



Anti

Bullying Policy

Date of Approval:	July 2023
Approved by:	Executive Team – Awaiting approval from LAC Autumn 2023
Review date:	July 2024

Policy Information:

Date of last review	N/A	Review period	Annually
Date approved	July 2023	Approved by	Executive Team – to be approved by LAC Autumn Term 2023
Policy owner	Nicola Redhead	Date of next review	July 2024

Updates made since the last review:

Review date	Changes made	By whom

1. Context

The Heights Academy is a special school which provides education for children with autistic spectrum condition (ASC) aged 7 to 16 years. This policy sets out the procedures for dealing with bullying and has been written with reference to Safe to Learn – Bullying of Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – Embedding Anti-Bullying work in School (2008) and Preventing and tackling bullying - Advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies (2017). Alongside guidance and advice from the Anti Bullying Alliance. This policy should be read with The Heights Academy Positive Behaviour and Relationship Policy.

2. Policy

As a school community, given the specific needs of our pupils, we understand that bullying in this context can have additional subtleties and raise issues that are in themselves complicated to resolve. Not all learners at The Heights Academy will recognise bullying behaviour if they experience it or/and may be unable to express or communicate their aversion to and also to respond appropriately to instances of bullying behaviours. Equally not all students would recognise that certain behaviours directed towards others may be undesirable or that they might be construed as bullying. We recognise that the negative consequences of experiencing bullying can last well into adulthood. It is vital that a timely and well planned response to bullying is implemented as this can have a positive effect on lessening the impact of those who experience it.

3. Ethos

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Students are given every opportunity to express their feelings in the most appropriate form of communication. The Heights Academy has adopted a trauma informed approach; it provides a safe environment that fosters trust and belonging alongside a culture that supports mental health. Our aim is to maximise the protective factors of school by creating an environment of safety that has strong, positive and supportive relationships at its centre.

4. Aims

- All LAC members, teaching and non-teaching staff and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying and what they should do if bullying arises.
- To provide a happy and secure school environment for all students and staff.
- To ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied.
- To promote consistency of approach and create an environment in which all types of bullying are considered unacceptable.
- To react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

5. Defining Bullying Behaviours

The Department for Children, Schools and Families *publication Safe to Learn – Bullying of Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – Embedding Anti-Bullying work in School. (2008)* describe bullying as ‘Behaviour by an individual or a group usually repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally’. Bullying behaviour which may occur in school usually has common features including:

- It is deliberate, hurtful behaviour;
- It is repeated, often over a period of time;
- It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves;
- It is often aimed at certain groups because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation. Research has shown that some groups are more vulnerable to bullying. These include SEND, Looked After Children, Young Carers, Minority Ethnic groups and LGBT. Bullying behaviour can cause feelings of distress, fear, loneliness and lack of confidence in those that are at the receiving end. The four main types of bullying behaviour:
 - Physical: hitting, kicking, pushing, taking belongings.
 - Verbal: name-calling, insulting, racist or discriminatory remarks attributed to gender or sexual orientation.
 - Indirect: spreading nasty stories or rumours; excluding from groups, being ignored, intimidation or threatening behaviour.
 - Cyber bullying: using IT particularly the internet and mobile phones, to deliberately upset someone

6. The Behaviours of Children with ASC and the characteristics of bullying behaviours

The children attending The Heights Academy have a diagnosis of ASC and associated needs. Cognitive understanding and communication impairment are strong factors in how/what the children and young people communicate.

The cognitive understanding and complex needs of the children and young people at The Heights Academy can result in varying levels of understanding of bullying behaviour; the impact their behaviour may have on others and how to appropriately express their needs and emotions.

The following three categories summarise the varying levels of understanding of our pupils:

- *No understanding of the targeted behaviours and/or are a result sensory processing need. This level of understanding would apply to the majority of the children and young people at The Heights Academy.*
- Some capacity to understand right and wrong when they are on baseline and present with little or no inappropriate behaviours. However, once triggered off baseline they may target and hurt others unintentionally with little understanding of the impact of behaviours on others. This level of understanding would apply to some of the children and young people at The Heights Academy.
- Pre-planned, targeted behaviours with intent to harm others. This would apply to a minority of the children and young people at The Heights Academy.

