



HEADINGTON
SCHOOL · OXFORD

Anti-bullying Policy

Senior and Prep School (including EYFS)

Reviewed by:	Senior School Deputy Head Pastoral Prep School Deputy Head Pastoral
Date of last Review	1 Sept 2023
Next Review Date:	Sept 2024 or in line with legislative updates
Meets:	ISI 10 NMS 16 (& 15)

This Policy applies equally to EYFS, KS1, KS2, KS3, KS4 and KS5. It can be found on the School website and is available to parents on request.

Headington School's Anti-bullying Policy has been written with careful regard to DfE advice '*Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017)* as well as *KCSIE (2023)*. It should be read in conjunction with the School's Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy and other relevant policies, for example Preventing Cyber-Bullying and Safeguarding. These Policies can be found on the School website and are available to parents upon request.

- (i) Headington School's ethos aims to create an atmosphere of mutual trust, respect and tolerance amongst all members of its community. Bullying, in any form, is totally unacceptable and will not be tolerated. This Policy complements the Safeguarding Policy and several other pastoral focused policies in its care and concern for the welfare of the individual.

The aim is to concentrate on developing good, positive relationships between pupils, creating an environment where bullying is unable to flourish.

- (ii) Bullying may be defined as the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person by physical (including sexual), verbal, cyber (including social media, email, chat room and SMS messages – see Preventing Cyber-Bullying Policy), and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory.

Bullying behaviour is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups or individuals, including those with protected characteristics. Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, sexist, sexual, homophobic, transphobic, religious, cultural; or focus on disabilities, neurodiversity, or SEN or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). Comments may focus on a child's background, for example because they are a carer, are adopted or have been bereaved. Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time. What some might dismiss as 'joking' or 'banter' can be extremely hurtful: such behaviour conflicts directly with the school's ethos and should never be condoned by any part of the community. We always treat bullying very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the School's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, as well as with its social and moral principles.

More detail on methods of, and motivations for, bullying can be found in Appendix 1. The signs and symptoms of bullying can be found in Appendix 3.

Where an allegation of bullying initially cannot be proven, the situation will be closely monitored and full support will be given to all parties.

- (iii) Headington School sees bullying as a very serious issue which can cause pain and distress to the victim or target. Such behaviour can lead to psychological damage and in extreme cases may lead to suicide. Although bullying is not a specific criminal offense, we are aware that there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

We are aware that pupils may inflict hurt on each other without always realising exactly what they are doing.

- (iv) If an incident of bullying is reported, the School will deal promptly, sensitively and effectively with any allegation or reports of bullying. Bullying thrives on secrecy and pupils are encouraged to report incidents

If a pupil feels they have been a victim of bullying, School staff will always listen to them and take their views seriously.

If a pupil has been a witness to bullying behaviour it is their duty to report it. No pupil will be punished for making an allegation in good faith.

We ensure pupils understand another aspect of bullying: bystander bullying. Laugh at it and you are part of it. Do nothing to stop it and you are complicit in it. If you pass on a malicious message or image you are engaging wilfully in bullying and could be committing a criminal offence.

We deal with any and all allegations of bullying by adopting the following procedures:

- The member of staff to whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the pupils involved.
- He/she will inform either the Head of Year or Head of Section in the Senior School; Head of Key Stage or Deputy Head Pastoral and then, if appropriate, to the Head in the Prep School.
- That person will calmly explain the range of disciplinary measures that are potentially involved.
- The Prep School will often use a restorative justice approach as the guiding process for resolving social conflict situations (incl bullying). Sanctions may still be imposed once this process has concluded if this is appropriate.
- In the Senior School the victim will be interviewed by the Head of Year or Head of Section, and asked to write an account of events. In the Prep School the victim will be interviewed by the Head of Key Stage, Deputy Head Pastoral or Head of Prep and may be accompanied by her class teacher. Notes are made of events on behalf of the pupil.
- The alleged bully, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually by the Head of Year or Head of Section in the Senior School, Head of Key Stage or Deputy Head Pastoral in the Prep School, and asked to write an immediate account of events. In the Prep School the group is sometimes seen together.
- The incident should be recorded by the appropriate person and passed to the Deputy Head Pastoral in the Senior School, or to the Deputy Head Pastoral in the Prep School.
- In the Senior School all tutors and House Masters or Mistresses of the pupils involved should be informed. In very serious incidents, the Headmistress should be informed. In the Prep School all staff should be informed.
- The victim will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the Pastoral Team in the Senior School/appropriate senior member of staff in the Prep School, separately from the alleged perpetrator. It will be made clear to her why revenge is inappropriate. She will be offered support to develop a strategy to help herself.

