

“Enjoying ‘life in all its fullness’ by achieving your personal best!”



Anti Bullying Policy

THE HEREFORD ACADEMY

1. Introduction

The Governors of The Hereford Academy believe it is essential that students can 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 students be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at schools.

2. Definition of Bullying

The act of bullying is a conscious desire to hurt, threaten, intimidate or frighten someone, and as a form of aggressive behaviour which is usually hurtful and deliberate: it is often persistent sometimes continuing for weeks, months or even years and it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

Underlying most bullying behaviour is an abuse of power and a desire to intimidate and dominate. However, there is a danger that the word ‘bullying’ will become an over-generalised term for all manner of childhood squabbles, one-off fights and acts of aggression are of serious concern to us, and will be dealt with as part of school life.

All incidents involving aggression which do occasionally occur as part of the school’s policy on discipline; this policy particularly focuses on those incidents which are deliberate and often premeditated prolonged physical and / or verbal “attacks” upon victims who are generally younger, smaller, weaker or vulnerable in some way.

3. Types of Bullying

Bullying can manifest itself in a variety of ways, physical, verbal or emotional, and each type can be extremely distressing for the victim.

Bullying can be carried out by individuals or groups of children. Bullies often try to involve other people in their behaviour; other students who act as an audience to the bully’s actions are a part of the bullying especially if they go to places secretly because they know something is going to happen. If bullies are allowed to continue, no student is safe from being threatened.

3.1 Physical Bullying

This involves hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, pinching or poking someone. It can also involve the use of a weapon. Violent behaviour of this sort is against the law as well as being against school rules.

3.2 Verbal Bullying

This includes name calling, taunting, and teasing, often using offensive and abusive language.

3.3 Indirect Bullying

This includes spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups.

3.4 Other Forms of Bullying

This includes rude gestures, intimidation, extortion (e.g. taking crisps or dinner money), damaging others' property, or forcing someone to steal money or property.

3.5 Racist Bullying

This includes name calling, racist jokes or offensive mimicry, physical threats or attacks. It can also involve written insults against people, culture or customs. This may appear in graffiti, badges or leaflets brought into school. It may also be seen in certain types of behaviour such as refusing to co-operate in work or in play.

3.6 Sexual Bullying

This type of bullying impacts on both genders; it is characterised by behaviours such as abusive name calling, comments about appearance or inappropriate and uninvited touching. It includes the use of sexual innuendos and propositions. The use of pornographic material or graffiti with sexual content may also characterise sexual bullying. In extreme cases it may be in the form of sexual assault.

Sexual bullying may also be related to sexual orientation. Students do not have to be lesbian, gay or bi-sexual to experience such bullying – just being 'different' can be enough. Homophobic comments, graffiti and physical bullying are all forms of sexual bullying.

3.7 Cyber Bullying

Text messaging and emailing can be used as a vehicle for bullying, and young people should be careful who they give their phone number or email address to. Messages sent this way on a persistent basis with a threat of violence are serious matters and constitute a form of bullying.

4. Combating Bullying Types of Behaviour at the Academy

4.1 Aim

To work towards the prevention of bullying rather than just reacting to bullying.

4.2 Objectives

- Promote and develop the self-esteem of each student, thereby helping young people to avoid becoming the victims of bullying. Positive self-esteem also helps to build an ethos in which students do not feel the need to bully others in order to achieve status.

- Promote and develop self-confidence of each student, thereby helping students to realise their strengths and talents according to their own aptitudes, and channelling these in a positive fashion; enabling students by recognising their own self-worth, to stand up for their rights in a responsible and constructive manner and to be generous about other people's limitations.
- Promote and develop within our students a respect for 'differences' between each of us as individuals and within society in general.
- Encourage an atmosphere of kindness and consideration towards others.

Curricular and extra curricular activities make a vital contribution to the realisation of these objectives.