As the DFE anti-bullying guidance notes, children with special educational needs and disabilities may not be able to articulate their experiences. Learners who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy, nervous, feigning sickness, refusing to come to school, clinging to adults, refusing to remain in class. It is important that all school staff are alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against any form of bullying in line with the procedures below.

It is also possible that one child may develop an obsession with another child or display undesirable behaviours towards others through high anxiety levels. These may manifest in potentially harmful behaviours such as kicking, biting, pinching, hitting or throwing objects.

Staff have a duty to be vigilant to these behaviours and the fear/anxiety that the 'target' child may have. Incidents of bullying with or without intent are recorded on Bromcom. Any incidents of bullying will be reported to a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). It is important that this information must be shared amongst all members of the class team and other members of staff as soon as possible.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Local Academy Council

- Members of the LAC will take a lead role in monitoring and reviewing this policy.
- They will support, uphold and implement this policy accordingly.

Senior Leadership Team

- To ensure that the whole school is promoting equality and inclusion.
- To support anti- bullying strategies.
- To oversee the implementation of the Anti – Bullying policy.

All Staff

- Ensure that all incidents of bullying are reported to SLT.
- To be vigilant and constantly monitor the pupils for bullying related behaviour and follow the procedure when evidence points towards bullying taking place.
- To model high standards of behaviour and have high expectations from all the students.
- To maintain a positive attitude towards all pupils.

Pupils

- Pupils will abide by the policy.
- Where appropriate pupils will be involved in exploring bullying and its impact through PSHE. This will include the role of friendships, peer support and celebrating individuality. This can involve a variety of educational opportunities, such as discussion and role- play.
- The pupils can express their feelings and thoughts through pupil council, annual reviews, Education Health Care Plans, everyday communication with staff. School staff should be vigilant for signs that a learner may subject to bullying behaviour.

Parents/Carers

- Parents/carers to support their children and work in partnership with the school.

8. Prevention

The Heights Academy uses the following approach to support the pupils to understand what is meant by the definitions of bullying and help to create an ethos of inclusivity and acceptance.

We aim to support and teach skills to increase desirable behaviours through the development of individual targets and the wider curriculum which incorporates the new Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education curriculum. An additional focus is placed on celebrating difference and encouraging the children and young people to choose kindness and respect.

As a school we have committed to following the 10 Key Principles (Appendix 1) to prevent and respond to bullying as set out by the Anti-Bullying Alliance. This is underpinned by the schools commitment to provide a trauma informed approach, which focus on creating and sustaining positive relationships and practises which protect, relate, regulate and reflect.

Links with other policies

- Positive Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Child Protection / Safeguarding Policy
- E-safety Policy

10 Key Principles

- 1. listens** - all pupils and parents and carers are listened to and influence strategies and approaches to prevent, report and respond to incidents of bullying.
- 2. includes us all** - all pupils, including those with SEND, are included, valued and participate fully in all aspects of school life.
- 3. respects** - all school staff are role models to others within the school in how they treat others.
- 4. challenges** - all forms of discriminatory language – including disablist language – is challenged taken seriously.
- 5. celebrates difference** – difference is actively and visibly celebrated and welcome across the whole school.
- 6. understands** - all school staff, pupils and parents and carers understand what bullying is and what it isn't.
- 7. believes** - all pupils, including disabled children and those with SEN, and their parents and carers are acknowledged, believed and taken seriously when reporting incidents of bullying.
- 8. reports bullying** - all pupils within the school and their parents and carers understand how to report incidents of bullying.
- 9. takes action** - we respond quickly to all incidents of bullying. Pupils, including disabled pupils and those with SEN, participate fully in decisions made about them and help to formulate appropriate action to respond to incidents of bullying.
- 10. has clear policies** - our school's anti-bullying policy reflects these principles and is embedded within other school policies. They are widely and actively promoted to school staff, pupils and their parents and carers.