remember that adults and children alike must be protected from bullying. This policy can be read in conjunction with our Equality and Diversity policy. The Hermitage has adopted Durham County Council's Harassment at Work and Anti-bullying policies for staff.

Definition of bullying

Bullying may be defined as the intentional abuse of power by an individual or group with the intent and motivation to cause distress to another individual or group. It may be physical or non-physical, verbal or non-verbal. The nature of the bullying could be sexual, racial, technological or homophobic

Physical bullying: involves such things as hitting, pushing, kicking, biting, pinching, hair- pulling, etc.

Verbal bullying: involves name-calling, mocking, threatening, etc.

Sexual bullying: involves unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive or inappropriate comments.

Racial bullying: this term refers to a range of hurtful behaviour both physical and psychological that makes a person feel unwelcome, marginalised, excluded, powerless or worthless because of their colour, ethnicity, culture, faith community, national origin or national status. It can take the form of racist jokes, racist name-calling, offensive gestures, assaults or inappropriate comments.

Technological (cyber) bullying: a relatively recent phenomenon which is on the increase, and can involve the use of mobile phones, computers, camera phones, internet etc.

Homophobic bullying: this occurs when bullying is motivated by prejudice against lesbian, gay or bisexual people. It can take the form of verbal or physical attacks because of person's sexual preference (or perceived sexual preference).

Homophobic and Racist Bullying

Homophobia and racism, although different, are both forms of discrimination. In the Hermitage School, we seek to create a positive, understanding and inclusive environment for all staff and students irrespective of their sexual orientation or race.

Recommendations for staff and students

- Treat all people with respect, regardless of their sexuality/race
- Value other cultures and lifestyles. It is okay to be different
- Challenge name calling, no matter what the nature of it
- Ensure equal rights for everyone
- Promote self-esteem of all students through aspects of the school life
- Challenge the use of homophobic/racist language
- Judge people for who they are, not their sexuality/race

Recommendations for staff

- Offer counselling and support around issues concerning all aspects of bullying
- Create opportunities for discussion in school to raise awareness about bullying and its effects.
- Publish telephone help lines and website addresses

Guidelines for students

- If you are being bullied or know someone who is, talk to an adult you can trust. This could be a number of people
- **In school this could be a number of people:**
 - A Learning Support Assistant
 - Your Learning Manager
 - Your Co-ordinator of Learning
 - A member of the Senior Leadership team
 - The School Nurse (???)
- **If you feel you are being bullied:**
 1. Come and talk; we will be friendly; we will help.
 2. You will be listened to, you will be taken seriously and we will try to do something about it.
 3. If you want to talk to a teacher or other adult in the school, they will listen carefully to what you have to say.
 4. The teacher (or other adult) will tell you what can be done, but you will help to decide what happens next.
 5. We might need to tell someone, but we will tell you what we are going to do first.

Cyber Bullying: How to Protect Yourself

Unwanted Calls/Text Messages:

- Adhere to school policy relating to mobile phones in school
- **If you do get an unwanted call or text message:**
 - Do not reply. Save incoming numbers/text messages to show to an adult.
 - Tell an adult straight away. Ask the adult to contact your network provider who may be able to change your number.
- Choose carefully who you give your home/mobile number to. Tell only close friends and family.

Protect Your Phone:

- Security mark (in permanent form) the battery and phone with your postcode and street number.
- Register your phone with the network provider. If you report your phone stolen, the operator should be able to bar the SIM card.
- When using your phone, remain aware of your surroundings and do not use it in crowded areas.
- Avoid displaying your phone where it is in public view. Keep it with you at all times and do not leave it unattended.

E-Mail Bullying:

Anti-Bullying Policy/School Docs/School Policies 2006

Reviewed May 2008; Further Reviewed: 2009 Next Review: May 2010

- Do not reply. Save e-mails to show an adult
- Keep your e-mail address private. Tell only close friends and family
- If it occurs in school, make sure you tell a member of staff immediately

Advice to Parents / Carers

Signs to watch for:

- Cuts and bruises which are not adequately explained
- Clothes or possessions are damaged or lost
- Requests for extra money
- Student starts using different routes to and from school
- Requests for a change of class
- Reluctance or refusal to attend school
- Unwanted telephone calls/texts messages on your mobile

Procedures for parents/carers of students who are concerned that a child may be being bullied

- If parents suspect a child is being bullied, they should always contact school. This should be with the child's agreement, if possible
- Every referral from any parent will be dealt with individually and sensitively and be taken seriously
- All incidents will be investigated and the parents will be informed of the outcome
- The Educational Welfare Officer is available to support the victims of bullying and their families. It is acknowledged that very often the victim's family also suffers from the stress and trauma that bullying can cause. The EWO can offer advice and support to victims of bullying and their family

School-based training for staff

Training is available to staff via CPD to help them be aware of the issue of bullying and "staying safe" via electronic media. Students are also taught, via the Guidance programme, assemblies and ICT lessons, how to protect themselves from potential harm.

Guidelines for all staff

- Dealing with bullying is the responsibility of all members of the school community and should be seen as a priority with a clear commitment from all staff and Governors.
- Students must feel able to tell staff if they are being bullied in the knowledge that they will be listened to and taken seriously.
- In dealing with bullying behaviour, all personnel should be aware of and used to using the defined procedures.
- Direct action against bullying should aim to remind all students that bullying behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- The curriculum should be used to challenge attitudes about bullying behaviour, increase understanding for bullied students and help build an anti-bullying ethos in school.
- The Education Welfare Officer is available to support the victims of bullying and their families. It is acknowledged that very often the victim's family also suffers the stress and trauma that bullying can cause. The EWO can offer advice and support to victims of bullying and their family.

Procedures for staff

- All alleged instances of bullying will be taken seriously, investigated and, where appropriate, parents or carers should be informed
- All instances of bullying behaviour should be responded to promptly and consistently
- The victim should be reassured that their immediate safety and well being will be attended to and what course of action the school intends to take
- The victim will be offered an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience to an adult they can trust
- Evidence of sexual or serious physical abuse or other behaviour that may put the young person at risk should be immediately referred to the Child Protection Officer in School
- Accurate records of incidents should be kept indicating:
 - Who was involved
 - Where and when the incident occurred
 - What happened
 - What action was taken
 - How it was followed up
- For serious or persistent bullying offences, the parents and carers of both parties should be informed and invited to school
- For bullying which results in damage to property or person, senior staff should be notified as there may be legal implications
- Sanctions may include removal of privileges, detentions, internal or fixed term exclusions. The Head Teacher may decide to permanently exclude when there have been serious breaches of this policy or if allowing the student to remain in the school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the students in the school
- Sanctions should also be used in conjunction with work done in Pause Time, at Assemblies and work with outside agencies. Sanctions will be in accordance with school's sanction policy.

Useful Contact Details

County Durham Anti-Bullying Service

Copelaw Education

9, Orchard Lane

Newton Aycliffe

Co Durham

DL5 6UT

Tel: 01325 372812

Web: www.durhamlea.org.uk/abs

Buddy service:

Email: askbuddy@durhamlea.org.uk

Further useful contact details are available from the school's web site.

www.thehermitage-lc.net

Childline

Anti-Bullying Policy/School Docs/School Policies 2006

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Tel: 0800 1111 (free)
Web: www.childline.org.uk

NSPCC

Tel: 0800 800 500 (free)
www.nspcc.org.uk

Parentline

Tel: 08088 00 22 22 (free)
www.parentlineplus.org.uk

Kidscape

Tel: 08451 205204
www.kidscape.org.uk

Staying safe on the internet

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

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