- The alleged bully will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the Pastoral Team in the Senior School/appropriate senior member of staff in the Prep School, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why their behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. She will be offered guidance on modifying her behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions.
- The parents/guardians of all parties should be informed and offered an opportunity (in person, via online meeting or telephone call) to discuss the matter where appropriate. Their support should be sought.
- A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling or other forms of pastoral support, should be agreed.
This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures.
- A meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode. This restorative approach is increasingly used with very positive outcomes for all concerned.
- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place.
- In very serious cases, where a child is felt to be at risk of significant harm, and only after the Headmistress in the Senior School/Head in the Prep School, has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to Children's Social Care. In such cases there are grounds to treat the bullying incident as child-on-child abuse (refer to page 7 of this policy) and it will be dealt with following guidance contained within the Safeguarding Policy. However, it is the policy of Headington School to attempt to resolve such issues internally under the School's own disciplinary procedures, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely.
- Where cyber-bullying is reported staff should refer to the Preventing Cyber-bullying Policy and follow the procedures and guidance contained within it.
- All bullying incidents will either be recorded on CPOMs or held centrally by the Deputy Head Pastorals or DSLs. The centralised records enable senior staff to evaluate the effectiveness of any approaches adopted, to identify patterns, and to take actions to reduce the incidence of bullying behaviour as necessary. Data is shared with the Safeguarding Governor in termly meetings and is made available to all Governors at Council meetings via the Safeguarding Report.

See Appendix 2 - Guidelines and Advice for Pupils, Parents and Staff for more information.

- (v) During the course of the year issues of bullying are discussed as part of staff training. Staff are encouraged to place the highest priority on the effective communication and implementation of this policy. All staff agree to set an example of respect, kindness and good manners, both in and out of the classroom, towards all members of the school community. Discipline is maintained in a positive quiet, controlled and caring way. Teaching methods that encourage co-operative work and a variety of groupings are used throughout school. Staff regularly remind girls of the adults available to support and listen. Relevant staff members supervise areas of School at break and lunch times to

ensure that there is always someone available that pupils can turn to if the need arises.

Girls are encouraged to tell adults if anyone is in trouble or unhappy, so that the necessary help and guidance can quickly be put in place.

(vi) We take the following preventative measures:

- We use appropriate Assemblies to explain the School policy on bullying and to mark Anti Bullying Week. Our PSHE education programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the School. The programme is structured to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other. Compassion is arguably the most important of our '6 C's'. Also in the Prep School issues are discussed as they arise, in PSHE, circle time and form time and each term the children are reminded of the code of behaviour which is on the walls in the classroom.
- Other lessons highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable, and by developing social skills.
- All our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place.
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents.
- In the Senior School, we have a strong and experienced Pastoral Team consisting of Tutors, Heads of Year, House Masters and Mistresses, and Heads of Section who support the Deputy Head Pastoral. In the Prep School, all staff have pastoral responsibility with the Deputy Head Pastoral taking a whole school role. Staff are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority and are alert to possible signs of bullying.
- Our Pastoral Team in the Senior School and the Head and Head of Pastoral Care in the Prep School give support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents of bullying and on the follow-up procedures for both victim and perpetrator.
- Our Wellbeing Support Supervisor, Health and Wellbeing Assistant and trained School Counsellors are an important part of our pastoral support service, providing specialist skills of assessment and counselling. They are available to give confidential advice and counselling support to pupils who can refer themselves to the counsellors when they have social, emotional or behavioural concerns. Pupils can self-refer or members of staff can recommend a pupil to the School Counsellors.
- In the Senior School, the School Chaplain will give support and guidance to pupils of all faiths who are able to refer themselves to him, perhaps at a time of family break-up, sickness or bereavement. The Chaplain will provide confidential advice and seek to encourage the development of tolerance, understanding and respect for others in a multi-faith community. In the Prep School the Chaplain is available to provide confidential advice and guidance as requested.
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the School site, particularly areas such as lunch queues and during break time, where bullying might occur. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour.

