



RELATIONSHIPS AND ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Primary & Secondary

SLT responsible:	Head of School (Primary) / Assistant Headteacher (Secondary)
Last reviewed:	May 2025
Ratified by Trustees:	n/a
Date for next Review	May 2026

Relationships and Anti-Bullying Policy

Objectives of this Policy

- For all trustees, teaching and non-teaching staff, learners and parents to have an understanding of what bullying is.
- For all trustees and teaching and non-teaching staff to know what the college policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- For all learners and parents to know what the college policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- For learners and parents to be assured and shown that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- To develop a shared understanding that bullying will not be tolerated.
- To compliment government guidance in dealing with bullying behaviour e.g. 'Safe to Learn'.
- To support the college in building positive relationships between young people and young people with adults.

Statement of Intent

Hailsham Community College Academy Trust is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our learners so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our college. If bullying does occur, all learners should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively, with appropriate attention being given to emotional well-being of learners where necessary. *Anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell staff.

The aim of the anti-bullying policy is to ensure that learners learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will learners be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at college.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation 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

This policy has been written in accordance with guidance, including, but not limited to:

- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2018) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in Academies' and Colleges'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in Academies'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following Academy policies:

- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour for Learning Policy

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular 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.

Bullying is generally characterised by:

- **Repetition:** Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over a period of time.
- **Intent:** The perpetrator(s) means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
- **Targeting:** Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- **Power imbalance:** Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

Learners who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from college.

The college's teaching and support staff must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with college policy.

Bullying can take many forms such as:

- **Emotional** - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- **Physical** - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- **Racist** - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, ethnic or cultural prejudice
- **Sexual** - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- **Homophobic and biphobic** - focussing on the issue of sexuality.
- **Transphobic** bullying occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against people who identify as trans

- **Disablist** bullying occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against people with any form of disability.
- **Sexist** bullying occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against someone because of their gender
- **Verbal** - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- **Online** - Instances where technology has been used to bully, such as email and internet chat room misuse

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

The potential effects of bullying can impact on a child's emotional well-being e.g self-esteem, self confidence, attainment and attendance.

Involving parents

When a situation arises whereby it appears that, in the secondary phase, a mentor, Assistant Head of Year (AHOY) or Head of Year (HOY) or, in the primary phase, a member of SLT needs to involve key stakeholders from voluntary and statutory organisations, learners will be referred via the weekly HOY meeting or primary SLT meeting whereby support will be sign posted to ensure that the young person concerned receives the appropriate support and the outcome achieved.

Parental support is a key to success of our anti-bullying initiatives. The majority of parents support anti-bullying measures and are keen to participate. Consultation is important, helping create an ethos in which positive behaviour is encouraged, and bullying considered unacceptable.

The first point of contact for parents is likely to be the general office staff in both phases, mentor in the secondary phase or a class teacher in the primary phase. All staff must know the college policy and when to refer parents to someone senior.

Good practice includes:

- recognising that the parent may be angry and upset
- listen carefully to the parent's point of view
- keeping an open mind - bullying can be difficult to detect, so a lack of staff awareness does not mean no bullying occurs
- remaining calm and understanding
- making clear that the college does care and that something will be done explaining the college policy, making sure procedures are followed

When a case is referred to them, the lead member of staff should also:

- ask for details and record the information on the college's safeguarding system 'My Concern' including follow up outcomes and actions.
- make a further follow up appointment to explain actions and find out if it has stopped and this is recorded on MyConcern. (Please see Appendix A - Recording Bullying procedures)

Many of the same points apply when the college must tell the parents that their child is involved in bullying. Parents are more likely to accept a calm approach, following the agreed guidelines of an anti-bullying policy they are familiar with. This helps to defuse anger and resentment.

Who is involved in bullying - and where?

Usually one learner starts bullying a victim. There are often other learners present. These may:

- help the bully by joining in
- help the bully by watching, laughing and shouting encouragement
- remain resolutely uninvolved
- help the victim directly, tell the bullies to stop, or fetch an adult.

