



Document Control Policy

Document type:	Anti- Bullying Policy
Version:	Draft Version 1.0
Author and Role:	Jane Jackson, Head teacher
Approved by:	Governance Leadership Team
Date Approved:	30/9/18
Ratified by:	Awaiting
Date ratified:	awaiting
Director Owner:	Jane Jackson
Master Document Controller:	Nicole Durrans
Date uploaded to Portal:	N/A
Review Frequency:	Annually

Version Control

Version	Type of change	Date	Revisions from previous version

Anti-bullying Policy and Procedure

Draft Policy

Date written:

Revised:

Ratified by governors:

Review date:

This document has been drawn up using guidance from and in conjunction with:

- Heathermount Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy April 2018.
- Heathermount Peer on Peer Abuse Policy & Procedure April 2018.
- Heathermount Behaviour Policy April 2018/19
- Heathermount E-safety Policy 2018

Mission Statement

Heathermount School is a specialist school for children and young people with Autism, where all students and staff have a right to go about their daily lives without the fear of being threatened, assaulted or harassed and where they are respected.

At Heathermount School, we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students and staff, so that they can learn and work in a relaxed and secure atmosphere free from abuse. Bullying of any kind at Heathermount is unacceptable and if it does occur we encourage everyone in our community to report it. Any incidents of bullying will be dealt with promptly and effectively and will be fully investigated.

Aims of the policy

The aims of this policy are to:

- ensure all students, staff, parents and governors have an understanding of what bullying is and can identify forms of bullying;
- clearly identify what preventative measures are in place to prevent bullying;
- identify the responsibilities of everyone at Heathermount to prevent bullying;
- create an environment where it is understood and accepted that bullying in any form, is not acceptable;
- identify the procedure and actions that need to be taken if bullying occurs and how the school will support both the victim and the bully;
- ensure that the school continues to evaluate and monitor its preventative strategy and the review the anti-bullying policy.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is defined as behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally. Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim. Often the bully has a level of control over the relationship and this makes it difficult for the victim to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest physically, psychologically (knowing what upsets someone), be due to an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate.

Bullying has been identified as a key area where Peer on Peer abuse can occur. This could be carried out either directly or via the internet (Cyberbullying). Peer on peer abuse is when a young person is exploited or harmed and/or bullied by their peers who are the same or similar age; everyone directly involved in peer on peer abuse is under the age of 18.

Further details regarding the definition and symptoms of Peer on Peer abuse and the management of peer on peer abuse allegations is available in the Heathermount Peer on Peer abuse policy.

Types of Bullying

- **Emotional** – being unfriendly, excluding someone deliberately, tormenting (such as hiding books or bags), threatening gestures or laughing at someone who is upset;
- **Verbal** – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours and teasing;
- **Physical** – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, or any use of violence;
- **Cyber** – All areas of internet misuse, such a nasty or threatening emails, mobile threats by text messaging or calls, internet chat rooms, misuse of camera and video facilities including those on a mobile phone, gaming websites;
- **Extortion** – demanding money or goods with threat;
- **Racist** – writing offensive notes or graffiti, gestures, racial taunts, making someone feel worthless because of their colour, ethnicity, culture, faith or national origin;
- **Sexual or sexist** – unwanted physical contact, sexually abusive comments, or where sexuality is used as weapon by boys or girls;
- **Homophobic** – targeting someone because of their real or perceived sexual orientation
- **Disablist** – bullying someone because of their disability, ability, appearance, or way of speaking or mannerisms

Signs & Symptoms of Bullying

People often find it difficult to speak out and may indicate by signs or their behaviour that they are being bullied. Everyone should be aware of these signs and should investigate if the person:

- ! is unwilling to go to school;
- ! begins to truant;
- ! starts stammering;
- ! becomes aggressive, abusive, disruptive or unreasonable;
- ! feels ill in the morning;
- ! their performance starts to drop;
- ! continually “looses” money;
- ! comes home with possession damaged or clothing torn;
- ! has unexplained cuts and bruises;
- ! is bullying others;

- ! is frightened to say what's wrong;
- ! is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- ! jumps or is nervous when a text or email is received;
- ! cries themselves to sleep at night;
- ! threatens or attempts suicide or self harm;
- ! threatens or attempts to run away from home;
- ! changes their eating habits;
- ! is unable to sleep;
- ! wets the bed.

Prevention.

Bullying hurts and it can affect the social, mental and emotional health of those who are bullied. People with Autism often have very little understanding of the feelings of others and as an Autism specific school we recognise the impact that this can have in respect of bullying incidences and their interpretation. Whilst, autism should not be an excuse for bullying, we recognise that some students may make remarks or have responses that are not set out to be deliberately hurtful or cause harm, nor understand the intention of others who make comments or act towards them. All incidences of perceived bullying will be considered on an individual basis.

At Heathermount we recognise that it is essential that our response to bullying does not start when it occurs but by taking preventative action beforehand. At Heathermount we will do this by:

- ensuring that all students receive insight into bullying through the use of the PSHE curriculum and across other areas of the curriculum such as through Drama and English;
- developing empathy and emotional intelligence including "Theory of mind" using the school BERIS strategy to assist them in being with and working with others;
- celebrating differences and encouraging students to openly discuss the difficulties that others may experience based on their religion, race, gender, sexuality or family situations;
- creating an atmosphere throughout the whole school environment where praise of positive and supportive behaviour is demonstrated by all;
- all staff modelling appropriate and high standards of behaviour in their own physical, emotional and social responses;
- using specific events such as assemblies and Anti-bullying week to highlight the impact of bullying and that bullying is not acceptable behaviour;
- creating visuals to promote positive behaviour, highlight that bullying is not acceptable and also how to get help if you are being bullied;
- creating school rules that promote respect of others and are clear about expectations of behaviour;

- involving students in the development of the school strategy and emphasise their part to play in preventing bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders;
- dealing with any incidences quickly and effectively;
- working with the student council to ensure that students ideas or concerns are heard;
- creating a “student friendly” Anti-bullying policy to aid all students in their understanding;
- seeking guidance, updates and advice from local authority and national services and charitable organisations;
- reviewing the developments in technology that may impact on the e-safety of the school and its students;
- at least annually reviewing the school’s preventative strategies and the Anti-bullying policy.