5. Expectations of Student Behaviour at the Academy

- Students are expected to avoid using physical violence towards any other person. Violence is not an acceptable way of solving problems and will normally result in serious punishment.
- Verbal bullying is not an acceptable form of behaviour; deliberately hurtful name-calling or teasing will be treated as seriously as physical forms of bullying with appropriate sanctions / actions being taken against the bully.
- Other forms of bullying (e.g. damaging personal property) are clearly against school rules and will be treated as a very serious matter.
- Any student witnessing bullying behaviour of any sort should report the matter, in confidence if required, to a member of staff or responsible adult. We are anxious to maintain a safe environment in which students feel able to disclose information about bullying, in the knowledge that it will be acted upon in the best interests of both the victim and bully.

Clearly, bullying of any type is totally unacceptable behaviour. To this end The Hereford Academy will:

- Use a range of strategies to outlaw bullying including assemblies, the curriculum, individual counselling and help and advice to both groups and individuals. We shall employ the full range of sanctions available to us if positive intervention is not successful in modifying the behaviour of bullies.
- Encourage students to understand just how hurtful bullying can be and provide support to both bullies and victims in an effort to prevent the problem from recurring.
- Provide guidelines for staff, students, parents and Governors about how bullying can be dealt with effectively.

6. Guidance about Bullying for Students

6.1 When someone is being bullied or in distress, students should:

- Tell a member of staff immediately. If necessary, the student should take a friend along for support; we recognise that students may be too frightened to tell a teacher, but it is this fear which enables the bully to operate effectively. If students do not feel able to tell an adult in school, they may feel easier about reporting the incident to parents, relatives or older friends, who can, in turn help by contacting us and alerting an appropriate member of staff of the situation. Peer supporters are also available in the Infozone daily. Every report of bullying is thoroughly investigated by a member of staff, parents informed and appropriate action taken, ranging from help, advice and counselling, through to the most serious of school sanctions including exclusion. The school can assist both bullies and victims by offering help and support by referral to outside agencies.
- Not tolerate a bully in a group of friends. Bullies will soon stop their behaviour if they realise that everyone disapproves.
- Not 'hit back', or join in the same sort of behaviour as the bullies. This will only make matters worse, and may result in students being accused of bullying. Students should not repeat unpleasant things said, or carry messages or threats they hear from someone else.
- If you do not wish to speak to an adult, but wish to report a bullying incident, you may post your concerns in the anti-bullying box in the library.

6.2 REMEMBER: WATCHING AND DOING NOTHING DOES NOT HELP AND CAN SUGGEST STUDENTS' SUPPORT FOR THE BULLY'S ACTIONS – THE NEXT TIME, IT COULD BE YOU!

7. Guidance for Staff

- Watch for signs of distress in students; deterioration in work, isolation, regular 'illness', erratic attendance, the desire to remain with adults. These may be signs of bullying, but they can also be symptomatic of other problems.
- Treat all reports of bullying seriously; take prompt action according to the needs of the situation, record all incidents, indicating action taken and ensure appropriate Pastoral Staff are informed. Feedback should be given to those involved of any actions taken.
- Offer immediate support to the victim and collect facts which may be pertinent to the investigation. Ensure that all information is recorded on Facility E Portal and placed on the appropriate student's file once the matter has been dealt with. Records of action taken should also be appended.
- Continue to monitor for further signs of bullying.
- Parents of both the bully and victim should be contacted.

8. Guidance for Parents

- Watch for signs of distress in your child, e.g. an unwillingness to attend school, or a pattern of headaches or stomach aches. Other signs may include requests for extra pocket money or property going missing.
- Take an active interest in your child's school life; discuss friendships, the day's events and any problems which may arise.
- Inform the school if you think your child may be being bullied; your child's Form Teacher or Key Stage staff should be your first point of contact.
- If the bullying continues either in or out of school, keep a written record of incidents so that you know:

Who was involved
What was said or done
Where it took place
When it took place

- Together with the school devise ways of dealing with the problem which will provide your child with support both in and outside school.
- If the problem occurs outside school, you may need to involve the Police in order to make clear the legal implications of the bullying.
- Do not encourage your child to hit back, however, tempting this option might seem. Ultimately, it will only make matters worse. On the positive side, do encourage your child to make friends and to bring friends home. A child with friends is less likely to be bullied.
- Try to discourage your child from bringing family / friendship disputes which stem from incidents outside, into school.

