Heathland Whitefriars Federation

Anti-Bullying Policy

Reviewed Annually by the Safeguarding & Inclusion Committee
Effective from: October 2025
Next Review Date: October 2026

1.Introduction and Policy Objectives

Heathland Whitefriars Federation is committed to fostering a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment where bullying in any form is not tolerated. This policy outlines how we prevent, identify, and respond to bullying, ensuring that all pupils, staff, and adults are supported and protected.
This policy aligns with:

- DfE guidance *Preventing and Tackling Bullying* (2017, updated 2024)
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2024)
- SEND Code of Practice (2024)
- Education and Inspection Act (2006, 2011)
- Equality Act (2010)

Our approach is rooted in our shared values, the Rights Respecting Schools ethos, and a trauma-informed understanding of child development.

Article 40: Our role to support you in putting it RIGHT

This policy is designed to be used by all staff for reference and guidance and for parents of pupils at the Heathland Whitefriars Federation. It is important that all stakeholders in the work of the schools understand the shared vision we have in supporting children's positive behaviours and our methodologies and systems we employ to secure an excellent climate for learning. This policy covers all key stages

This policy links with several school policies including:

- Behaviour policy
- Complaints policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Online safety and Acceptable Use Policies (AUP)

2. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as:

"Behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual physically or emotionally." (DfE 2017)

Bullying is a form of peer-on-peer abuse and includes:

- Physical, verbal, emotional, and online (cyber) bullying
- Sexual harassment and violence
- Discriminatory bullying (race, faith, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, etc.)
- Bullying related to family circumstances or health conditions
- Key characteristics include repetition, intent, and power imbalance.

Forms and types of bullying covered by this policy

Bullying can happen to anyone. This policy covers all types and forms of bullying including but not exhaustive:

- Bullying related to physical appearance
- Bullying of young carers, children in care or otherwise related to home circumstances
- Bullying related to physical/mental health conditions
- Physical bullying
- Emotional bullying
- Bullying via technology, known as online or cyberbullying

Prejudicial bullying (against people/pupils with protected characteristics):

- Bullying related to race, religion, faith and belief and for those without faith
- Bullying related to ethnicity, nationality or culture
- Bullying related to Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND)
- Bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic/biphobic)
- Gender based bullying

3. Responsibilities

Leadership Team: Communicate and champion the policy; ensure staff receive ongoing training; monitor bullying incidents and outcomes.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Lead on bullying cases with safeguarding concerns; liaise with external agencies.

Staff: Implement the policy consistently; record and report incidents; support pupils.

Directors: Oversee policy implementation and review; receive regular reports.

Parents/Carers: Support the school's approach; communicate concerns promptly.

Pupils: Uphold positive behaviour and report bullying.

Article 12: Your RIGHT to say what you think should happen and be listened to

4. Preventing Bullying

The Heathland Whitefriars Federation recognises that all forms of bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can create a barrier to learning and have consequences for mental wellbeing. By effectively preventing and tackling bullying our school can help to create a safe and environment, where pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

We create a positive school culture by:

- Promoting respect, tolerance, and inclusion through curriculum, assemblies, and displays.
- Building pupils' social, emotional, and digital resilience via the MindUp curriculum and PSHE.

- Encouraging pupil voice and peer-led anti-bullying initiatives.
- Providing safe spaces and support networks.
- Training staff in trauma-informed practice and attachment theory.
- Working collaboratively with families and external agencies.

Article 19: Your RIGHT to be SAFE and to feel safe

5. Responding to Bullying

The following steps may be taken when dealing with all incidents of bullying reported to the school:

a) Reporting and Recording

- All bullying concerns are taken seriously and addressed promptly.
- Staff record incidents factually using 'What Happened?' sheets within 24 hours.
- DSL is informed of all incidents with safeguarding implications.

b) Investigation

- Speak with all involved parties sensitively and confidentially.
- Gather evidence, including witness accounts and digital records.
- Involve parents/carers early and maintain communication.

c) Intervention and Support

- Use a restorative approach focusing on accountability, empathy, and behaviour change.
- Apply sanctions in line with the Behaviour Policy, including fixed-term or permanent exclusions if necessary.
- Provide tailored support for pupils affected, including access to mental health services (e.g., Place2Be, CYPMHS).
- Address cyberbullying by removing harmful content, liaising with service providers, and involving police if criminal activity is suspected.

d) Bullying Outside School

Head teachers have a specific statutory power to discipline pupils for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives head teachers the power to regulate pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town centre.

- The school may discipline pupils for bullying outside school premises where it impacts the school community.

- Consider notifying police or local authorities if behaviour is criminal or seriously threatening.

