



## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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| <b>Policy agreed by</b>        | S Trevethan / R Childs |
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Bullying and unkindness whether physical or emotional are entirely unacceptable at Hackberry.

It conflicts sharply with the Hackberry principles, and we will always treat it seriously.

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

□ Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously Hackberry/s priority, but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; Hackberry has to make its own judgements about each specific case.

□ In particular, it is noted that peer-on peer abuse can be a form of bullying and, in line with the Hackberry Safeguarding Policy, any peer-on-peer abuse will be treated as a safeguarding matter and passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Please refer to the safeguarding Policy for further information on peer-on-peer abuse.

□ Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

□ Bullying can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. However, it is also considered to be bullying when careless or reckless behaviour unintentionally causes the same effects as intentional actions.

□ Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory.

□ Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve everyone - young people, staff and parents.

□ All members of Hackberry have the right to enjoy their lives free of bullying and harassment. Anyone who feels bullied or intimidated has the right to expect the Hackberry to listen and to act promptly and sensitively to deal with the problem. The Hackberry will investigate any incidents, including those which occur outside normal Hackberry hours or off the premises.

□ If you feel that you are being bullied, talk to someone: your teacher or tutor, someone you trust either at school or Hackberry. It is also right for you to talk to your parents about it, and for them to discuss it with the Hackberry.

□ If you find it difficult to talk to anyone at Hackberry, school or at home then you can phone the 24-hour Childline service on 0800 1111. All calls are free and confidential and trained counsellors will help any young person with a problem.

- You should treat others as you would hope to be treated yourself in an atmosphere of mutual respect. If an incident occurs, you should do what you can to show your disapproval of bullying.
- Bullying will never stop if it is kept secret and no one faces up to it. If you think someone else is being bullied, talk to a member of staff. We guarantee that whistle-blowers who act in good faith will not be penalised and will be supported.
- It is important to recognise that there is culpability if you see or are aware of bullying but do nothing about it. Neglecting to act makes the bystander complicit in the bullying. If you are aware of bullying happening in Hackberry it should immediately be reported to a member of staff.

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY & GUIDELINES FOR STAFF

Your attention is drawn to the DfE guidance 2014 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' DfE website

[www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

At Hackberry, our community is based upon respect for others, good manners and a sense of decency. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our young people can develop their full potential. We expect our young people to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed but orderly atmosphere. All children should care for and support each other.

Parents and guardians have an important role in supporting Hackberry in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that Hackberry and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together.

At Hackberry, we always treat bullying, including allegations of bullying very seriously, regardless of whether it is physical or emotional. It conflicts sharply with the Hackberry policy on equal opportunities, as well as with our social and moral principles. Bullying can be so serious that it causes psychological damage, eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide, and, whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour. It is also noted that in the case of peer-on-peer abuse, bullying can also have safeguarding implications.

We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside Hackberry hours, on Hackberry visits and trips and incidents that occur in the vicinity of Hackberry, involving our young people. Hackberry will report the incident to the child's school.

### GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

All new members of staff will be given guidance on Hackberry anti-bullying policy and in how to react to allegations of bullying at Induction. They will be required to read the Hackberry policy as part of their induction.

Flagrant cases of bullying are fortunately not normal features of life at Hackberry, but we should be aware that it can happen at any time, and that patterns of bullying, once

established, can easily repeat themselves, even to the extent that those who have suffered themselves may in their turn cause others to suffer.

Discreet but constant vigilance is therefore essential and is an important part of our role in Hackberry.

Staff should arrive on time and be alert to signs of horseplay: the child who waits alone outside Hackberry (or who hangs about after) may well be a victim. Similar considerations apply to games, and other activities. The less structured times of the day, mealtimes, break and the weekend, are moments when bullying and unkindness can occur. There may also be places where children are more at risk such as workrooms. It is therefore important for staff to keep an eye on things unobtrusively. We should be alert to any inappropriate language or behaviour or other dubious practices and never acquiesce to them. We should always be aware of and reflect on our own behaviour in case it might unintentionally trigger bullying.