- In Boarding Houses, there are strong teams of staff supporting the House Master/Mistress, all of whom act *in loco parentis*. The informal house environment is important in reinforcing a pupil's standards and values, providing the opportunity for friendly, informal discussion of matters of concern to the individual pupil outside the formal classroom. We encourage close contact between the House Master/Mistress and parents/guardians, and would always appropriately make contact if concerned about a pupil's well-being. Unlike in day schools, boarders who are being bullied (off line) by their peers may feel they cannot escape their bullies for long periods of time as they are not going home as often. Staff are aware of this and maintain a vigilant approach. Immediate action is taken when an issue arises or bullying is suspected.
 - The Health Centre, Wellbeing Hub, Boarding Houses and all Form Rooms in the Senior School display advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential help lines and web sites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline, the Samaritans, the Children's Commissioner and Young Minds. Similar advice is displayed in the Prep School in main corridors, cloakrooms and in Key Stage 2 pupil planners.
 - All pupils in the Senior School have access to telephone and/or text based or online helplines, enabling them to reach out for support beyond school if necessary.
 - In the Senior School, we encourage informal peer support, whereby older pupils are encouraged to offer advice and support to, and share their wisdom with younger pupils.
 - In the Senior School, we provide leadership training to our Head Girls and their team of prefects which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable pupils.
 - In the Prep School pupils receive training on how to support their peers when dealing with online bullying.
 - Initiation ceremonies designed to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation are banned.
 - We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips, and that occur in the vicinity of the School, involving our pupils
 - We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.
 - Any deficiency or weaknesses in anti-bullying procedures are remedied without delay.
- (vii) Every member of the School, both staff and students, deserves and expects respect. No bullying, threatening behaviour or bad language are permitted. Everyone is expected to subscribe to the School's Anti-Bullying Policy.

Bullying will be fully investigated and sanctions can range from a reprimand, detention, letter home to parents or guardians. Persistent bullying or abuse that has a significant impact may lead to suspension or expulsion.

Low level unkindness can usually be addressed by the tutor or class teacher and in most cases children will respond to the advice they are given. If a pupil fails to heed this warning other staff may become involved and a sanction will be applied. In every case we work to help the perpetrator understand why their behaviour is unacceptable, and to appreciate the harm that this hurtful behaviour

can do. The intentional repetition of harmful behaviour will be treated as a serious matter

(viii) **Child on Child Abuse :-**

At Headington we recognise that child-on-child abuse may occur between children as young as primary age. Staff are trained to identify blind spots where children may be able to hide, such as tents or play structures. These are supervised closely. Staff are also made aware of signs including, patterns of behaviour between certain children and are vigilant in monitoring these children closely. Staff are trained to report any signs of physical, sexual or emotional abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Leads.

For older pupils, a growing form of child-on-child abuse involves youth produced sexual imagery, sometimes referred to as 'sexting' and now more commonly referenced as the consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos. This involves the child or young person (under the age of 18) writing and sharing explicit messages with people they know, or sometimes takes the form of the sharing of images that they, or another child, have created of themselves (still photos or videos). When this online behaviour occurs pupils can be made to feel uncomfortable, pressurised, embarrassed, and frightened. Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 it is an offence to possess, distribute, show and make indecent images of children. Therefore pupils who are involved in youth produced sexual imagery may be committing an illegal act. Indecent images would include those that show a naked young person, a topless girl, that displays genitals or sexual acts including masturbation. It can also include overtly sexual images of young people in their underwear.

