Anti-Bullying Policy

Written by: Alice Brennan and Lauren Bannister

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School statement on bullying

LVS Hassocks is a place where every person has the right to be themselves and to be included in a safe and happy environment. Everyone at our school is equal and should be treated with respect. Bullying is unacceptable. At our school, the safety, welfare, and wellbeing of all students and staff is a key priority. We take all incidences of bullying seriously, and it is our duty as a whole school community to take measures to prevent and tackle any bullying, harassment, or discrimination.

We actively promote values of respect and equality, and work to ensure that difference and diversity is celebrated across the whole school community. We want to enable our students to become responsible citizens and prepare them for their adult life. These values reflect those that will be expected of our students by society when they leave school and enter the world of work or further study.

Aims and purposes of the policy

The aim of this policy is to define bullying, explain what actions the school will take when bullying occurs and to ensure that all staff understand how to respond to bullying in school, so that parents/carers are aware and to ensure the safety, security and wellbeing of all students in the school.

This policy considers the social communication difficulties of our students and outlines the importance of interventions such as explicit teaching and restoration work. We are committed to improving our school's approach to tackling bullying by regularly monitoring, reviewing and assessing the impact of our preventative measures.

What is the Legal Framework for the Policy?

The Licensed Trade Charity is committed to complying with all relevant anti bullying legislation, in particular:

- Race Relations Act 1965 (amended 2000)
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Education Act 2011
- Children Act 2004
- Education and Inspection Act 2006
- Healthy Schools Anti–Bullying – a guidance for schools
- Preventing & Tackling Bullying – advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies, July 2017
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2024

What other documents relate to the Anti-Bullying and Cyber Bullying Policy?

- Wellbeing policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Child Protection Safeguarding Policy

- Low Level Concern Policy
- PSHE Policy
- Relationship and Sex Education Policy
- SEN Policy
- Online and E-Safety Policy
- Record of Complaints
- Staff Handbook

1. Definition of bullying

Bullying is hurtful or unkind behaviour which is deliberate and repeated. Bullying can be carried out by an individual or a group of people towards another individual or group, where the bully or bullies hold more power than those being bullied.

The nature of bullying can be:

- PHYSICAL– such as hitting or physically intimidating someone or using inappropriate or unwanted physical contact towards someone
- ATTACKING PROPERTY– such as damaging, stealing or hiding someone's possessions
- COMMUNICATION (VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL) – such as name calling, spreading rumors about someone, using derogatory or offensive language or threatening someone, swearing (verbal and non-verbal), mocking/imitating
- PSYCHOLOGICAL– such as deliberately excluding, ignoring people/alienating people
- CYBER– such as using text, email or other social media to write or say hurtful things about someone

Bullying behaviours are characterised by the following attributes:

- The behaviour is repeated
- The behaviour is intentional
- The person or group who are carrying out the bullying behaviours have more power than the victim or victims of bullying
- The behaviour causes physical or emotional harm for the individual or group who is targeted

Bullying can be based on any of the following things:
- Race (racist bullying)
- Religion or belief
- Culture
- Social Class or socio-economic background
- Gender (sexist bullying)
- Sexual Orientation (homophobic or biphobic bullying)
- Trans Identity, Including non-binary (transphobic bullying)
- Special Educational Needs (SEN), Additional Learning Needs (ALN), Additional Support Needs (ASN), OR Disability
- Appearance
- Related to home or other personal circumstances
- Related to another vulnerable group of people

Sometimes, the behaviour of the students at LVS Hassocks may appear to be bullying in nature, due to students' difficulties related to their diagnosis, such as difficulties with communication, socialisation and imagination. Students may find it difficult to socialise appropriately with others and may have problems communicating with peers, sometimes making comments which feel to them, that they are merely stating the obvious. All staff need to be aware of students' difficulties when dealing with allegations/observations of bullying.

Prejudice-based incidents

A prejudice-based incident is an incident of unkind or hurtful behaviour that is motivated by a prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views towards a protected characteristic or minority group. It can be targeted towards an individual or group of people and have a significant impact on those targeted. All prejudice-based incidents are taken seriously and recorded and monitored in school, with the Principal regularly reporting incidents to the governing body. This not only ensures that all incidents are dealt with accordingly, but also helps to prevent bullying as it enables targeted anti-bullying interventions.