Peer-group bullying is most likely to occur among the younger children - as the pecking order develops. We should also be aware that some young people could be more vulnerable than others; those who are shy, come from an over-protective background, are different in some way, behave inappropriately with others or even show off expensive possessions. They may well need our guidance about how to adapt their behaviour to avoid or deal with bullying and unkindness.

It is important that at Hackberry we act with consistency about bullying. Discussions between staff should ensure that reaction is immediate before matters have a chance to escalate, and that minor incidents are dealt with; this should reduce the occurrence of more serious bullying.

## 1. ACTIONS TO PREVENT BULLYING

Children need to be aware that both staff and children disapprove of bullying behaviour and will act if bullying is brought to their notice. An anti-bullying ethos should be in place, reinforced by all adults; something that takes time and a drip feed approach - repeated plugging of the theme with children. The majority of children who are not involved are the most effective preventative and protective force in countering the problem. A clear understanding is therefore essential. Children must be reminded that initiation ceremonies designed to cause pain anxiety or humiliation are unacceptable.

'Hackberry's Code of Conduct' is available to all new children and their parents and is published on Hackberry's web site. All new children are to be informed on Hackberry's expected standards of behaviour. They are told what to do if they encounter bullying.

Hackberry's notice board will have information for those seeking help, including details of confidential help lines and web sites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline.

Children should be listened to carefully and opportunities be provided for them to express views and opinions whilst at Hackberry.

Our trained staff at Hackberry are an important part of our pastoral support service, providing specialist skills of assessment and signposting. Staff are available to give confidential advice support to children.

## 2. PEER-ON PEER ABUSE

Peer-on-peer abuse is abuse by one or more children against another child. It can manifest itself in many ways and can include bullying (including cyber bullying), physical abuse, initiation/hazing violence and rituals, sexting, sexual assault, gender-based issues and harmful sexual behaviours including sexual violence and sexual harassment. Hackberry believes that all bullying and peer-on-peer abuse is unacceptable and must be dealt with in this context. Abusive comments and interactions should never be passed off or dismissed as “banter” or “part of growing up”. Nor will harmful sexual behaviours be dismissed as the same or “just having a laugh” or “children being children”.

Please refer to the Safeguarding Policy for further details on peer-on-peer abuse and the management of allegations.

## 3. DETECTING BULLYING

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a child is being bullied include:

- ☐ Unwillingness to return to Hackberry
- ☐ Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- ☐ Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
- ☐ Bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged
- ☐ Change to established habits (e.g. change to accent or vocabulary)
- ☐ Diminished levels of self confidence
- ☐ Frequent illness symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches
- ☐ Unexplained cuts and bruises
- ☐ Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- ☐ Choosing the company of adults
- ☐ Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- ☐ Difficulty in sleeping, experiences nightmares
- ☐ Talking of suicide or running away

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers.

### Racism

Examples of racism that we need to be alerted to include:

- ☐ Verbal abuse by name-calling, racist jokes and offensive mimicry
- ☐ Physical threats or attacks
- ☐ Wearing of provocative badges or insignia
- ☐ Bringing racist leaflets, comics or magazines into Hackberry

- ☐ Inciting others to behave in a racist way
- ☐ Racist graffiti or other written insults, even against food, music, dress or customs
- ☐ Refusing to cooperate in work or in play

### Sexual bullying

Sexual bullying can have the following characteristics:

- ☐ Sexual innuendoes and propositions
- ☐ Abusive name-calling
- ☐ Looks and comments about appearance, attractiveness (e.g. emerging puberty)
- ☐ Pornographic material, graffiti with sexual content
- ☐ In its most extreme form, sexual assault or rape

### Homophobia

We should be alert to sexual bullying based around sexual orientation, whether or not the person being bullied is gay, lesbian or bisexual. Generally homophobic bullying looks like other sorts of bullying, but in particular it can include:

- ☐ Verbal abuse - including spreading rumours that someone is gay, suggesting that something or someone is inferior and so they are 'gay'- e.g. 'those trainers are so gay!'
- ☐ Physical abuse – including hitting, punching, kicking, sexual assault, and threatening behaviour.
- ☐ Cyberbullying – using on-line spaces to spread rumours about someone or exclude them. Can also include text messaging, including video and picture messaging.