The most recent guidance recommends that in incidents where a child creates and shares sexual imagery of themselves with a peer who is also under 18, or where a child shares sexual imagery created by another child under 18 or an adult, or where a child is in possession of sexual imagery created by another child, this should be treated as a safeguarding issue rather than criminalising the child or children involved. Where a young person has engaged in consensual image sharing it may not be abusive but the child will be reminded that it is illegal. Further details can be found within the Safeguarding Policy and staff who become aware of an incident involving nudes/semi nudes should follow the procedures outlined there.

Where other forms of online or cyber-bullying are reported or disclosed staff should follow the guidance and procedures outlined within the Preventing Cyber-Bullying Policy.

Child-on-Child abuse can take a variety of forms, and can sometimes best be viewed on a spectrum. At one extreme are behaviours that would be defined as bullying, and which would be dealt with following the guidance in this policy; at the other are behaviours of an overt sexual nature often resulting in sexual violence. This type of behaviour is usually criminal and is dealt with following the guidance provided in the Safeguarding Policy. A bullying incident will always be treated as a child protection concern where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm which warrants a response under the School's Safeguarding procedures.

More details on child-on-child abuse can be found in the School's Safeguarding Policy.

Resources/Advice for Parents and Girls

The School can signpost a range of helpful information relating to bullying. Prefects and Sixth Form School Leaders are always happy to listen and offer support should pupils need to talk within the Senior School.

Resources:

Mellor A : Bullying and how to fight it

Pearce J : Fighting, teasing and bullying : simple and effective ways to help your child
UKCIS and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: [Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people.](#)

SWGfL : [So you got naked online ...](#)

The Anti-Bullying Alliance – www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Kidscape – www.kidscape.org.uk

Department for Education Parental Advice: [Advice for parents on cyberbullying.](#)

APPENDIX 1 (Guidelines and advice for pupils, parents and staff)

Pupils

If you are being bullied or you suspect or observe bullying be encouraged to :

- Talk to any adult you trust
- Talk to a Prefect or Sixth Form Leader in the Senior School, or Head of House or Head Girls/someone you trust in the Prep School
- Be confident that action will be taken to stop the bullying
- Be a good friend, above all when it is known that someone is unhappy or lonely, and remember to include everyone in your class or House, especially where group work is concerned

If you are being bullied the following responses should help

1. Try and explain to the bully that their words/actions are upsetting; they may not be aware of this. Be firm, look them in the eye and tell them to stop. However, if the bullying continues try not to show your feelings.
2. Walk away quietly and confidently, even if you don't feel that way inside.
3. It might be useful to jot down a few notes about what has happened, to keep it clear in your mind.
 - How often has it happened?
 - Who was involved?
 - Who witnessed what was happening?
 - Where did it happen?
 - What have you done about it?
4. Try and stay in a group as often as possible.
5. Keep away from the 'trouble' spots.
6. The bully will not stop if they think they can get away with such behaviour. Give the situation some thought and if it's serious tell a member of staff or ask your friends to tell a member of staff on your behalf.
7. You can always take a friend with you to talk to someone about it.
8. Talk to your parents, or your House master/mistress if you're a boarder, let them know what's going on.

Everyone can help to stop bullying

1. If the pupil being bullied is in any danger, get help. If they aren't, stay with them; your presence may ease the situation.
2. Always show that you and your friends disapprove of bullying.
3. Give sympathy and support to girls who are being bullied –If you know of any bullying – tell someone! The victim may be too scared or lonely to tell.

Parents

Problem-solving approaches to bullying which are school-based alone may not always work without the help of the parents, so please support us on this issue.