Cyberbullying

When responding to cyberbullying concerns, the school will:

- Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified.
- Provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again.
- Encourage the person being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation.
- Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. This may include:
    - looking at use of the school systems;
    - identifying and interviewing possible witnesses;
    - contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary

The Heathland Whitefriars Federation will work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation. This may include:

- Reports to a service provider to remove content if those involved are unable to be identified or if those involved refuse to or are unable to delete content.
- Requesting the deletion of locally-held content and content posted online if they contravene school behaviour policy.
- The Federation will take steps to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully, as well as ensuring access to any additional help that they may need.
- Inform the police if a criminal offence has been committed.
- Provide information to staff and pupils regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online. This may include:
    - advising those targeted not to retaliate or reply;
    - providing advice on blocking or removing people from contact lists;
    - helping those involved to think carefully about what private information they may have in the public domain.

6. Supporting Pupils and Adults

- Victims receive reassurance, opportunities to discuss concerns, and ongoing pastoral support. Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss any concerns with their teacher, the designated safeguarding lead, or a member of staff of their choice.

- Working towards restoring self-esteem, confidence and their sense of belonging to the school

- Providing ongoing support; this may include: working and speaking with staff, offering the support of an external agency such as Place2Be, engaging with parents and carers.

- Providing opportunities for conflict resolution. This may involve team building activities.

- Adults affected by bullying (staff, parents) are offered support, including confidential discussions and advice on managing online abuse.

- All support is delivered with sensitivity, confidentiality, and respect for individual circumstances.

Pupils who have perpetrated bullying will be helped by:

- Discussing what has happened, establishing the concern and the need to change.
- Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude and behaviour of the child.
- Providing appropriate education and support regarding their behaviour or actions. This may include a discussion of cause and motive.
- If online, requesting that content be removed and reporting accounts/content to service provider.
- Sanctioning, in line with school behaviour policy; this may include fixed-term or permanent exclusions where deemed appropriate and in line with the DfE Exclusions Guidance
- Providing activities to produce resources and solutions to prevent any further bulling in the school more widely
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this may include involvement from the Police or referrals to Early Help, Specialist Children's Services, or the Children and Young People's Mental Health Service (CYPMHS)

How we will support any adults affected by bullying

Our Federation takes measures to prevent and tackle bullying among pupils; however, it is equally important to recognise that bullying of adults, including staff and parents, whether by pupils, parents or other staff members, is unacceptable.

Adults who have been bullied or affected will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the concern with the designated safeguarding lead, a key member of staff and/or the senior leadership team.
- Advising them to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience, as appropriate.
- Where the bullying takes place off school site or outside of normal school hours (including online), the school will still investigate the concern and ensure that appropriate action is taken in accordance with the schools' behaviour and discipline policy.
- Reporting offensive or upsetting content and/or accounts to the service provider, where the bullying has occurred online.
- Reassuring and offering appropriate support.

- Working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance.

Adults who have perpetrated the bullying will be supported by:

- Discussing what happened with a senior member of staff and/or the headteacher to establish the concern.
- Establishing whether a legitimate grievance or concern has been raised and signposting to the school's official complaints procedures.
- If online, requesting that content be removed.
- Instigating disciplinary, civil or legal action as appropriate or required.

What we will do to prevent bullying

The whole school community will:

- Create and support an inclusive environment which promotes a culture of mutual respect, consideration and care for others, which will be upheld by all.
- Recognise that bullying can be carried out or experienced by any member of the community, including adults and children (peer on peer abuse).
- Recognises the potential for children with SEN and disabilities to be disproportionally impacted by bullying and will implement additional pastoral support as required.
- Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as: children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities, religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference.
- Challenge practice and language which does not uphold the school values of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect towards others.
- Be encouraged to use technology, especially mobile phones and social media, positively and responsibly.
- Work with staff, the wider community and outside agencies to prevent and tackle concerns including all forms of prejudice-driven bullying.
- Actively create "safe spaces" for pupils.
- Celebrate success and achievements to promote and build a positive school ethos.

7. Training and Education

- All staff receive annual training on identifying and managing bullying, including cyberbullying and prejudice-based bullying.

- Anti-bullying education is embedded in the curriculum, assemblies, and special events like Anti-Bullying Week.

- Collaborative working with local schools to share best practice and support transitions.

8. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Review

- The Safeguarding Committee receives termly reports on bullying incidents and outcomes.

- Annual surveys of pupils, staff, and parents gauge the effectiveness of anti-bullying measures.
- The policy is reviewed annually or sooner in response to legislative changes or emerging issues.

9. Useful Resources and Contacts

- *Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk*
- *Childline: www.childline.org.uk*
- *NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk*
- *UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk*
- *DfE Cyberbullying Guidance: www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying*
- *SEND Code of Practice: www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25*
- *Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk*
- *Young Carers: www.youngcarers.net*