2. **Social communication difficulties vs bullying**

The students at LVS Hassocks are vulnerable due to their social communication skills. This means that they can find it hard to navigate relationships and can find it hard to:

- Understand the social rules of peer relationships and friendships
- Understand that sometimes rules change from person to person, or use their observation skills to see if a rule should be changed due to how someone is feeling
- Use assertive language to get their needs met
- Know the conversational rules and rituals and how to use these flexibly
- Understand how to joke and understand the boundaries of jokes so you don't upset others
- Come up with ideas for conversation and rapport building with peers
- Understand and use appropriate nonverbal communication
- Perspective take and understand why someone else might think a different way to them
- Understand how to be tactful
- Understand the boundaries of relationships
- Understand and navigate social media

Because of this, often their words and actions can be perceived as bullying. It is important that staff monitor this to ensure that students are supported with their social communication.

3. **School initiatives to prevent bullying:**

We use a range of measures to prevent bullying including:

- A student-friendly anti-bullying policy in every classroom, which ensures all pupils understand and uphold the anti-bullying policy

- Our Wellbeing policy sets clear expectations about acceptable behaviour and how members of the school community should treat one another
- Our curriculum includes opportunities for students to learn about different types of bullying and what they can do to prevent and respond to bullying in PSHE and Social Skills Lessons
- Tutor time provides regular opportunities to discuss issues that may arise in class and for form tutors to target specific interventions
- Assemblies and the weekly 'shout-out' help raise pupils' awareness of bullying and derogatory language
- Difference and diversity are celebrated across the school through diverse displays, books and images. The whole school participates in events including Anti-bullying week, Black History Month and LGBTQ+ History Month and World Autism Acceptance Week
- The school values of equality and respect are embedded across the curriculum to ensure that it is as inclusive as possible
- Stereotypes are challenged by staff and pupils across the school
- Restorative work and communication programmes provide support to targets of bullying, and those who show bullying behaviour
- Students are continually involved in developing school-wide anti-bullying initiatives through consultation, such as the school council and student feedback through student individual annual reviews
- Working with parents and carers, and in partnership with community organisations, to tackle bullying where appropriate
- The work of our work of anti-bullying ambassadors

4. Reporting bullying

We are a 'telling' school. This means anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff. If a student is being bullied, they are encouraged to not retaliate but to tell someone they trust about it such as a friend, family member or trusted adult.

Students can report bullying in the following ways:
- Report to a staff member
- Emailing: time2talk@lvs-hassocks.org.uk
- Using the anonymous school "I need to talk" post box
- Call ChildLine to speak with someone in confidence on 0800 1111 (posters around the School)

Anonymous reporting mechanisms such as our time to talk post box, are particularly important for LGBTQ+ young people who may worry that reporting bullying might involve discussing their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Reporting – roles and responsibilities

STAFF: All school staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have a duty to report bullying, to be vigilant to the signs of bullying and to play an active role in the school's efforts to prevent bullying. If staff are aware of bullying, they should reassure the students involved and inform a relevant member of the staff team, such as the student's tutor or a member of the senior leadership team.

The following staff members are anti-bullying leads:

- Alice Brennan Alice.Brennan@Lvs-Hassocks.org.uk
- Lauren Bannister Lauren.Bannister@lvs-hassocks.org.uk

SENIOR STAFF: The Senior Leadership Team and the Principal have overall responsibility for ensuring that the anti-bullying policy is followed by all members of staff and that the school upholds its duty to promote the safety and well-being of all young people.

PARENTS AND CARERS: Parents and carers should look out for potential signs of bullying such as distress, feigning illness or other behaviour that is unusual for the child. Parents and carers should tell their child not to retaliate and support and encourage them to report the bullying. Parents and carers can report an incident of bullying to the school either in person, or by phoning or emailing the school office or a member of staff- info@lvs-hassocks.org.uk

STUDENTS: Students should not take part in any kind of bullying and should watch out for potential signs of bullying among their peers, if they are able to do so. If students witness bullying, they should support the victim, encourage them to report the bullying and, if possible, accompany them to tell a trusted adult.

4. Responding to bullying

When bullying has been reported, the following actions will be taken:

- Staff will record the bullying centrally on iSAMS (Reward and Conduct manager) and inform the key member of staff involved with the student, the class tutor
- Designated school staff (Assistant Head, Alice Brennan) will monitor incidents reported on iSAMS. Actions taken regarding bullying will be documented by relevant staff on iSAMS; information recorded shall be analysed and evaluated by the senior leadership team
- Staff will pro-actively respond to the bully, who may require support from the wellbeing team, their tutor, senior leadership team or through the use of restorative practice programmes or other appropriate actions, such as support through use of social stories or comic strip conversations
- Staff will liase with parents/carers to ensure they are aware of any incidents of bullying where their child is either the victim or perpetrator.
- Bullying reports will be delivered to governors termly as part of the safeguarding report

- Support will be offered to those who are the target of bullying from the safeguarding or the wellbeing team in school, from their class tutor or through the use of restorative practice or other appropriate actions, dependent on the individual needs of the child
- Staff will assess whether any other authorities (such as police or the local authority) need to be involved, particularly where actions take place outside of school.