### Special educational needs and disability

We should be alert to the fact that children with special educational needs or disabilities are often at greater risk of being bullied than other children on the basis of their educational difficulties or disability.

### Cyberbullying

With constantly advancing technology we must be alert to this unpleasant and particularly intrusive form of bullying. Cyberbullying can involve Social Networking Sites, like Snapshot, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, emails and mobile phones, used for SMS messages and as cameras.

## Banter

It should be noted that abusive comments and interactions may not be passed off as mere 'banter'. Such comments referring to a person's race, religion, ethnicity, sexuality, culture, special educational needs or because a child is a carer are not acceptable and will be treated as bullying matters.

## 4. SHARING ANY CONCERNS

Children should be encouraged to "tell" when bullying occurs. Friends of victims should be encouraged to do the telling, if necessary: this is difficult and young people often baulk at it, but the more it occurs the more acceptable it becomes. We should guarantee that whistle-blowers who act in good faith will not be penalised and will be supported.

Others in a year group should be reminded how important it is to let someone know if a problem recurs.

Any staff or young person who witness any form of bullying, however minor or who are at all concerned about any behaviour should report it to the lead member of staff, who will pass the information to the children's school. These incidents may be part of a bigger picture of which staff may be not aware.

Members of the community (children, staff and parents) need to be mindful that Hackberry expects any knowledge of bullying to be reported. A bystander who does not report bullying is complicit in the act.

Parents should be made aware on their child's arrival in Hackberry, of the importance of keeping lines of communication open so that any unhappiness of which they hear can be investigated and where necessary dealt with quickly.

## 5. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH REPORTED BULLYING

If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedures are adopted:

- ☐ The member of staff whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the children involved.
- ☐ He/she will inform the relevant appropriate member of staff as soon as possible.
- ☐ The victim will be interviewed on their own and asked to write an account of events.
- ☐ The alleged bully, together with all others who were involved, if at Hackberry, will be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events. If others that are involved are attending the child's school the information will be passed to the school.
- ☐ The incident should be recorded on a Hackberry Bullying Incident form and signed and dated, keeping all records of bullying and other serious disciplinary offences, securely in a locked cabinet.
- ☐ The victim will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of staff, separately from the alleged perpetrator. It will be made clear to them why revenge is inappropriate. They will be offered support to develop a strategy to help them.

☐ The alleged bully will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of staff, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why their behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. They will be offered guidance on modifying their behaviour. If appropriate a disciplinary sanction will be given as set out in the Hackberry's Behaviour Management Policy/Supporting Children at Hackberry; for example, withdrawal of privileges or suspension. In particularly serious and/or persistent cases, the bully should expect exclusion from Hackberry.

☐ The parents/guardians and schools of all parties should be informed of the incident.

☐ A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling, should be agreed. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for children who bully others.

☐ A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place.

☐ In very serious cases, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to the Social Services. In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 a bullying incident should be addressed as a Safeguarding concern where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

In line with KCSIE 2025 all peer-on-peer abuse will also be treated as a Safeguarding matter.

It is the policy of Hackberry to attempt to resolve such issues internally under the Hackberry's own disciplinary procedures, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely. If this is the case, then the Hackberry's Safeguarding Policy should be referred to for guidance. Hackberry may exclude children, either temporarily or permanently, in cases of severe and persistent bullying and in the event that the support put in place for the bully does not result in the modification of behaviour to an acceptable level.

## 6. RECORDING AND MONITORING INCIDENTS OF BULLYING

All bullying incidents and our response to them should be recorded by the relevant staff on a Hackberry Bullying Incident form. The Safeguarding Lead will keep a central record of all incidents so that patterns of behaviour can be identified and monitored. The incident recorder will record the name of the child who was bullied and also the perpetrators. All staff are permitted access to these files and so if they have any concerns they can check the file, but they are reminded that if they witness any form of bullying however minor or are at all concerned about any behaviour, they should report it to the safeguarding lead as soon as possible. These incidents may be part of a bigger picture of which the safeguarding lead will need to be aware.