Any child can be bullied, and although **none** of these characteristics can excuse it, certain factors can make bullying more likely:

- Changes in academic performance
- Appears anxious
- Regularly feeling sick or unwell and/or wanting to visit the nurse regularly.
- Asking to be driven to college
- Reluctance to come to college.
- Clothes/bags torn or damaged.
- lacking close friends in college
- being shy
- an over-protective family environment
- being from a different racial or ethnic group to the majority
- being different in some obvious respect - such as stammering, having Special Educational Needs or a disability, behaving inappropriately,
- intruding or being a 'nuisance'
- possessing expensive accessories such as mobile phones or computer games

What learners should do if they are being bullied or reporting incidents of bullying behaviour

(these are procedures we expect of staff, learners and parents/carers):

- Learners are responsible for informing a member of staff if they witness bullying or are a victim of bullying. We actively encourage learners not to be a bystander.
 - Not making counter-threats if they are victims of bullying.
 - Walking away from dangerous situations and avoiding involving other learners in incidents.
 - Keeping evidence of cyber bullying and informing a member of staff should they fall victim to cyber bullying.
- The incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached
- In cases of bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff and the voice of the child recorded on MyConcern.

As per our protocol on recording incidents of Child on Child abuse, if a pupil makes an allegation of abuse against another pupil:

- Staff must record the allegation and inform the DSL via MyConcern. If appropriate, the behaviour policy should be used to sanction any poor conduct.
- The DSL will assess the information and ensure that it is categorised and recorded by the nature of the incident ie. Bullying (including the type such as cyber, racial, biphobic etc), physical abuse (identifying the specifics: hitting ,kicking etc) or a Harmful Sexual Behaviour (identifying the risk via the Brook Traffic Light Tool, or other specifics such as sexting or whether the incident was potentially criminal).
- The DSL will identify appropriate outcomes to the incident, which may include school based support or interventions, as well as referrals to other agencies as necessary.
- The DSL will arrange for a risk assessment if required and where necessary create a written support plan for all children involved, including the child/ren who has experienced the abusive behaviour and the child/ren who is alleged to have displayed the abusive behaviour as well as any others affected, with a named person they can all talk to if needed.

Where appropriate, Child on Child abuse or bullying incidents should be dealt with as per our behaviour policy and recorded on Class Charts and MyConcern.

There may be occasions where it is not appropriate for the college behaviour policy to be used and in this instance the DSL will take appropriate action involving referrals to other agencies as necessary.

- In serious cases parents/carers should be informed and will be asked to come into a meeting to discuss the problem
- If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted (101 report)
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated, and the bullying stopped quickly
- An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour

All cases are looked at on an individual basis and the College has a range of strategies to call upon. In the majority of cases a '**restorative approach**' is used in the first instance.

- The **restorative approach** is based on the belief that the people best placed to resolve a conflict or a problem are the people directly involved, and that imposed solutions are less effective, less educative and possibly less likely to be honoured. Staff closely monitor the outcome to ensure progress has been made.

Learners who have been bullied will be supported by:

- offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a mentor or member of staff of their choice

- reassuring the learner
- offering continuous support
- restoring self-esteem and confidence
- sign posting to relevant external support services

Learners who have bullied will be helped by:

- discussing what happened
- discovering why the learner became involved
- establishing the wrongdoing and need to change
- informing parents or guardians to help change the attitude of the learner

There are times, e.g. due to the bully's emotional immaturity, a very serious incident such as serious physical assault, or the failure of a restorative approach, where additional intervention is necessary.

The following disciplinary steps can be taken:

- official warnings to cease offending or withdrawal of certain school privileges
- detention in the secondary phase and consequence time in the primary phase
- placed in the Reflection room (Internal Intervention facility) in the secondary phase, internally excluded in the primary phase
- Involvement of parent/carers
- involvement of the House Leader/Police
- exclusion from certain areas of college premises
- minor fixed-term suspension
- major fixed-term suspension
- permanent exclusion

Monitoring, evaluation and review

Hailsham Community College Academy Trust will review its policy and procedures annually and assess the implementation and effectiveness of various strategies used. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the college and with parents/carers.

We ask the learners in the secondary phase to complete an annual questionnaire which includes an area on bullying, this seeks the views of learners about their experiences of bullying related activities. We encourage all learners to complete the survey which is filled in online and confidential. The results of the survey are used to support the review of the development of our policy.