If your daughter is being bullied

Parents, along with peers, will probably be the first to hear of a bullying incident. They should not dismiss it. In the Senior School, parents should contact the tutor, Head of Year, Head of Section, Housemaster/mistress, Deputy Head Pastoral or Headmistress

if they are worried. In the Prep School they should contact the class teacher, Head of Key Stage, Deputy Head Pastoral or Head. It is essential to stay calm, supportive and find out the facts of the situation. The School will keep you informed of how things are progressing as we investigate your concerns.

If your daughter is involved in bullying

It is important to work with the school to modify the patterns of behaviour, which are causing your daughter to bully. Do not panic or blame yourself; these things do happen and the School has mechanisms in place to deal with the issue. It is helpful to recognise some of the reasons why pupils behave in this way from time to time.

Sometimes girls bully others because :

- They are not aware of how hurtful it is
- They are copying the behaviour of older siblings or people they admire
- They have a temporary difficulty integrating in their peer group
- They are encouraged to do so by friends
- They are going through a difficult time personally

To stop your daughter from bullying others

- Help her to understand that what she is doing is unacceptable
- Liaise with the School
- Make time to talk about how things are going at School
- Ensure your daughter has identified an adult at School to whom she can talk

Staff (If you are approached by a pupil who is being bullied)

- It is important the young person feels secure. This type of disclosure is difficult to trust anyone with.
- Take every reported incident seriously and take simple notes:
 - Exactly what happened and when did it happen?
 - Who was involved?
 - Who saw what happened?
 - How often has this happened?
 - Where did it happen?
 - Do parents know?

Then pass to the Head of Year, Head of Section in the Senior School or Head of Key Stage, Deputy Head Pastoral or Head in the Prep School.

Further advice

- Provocation can be confused with retaliation in a victim who is reacting out of fear. It can be difficult to establish the facts. **A problem-solving approach, which avoids blaming, can be much more effective in clarifying the situation and achieving a change in behaviour.** The aim is to resolve the incident as quickly as possible by discussion.
- Seek an apology or restitution and continue to monitor the situation.
- Discuss with colleagues who might know the pupil a little better than you do.
- Report the matter to the Head of Section or Deputy Head Pastoral in the Senior School/Head of Key Stage or Deputy Head Pastoral in the Prep School, who will monitor the situation.

APPENDIX 2: Methods of Bullying and Motivations for Bullying

Methods of bullying can include:

Cyber	All areas of digital technology and the internet e.g. email, social media misuse, threats via text messaging, calls, posts. Misuse of associated technology e.g. camera and video facilities
Physical	Pushing, hitting, kicking, puncing, biting etc. Any use of aggressive or violent behaviour. Deliberately damaging or defacing property.
Sexual	Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
Verbal	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, subtle comments, derogatory language
Written	Writing unpleasant and derogative comments, sometimes anonymously, that are intended to upset and unsettle the recipient
Exclusive Behaviour	Adopting a policy of excluding someone from conversations and/or activities
Peer Pressure	Pressure to conform

Motivations for bullying can include:

Cultural	Focusing on different customs and practices
Special Educational Needs / Neurodiversity / Disability	Verbal intimidation, name calling, specific physical comments/actions
Emotional	Being unfriendly, excluding, social ostracism, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, damaging belongings, threatening gestures)
Homophobic	Because of, or focusing on, the issue of sexuality
Racial	Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
Religious or other belief	Abusing aspects of a religion or belief, its founding member, observances, practices
Sex, Sexual Orientation or Gender related	Taunts of a sexist or gender nature (including transgender)
Home and/or other personal circumstance	e.g. Family circumstances such as adoption, or a child acting as a carer, pregnancy, matters connected to parents, marriage/civil partnerships, or comparative wealth.
Age	Focusing on being younger (or older) and taking advantage of that
<i>All of these are intended to make the victim unhappy and may cause great distress. Bullying is different in nature and severity from friendship issues, minor teasing and the ordinary give and take of school life.</i>	

APPENDIX 3: Signs and Symptoms To Be Aware Of

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied.

Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has continually "lost" money
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone or suddenly reduces or stops using technology
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and patterns of behaviour could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.