9. School Procedures on Bullying

9.1 Preventing Bullying

In order to minimise bullying we have the following preventative measures in place:

- There is a comprehensive rota of staff duties to monitor student behaviour around school at break and lunchtime; clear evidence of staff presence around school is in itself a deterrent to bullies and staff are encouraged to arrive at duty points promptly.
- The use of notice boards and displays around school to increase awareness of how unacceptable bullying is and to increase students' knowledge about how to handle it.
- The Infozone and clubs are available in school at lunchtime.
- Peer support system is offered to support victims of bullying and encourage them to tell someone. This is located in the Infozone.

- An anti-bullying box is available in the library so that students can report bullying easily. This is checked regularly and issues dealt with promptly by Key Stage staff.
- Students need to be used as a positive resource in countering the problem of bullying. Bullying is explored through the curriculum in subjects such as English, Drama and PSHE / COPE. Frank, honest discussions will help to expose problems in a sincere, genuine manner. Students should be enlisted to help shy children, or newcomers, to become accepted members of our school community.

9.2 Responding to Bullying Incidents

In order to minimise bullying, we need to respond promptly and effectively to an incident which occurs, either in school or on the way to or from school.

- Listen to students who report bullying and pass on any information about bullying to appropriate pastoral team as quickly as possible.

The following procedures should ideally be used wherever possible by the appropriate pastoral team:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached, they should report concerns to the relevant Head of Key Stage who will;
- Interview the victim, recording the main points in a statement.
- Interview the bully, recording the main points in a statement.
- Obtain witness statements to particular incidents.
- A log should be made on Facility E Portal. Student records and copies of statements placed in student's files.
- In the case of bullying and racial harassment or abuse full details should be submitted to the Vice Principal (Community) on an Inter-Agency Monitoring Form In keeping with the Authority's guidelines for dealing with Bullying, Racial Harassment or Racist Incidents, the Principal will:
 - Report the incident to the Governing Body, via the Principal's Report to Governors.
 - Ensure that the completed Inter-Agency Monitoring Form is returned to the Local Authority.
- Try to reconcile both the victim and bully. At the very least ensure that the victim knows what action you have taken and monitor his / her welfare throughout the day and over the next few days / weeks as appropriate. The aggressor should receive notice of the action / sanction the school intends to impose as a result of his / her behaviour.
- Counselling for the bully or the victim will be provided if appropriate. Work on Anger Management or Emotional Literacy may be an appropriate follow-up in some cases.

- Contact the parents of both parties to ensure they are aware of the situation; arrange meetings as appropriate. Keep parents informed appropriately and ensure their involvement and support in order to resolve the situation.
- The situation should be monitored by an agreed member of the Pastoral Team (Form Teacher, Key Stage Staff) to facilitate prompt action in case of any repetition as a result of the incident. A bullying log sheet may be used to monitor incidents.
- In the case of a bullying incident, details should be passed on to the relevant Head of Key Stage for monitoring of frequency and trends.

10 Students who have been bullied will be supported by

- offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a form tutor or member of staff of their choice;
- reassuring the student;
- offering continuous support; and
- restoring self-esteem and confidence.

11 Students who have bullied will be helped by:

- discussing what happened;
- discovering why the student became involved;
- establishing the wrong doing and need to change; and
- informing parents to help change the attitude of the student.

12 The following disciplinary steps can be taken:

- official warnings to cease offending;
- C4 detention
- exclusion from certain areas of school premises;
- withdrawal of some break and or lunchtime breaks for a specified period
- C6 Internal Seclusion;
- C7 Fixed Term Exclusion; and
- C8 Permanent Exclusion