The risks of bullying to the victims

Victims may be reluctant to attend college and are often absent. They may be more anxious and insecure than others, having fewer friends and often feeling unhappy and lonely. Victims can suffer from low self-esteem and negative self-image, looking upon themselves as failures - feeling stupid, ashamed and unattractive.

Victims may present a variety of symptoms to health professionals, including fits, faints, vomiting, limb pains, paralysis, hyperventilation, visual symptoms, headaches, stomach aches, bed wetting, sleeping difficulties and sadness. Being bullied may lead to depression or, in the most serious cases, attempted suicide. It may lead to anxiety, depression, loneliness and lack of trust in adult life.

Online bullying

This is the use of technology particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else.

There are some features of Online bullying which are different from other forms of bullying:

- It can take place at any time and can invade home/personal space.
- The audience can be very large and reached rapidly.
- People believe it is easy to attempt to remain anonymous.
- Some instances are known to be unintentional.
- Some incidents can themselves act as evidence.

Preventing Online bullying

The best way to deal with Online bullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. There is no single solution but there are five key areas to be addressed:

The whole college community will be aware of the impact of Online bullying through discussion via mentor time, ICT and Computing lessons and presentation via assembly. Learners and their parents will be made aware of their responsibilities in their use of technology, and what the sanctions are for misuse. They will also know that the college can provide them with support if Online bullying takes place out of college.

The college will continually review its acceptable use policy for ICT and publicise these to learners and parents. Incidents of Online bullying will be recorded, and internet use will be continually monitored.

Supporting the person being bullied

Learners need to be reassured that they have done the right thing by telling someone.

The following advice should be given:

- Learners must know not to retaliate or return the message
- The learners should be helped to keep relevant evidence for an investigation (e.g text message, screen shots, etc.)
- Discuss ways in which the learner can prevent the bullying from happening again, e.g changing contact details, blocking contacts or leaving a chat room.
- Parents will be advised to report the content/incident to the service provider

- Parents to monitor their child's social media and phone use, ensuring age appropriateness
- When there is an out-of-college incident occurring, parents will be advised to report the incident to the police via 101
- Staff are expected to take appropriate action to contain an incident where content has been circulated:
 - If the person responsible is known, they should be expected to remove the content.
 - Staff may contact the host (e.g., the social networking site) to make a report to get the content removed.
 - Learners who have been Online bullying may have their phones confiscated and presented to parents.
 - In cases of illegal content, the matter will be referred to the DSL with appropriate follow-up actions taken i.e. referred to police.

Key Safety Advice

For children and young people

1. Always respect others – be careful what you say online and what images you send.
2. Think before you send – whatever you send can be made very public very quickly.
3. Keep your password to yourself – only give mobile number or personal website address to trusted friends.
4. Block the bully – learn how to block or report someone behaving unacceptably.
5. Don't retaliate or reply.
6. Save the evidence – text messages, pictures, etc.
7. Make sure you tell an adult you trust.

For parents and carers

1. Be aware, your child may as likely Online bully as be a target of Online bullying. Be alert to your child seeming upset after using the internet or mobile phone.
2. Talk to your child and understand the ways in which they are using the internet and their mobile phone.
3. Regularly check your child's phone and ensure social media use is age appropriate
4. Monitor your child's time on electronic devices and use internet providers tools to restrict access if required.
5. Use the tools on the service and turn on the in-built internet safety features.
6. Remind your child not to retaliate.
7. Keep the evidence of offending emails, text messages or online conversations.
8. Report the Online bullying to a member of staff at the college where the issue involves another learner. Depending on the severity of the problem, consider contacting the service provider and the local police.

Bullying by text messages on mobile phones

Children should be careful who they give their phone number to and keep a record of the date and time of any offensive message. Teachers need to encourage victims to save messages they are concerned about and discuss them with the DSL or HOY. When learners report bullying text messages the college needs to take the complaint seriously; the child's family might also need to contact the police by calling 101.

If such bullying has been carried out by one or more learners on a persistent basis, or there has been a threat of violence, it will need to be dealt with firmly. The same also applies to malicious e-mails sent by other learners.

Prevent - Choosing strategies for reducing bullying

The following outlines the range of **key strategies** used by Hailsham Community College Academy Trust to deal with bullying depending on the nature and severity of the incident. A single strategy may not provide a complete solution on its own to the problem.