Responsibilities of School

The school will administer an Anti-bullying preventative strategy throughout the school and share this with all members of the school community. The School will provide a robust and clear Anti Bully Policy that will be shared with each individual member of staff and we will ensure they have a clear understanding of the policy. The Anti-bullying policy will be made available to parents via the school website or in hard copies. We will ensure that all students and staff are aware of the importance to report bullying.

If bullying incidences do occur, the school are committed to:

- dealing with the incident quickly and effectively;
- recording a clear and precise account of the incident;
- dealing with the incident to support both the victim and the bully;
- making it clear that the bully’s behaviour is unacceptable and must stop;
- using re-building and reconciliation to drive the process;
- working with both the families of the victim and the bully;
- reviewing the incident fairly and with respect to all concerned and their difficulties and;

if consequences are needed to be applied, then they will depend on the individual circumstances of each incident.

Responsibilities of Students

At Heathermount we expect our students to:

- not become involved either directly or as a bystander in any form of bullying;
- tell staff if they witness bullying or are being bullied themselves;

- not retaliate if they are bullied or have witnessed bullying;
- actively take part in all activities that the school provide to help their understanding of bullying, even though it might be difficult to understand.

Responsibilities of Parents/carers

Parents/carers have a vital role to play in working with the school to prevent bullying in our school. We expect our parents to:

- encourage their child to be respectful and kind to others;
- highlight the importance to their child about following school rules;
- be aware of the types, signs and symptoms of bullying;
- monitor their child's internet activity to help prevent cyberbullying;
- take part in e-safety training provided by the school, particularly as people with autism often find it easier to participate in social situations via the internet than directly with others and this makes them vulnerable;
- encourage their child to talk to the school and report the bullying or report the bullying themselves;
- making sure that their child understands that it is not acceptable to retaliate against bullying, especially not violently;
- support their child by re-assuring them they have done the right thing and that it is not their fault;
- work with the school, should bullying occur, in resolving the issue quickly and effectively;
- not retaliate or take matters into their own hands against the bully or their family;
- co-operate with the school, if it is their child who is accused of bullying and try to ascertain the truth.

Procedure to report bullying

All staff are responsible for implementing this policy and reporting any incidents of bullying as quickly as possible. The immediate response to an incident should be made by the member of staff who first learns of the matter. They should:

- challenge all incidents of bullying and take immediate action to secure the safety of all concerned where necessary;

- acknowledge that there is an issue;
- establish the facts of the incident such as what happened who was involved and how long it has been happening;
- make sure that both the victim and the bully are supported. Those students who may have difficulties with expressing themselves need to be supported effectively using school therapists, visuals, comic strip etc. to get an accurate account of what happened;
- record the details as quickly as possible, using the school datix system and notify either the Head teacher or Deputy Head teacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Data will be gathered using the school's behaviour database, Datix, and incident forms and will also include data from parent and student questionnaires.

This Policy and procedures will be monitored and the effectiveness will be evaluated, in light of:

1. Number of students being bullied;
2. Student's willingness to report incidents;
3. Staff vigilance and response to the bullying behaviour e.g.; reporting on BROMCOM;
4. Number of student and parents feeling secure about the school's response to bullying;
5. Discussion with school council about levels of bullying.

Responses to Bullying

As highlighted previously, people with Autism often have difficulty in their vocal and physical responses, especially in social situations. These actions can often lead to misunderstandings and their reactions may not be deliberate intentions to bully.

The immediate response will be for the matter to be recorded by staff and forwarded to the Senior Leadership team to establish the next course of action. In all cases, it must be made clear that the bully's behaviour is unacceptable and must stop, whether intentional or not.

Once the facts have been established the Parents/carers of the victim and the bully will be informed of the situation and the school's next steps. In some cases of bullying, this may include the need to involve the Children's services, Safeguarding teams, other local agencies or even the Police.

Any actions or next steps will be dependent on the individual circumstances of each incident. These could include (but not be limited to) and not in any specific order:

- Working with the school therapy teams to review the incident and provide insight into the bully's and victims actions;
- Re-build and reconciliation with peers;
- Discussion with the Senior Leadership Team, sometimes with parents/carers present;
- Loss of privileges such as leisure time, specific activities;
- Review of any Autism Support Plans/EHCP/Risk assessment;
- Development of a Positive Behaviour Plan/Student agreements;
- Internal exclusion; to be used to de-escalate anxiety for both the victim and the bully and as an opportunity of reflection and further work with the bully.
- Fixed term exclusion;
- Permanent exclusion. This step will only be taken as a last resort or as a result of extreme violent or persistent bullying that has not been resolved despite a variety of interventions.

All steps and actions will be taken in consultation with the victim, the bully, the Senior Leadership team and parents/carers.

All steps and actions will be monitored for a period of 3 weeks to establish there has been no repetition and this will then be further monitored to check repetition each half term for 2 terms.

The senior members of staff with responsibility for this policy area are the Head teacher, Deputy Head teacher, and Designated Safeguarding Lead.