Restorative Practice Guidance following an incident of bullying:

1. **Breaking the situation down**

This should be done in liaison with the staff that were there, and the student and the victim to find out the student's intention, feelings, any antecedents, the goal etc. The following supports should be used to do this:
- Comic strip conversations
- Perspective taking visuals
- Using Blank's questions to build up a picture from setting the scene to describing their thoughts, feelings and predicting what might have happened if they did something different.

2. **Explicit teaching and restoration**

If a student has lagging social communication skills, then the following things should be done to support a student:
- Explicit teaching of the social rules, with the step-by-step process, the rationales for why these happen and exceptions to the rule.
- Practice and role play of the skills.
- Social stories about what happens when the unwanted behaviour happens and how the student can get a better result for themselves and others.
- Perspective taking support to better understand someone else's point of view.
- Restorative work to make sure they understand the impact of their actions on someone else and an open conversation to see how they can restore the relationship.

3. **Set goals**

Staff should not expect that the target behaviour is able to be demonstrated right away. Instead, the skills should be broken down into small steps, and small steps should be incorporated into their EHCP outcome tracker to support them to make steps towards the target behaviour, with rationales and understanding of the purpose of this.

5. Bullying outside of school

Bullying can take place on the way to and from school, before or after school hours, at the weekends or during the holidays, or in the wider community. The nature of online bullying in particular, means that it can impact on students' well-being beyond the school day. Staff, parents and carers, and pupils must be vigilant to bullying outside of school.

Where a report of bullying outside of school is made to the Safeguarding Team, the team will ensure that all parents/carers are made aware of the incident and recommendations will be made about how to support the young person at home and prevent further incidences occurring.

In cases of bullying outside of school the following recommendations may be made:

- Reports to the police
- Reports to specific social media outlet
- Blocking of people on social media/mobile phones
- Suggestions of apps that parents/carers can use to closely monitor their child's online activity
- Referring to the communication guidance available in the Home Autism Toolkit
- Recommending websites that offer advice/support to parents and carers such as the NSPCC.

9. Responding to Cyber Bullying

Some features of cyber bullying differ from other forms of bullying and may prompt a particular response. The key differences are:
- **impact**: the scale and scope of cyber bullying can be greater than other forms of bullying
- targets and perpetrators: the people involved may have a different profile to traditional bullies and their targets
- **location**: the 24/7 and anywhere nature of cyber bullying
- **anonymity**: the person being bullied will not always know who is bullying them
- **motivation**: some students may not be aware that what they are doing is bullying
- **evidence**: unlike other forms of bullying, the target of the bullying will have evidence of its occurrence, although with some applications this may be time limited
- it is possible that a member of staff may be a victim and these responses apply to them too

Support for the person being bullied
- Offer emotional support; reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling someone
- Advise the person not to retaliate or reply. Instead, keep the evidence and take it to their parent or a member of staff
- Advise the person to consider what information they have in the public domain
- Unless the victim sees it as a punishment, they may be advised to change e.g. mobile phone number
- If hurtful or embarrassing content is being distributed, try to get it removed from the web. If the person who posted it is known, ensure they understand why it is wrong and ask them to remove it. Alternatively, contact the host provider and make a report to get the content taken down
- In some cases, the person being bullied may be able to block the person bullying from their sites and services.

Investigation
- Members of staff should contact a member of the Safeguarding Team in all cases of cyber bullying
- Staff and pupils should be advised to preserve evidence and a record of abuse; save phone messages, record or save-and-print instant messenger conversations, print or produce a screenshot of social network pages, print, save and forward to staff whole email messages.
- If images are involved, determine whether they might be illegal or raise child protection concerns. If so, contact: the local police or CEOP (http://www.ceop.gov.uk/)
- Identify the bully where possible
- Any allegations against staff should be handled as other allegations following guidance in Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education
- Contact the police in cases of actual/suspected illegal content

- **10. Training**

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that all school staff, both teaching and Non-teaching (including the estates team, cleaning and catering teams) receive regular training on all aspects of the anti-bullying policy.

11. Monitoring and reviewing

The Principal is responsible for reporting to the governing body (and the local authority where applicable) on how the policy is being enforced and upheld, via the termly report. The governors are in turn responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the policy via the termly report and by in-school monitoring such as learning walks and focus groups with students.
The policy is reviewed every 12 months, in consultation with the whole school community including staff, students, parents and carers and governors.