✚ Co-operative Group Work

Within the curriculum the college will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in PSHE/Citizenship, mentor time in the secondary phase, circle time in the primary phase, assemblies and subject areas, as appropriate, in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour. Learners are encouraged to explore issues and controversies by;

- considering different points of view,
- be more tolerant of others and more willing to listen,
- trust those of the opposite gender and those from other ethnic groups,
- become better integrated into the peer group

✚ Befriending

Befriending involves assigning selected learner volunteers to 'be with' or 'befriend' peers whom teachers have referred.

Befrienders:

- need friendly personal qualities give support with emotional and social problems - newness to a college, difficulty making friends, upset at separation or loss, being bullied or socially excluded, run after-college clubs offering companionship and activities to peers who would otherwise be miserable and alone may share a common difficulty - for example bereavement - perhaps setting up a support group
- The befriended feel more positive about themselves having had someone to talk to about their problems. Befrienders feel more confident and value other people more.

✚ Mediation by peers

The secondary phase has developed a team of trained peer mentors who can support in dealing with incidents of low level bullying by:

- enabling victim and bully to identify problems and solutions,
- defusing tension between peers ensure that all involved come away with a sense that the outcome is fair to both sides.

✚ **Developing a playground policy**

Effective supervision involves moving around the grounds, talking briefly with learners and anticipating potential difficulties. A suspected problem should be quietly and promptly investigated. The playgrounds are monitored by staff who complete this task as part of the whole college duties. A safe, supervised place, such as the LRC is available for secondary learners to go to at lunch or break time if they are involved in conflict with their peers or wish to avoid a bully. At primary site, similar systems apply. Playgrounds are monitored by staff and a member of SLT is always on call for any concerns that arise. Children are able to access a lunch/break club in both phases, which is inside and offers a quiet space for children to come away from the busy playground environment.

Anti-Bullying Week

Hailsham Community College Academy Trust actively takes part in Anti Bullying Week. This is a National scheme that aims to raise the awareness of the effects of bullying on the lives of children and young people and to bring about positive change. The aims of the week were to:

- Raise awareness of the effects of bullying on the lives of children and young people - both in the short and long term.
- Encourage children and young people to challenge bullying wherever it happens - whether in school, in sport, in other activities or in Online. Make sure that all children and young people feel confident to take part without bullying or intimidation.
- Make sure that all schools, colleges, sports clubs and youth providers take active steps to prevent bullying and are inclusive of all children and young people
- Empower children and young people to take the lead in bullying prevention in all areas of school life including sports and extra-curricular activities
- Take active steps to support children and young people who may have been affected by bullying
- Create opportunities for children and young people to use their unique skills and talents to send a clear message that *we're better without bullying*.

This is a National initiative that we support through the curriculum, in assemblies and through the pastoral programme. The learners also complete a Relationships Survey which explores the perceptions and experiences of bullying. The feedback received is used to review the HCC policy annually as well as ensuring our mentoring and PSHE programme covers key topics of learner concern.

Bullying outside of the College

Teachers have the power to discipline learners for misbehaving outside the College premises. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the College premises such as on public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

Where bullying outside College is reported to College staff, if the learner is in uniform and bringing the College into disrepute, it will be investigated and acted on. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, the College can only discipline the learner on College premises, or elsewhere when the learner is under the lawful control of the staff member.

Headteachers have a specific statutory power to discipline learners for poor behaviour outside of the Academy premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives headteachers the power to regulate learners' conduct when they are not on Academy premises and therefore not under the lawful charge of an Academy staff member.

The Executive Headteacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or antisocial behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a learner. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will always be informed.

Support for staff who are bullied

It is important that schools take measures to prevent and tackle bullying among students, but it is equally important that schools make it clear that bullying of staff, whether by students, parents/carers or colleagues, is unacceptable. Employees should see if they can sort out the problem informally first, if they cannot, they should take it to their:

- Head of Department
- Human resources (HR) department
- Trade union representative
- Head of Secondary/Primary

If this does not work, they can make a formal complaint using their employer's grievance procedure.

Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed every year by the Heads of School, Trustees and the Senior Leader responsible for monitoring the policy.

The scheduled review date for this policy is May 2026.