## 7. MEASURES TO HELP VICTIMS OF BULLYING

It can be helpful to try to identify those likely to be bullied and try if possible, to minimise the characteristics that might make them susceptible. This can be either pre-emptive action or part of the way victims can be helped not to attract bullying in future. The literature identifies "passive" (unassertive in their peer groups) and "provocative" (hyperactive) victims.

Discussion might help them to:

- ☐ Realise that they need to help themselves
- ☐ Be positive and assertive
- ☐ Be less selfish
- ☐ Be less aggressive
- ☐ Maintain friendships
- ☐ Understand non-victim body language

Regular meetings with an adult to discuss progress can help. Reference to the Kidscape booklets such as 'You can beat bullying' and 'Stop bullying' may be useful.

Remind the child that if they find that they are bullied again then they should:

- ☐ Try to remain calm and look as positive as they can
- ☐ Be firm and clear – look the bully in the eye and tell them to stop
- ☐ Get away from the situation as quickly as possible
- ☐ Tell an adult or monitor what has happened straight away.

The best thing that can be said is that Hackberry is an environment where there is a general understanding clearly exemplified by the community that bullying is unacceptable.

## 8. CYBERBULLYING POLICY

### Definition

“Cyberbullying is the use of Information Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else.”

Cyberbullying can have a serious impact because of a number of factors including:

- Invasion of personal space
- The anonymity (at least initially) of the bully
- The ability to broadcast upsetting messages and images rapidly to a potentially huge audience and to continue to do so repeatedly over a long period of time

### Forms of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying may take different forms:

- Threats and intimidation via electronic means
- Harassment or 'cyberstalking'
- Sexting
- Vilification/defamation
- Setting up website pages to invite others to post derogatory comment about a child

- The sending of insulting and vicious text messages
- Exclusion or peer rejection
- Impersonation
- Unauthorised publication of private information or images (including 'happy slapping')
- The posting of fake and/or obscene photographs of the victim on a social networking site
- Hacking into social networking sites and removing and circulating material which may embarrassing or personal
- Manipulation
- "Chatting" online e.g. through Social Network/Gaming Sites etc.

Whilst some cyberbullying is clearly deliberate and aggressive, it must be recognised that some incidents of cyberbullying may be unintentional and the result of simply not thinking about the consequences.

Children may need reminding that under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

### Preventing Cyberbullying

Members of the Hackberry community will understand and discuss cyberbullying through:

- The sharing of the definition of cyberbullying
- The discussion of cyberbullying and its forms
- The learning of our responsibilities in the use of ICT, and the sanctions for its misuse
- Agreed rules will be followed when using ICT (see Acceptable Use of ICT Policy)

### Policies and Practice:

- Annual reviews will be made of our strategies to tackle Cyberbully and the Acceptable Use of ICT Policy
- Records will be made of cyberbullying incidents
- Children will be encouraged to report incidents of cyberbullying and there will be active promotion of reporting incidents.
- The promotion of the positive use of technology will be encouraged.
- The exploration of safer ways of using technology will be carried out.

The prevention of cyberbullying will be promoted through discussion and children's activities around what cyberbullying is and how it differs from other forms of bullying.

Hackberry reserves the right to monitor children's use of the internet on a routine basis and to examine mobile phones where there is reason to suspect abuse. The misuse of technology will be subject to Hackberry's disciplinary regime and will be considered a serious offence.

Children will be held personally responsible for all material that they have placed on a web site and for all material that appears on a web site of which they are an account holder. Misconduct of this kind outside of Hackberry will be liable to Hackberry discipline if the welfare of other children or the culture or reputation of Hackberry is placed at risk and sanctions may include confiscation of mobile phones or restrictions on the use of the internet.

#### Education:

Education and discussion around the responsible use of technologies and e-safety are key to preventing cyberbullying and helping children and young people deal confidently with any problems that might arise, whether in or out of Hackberry. Hackberry will publicise progress and cyberbullying prevention activities to the whole-Hackberry community.

Members of the Hackberry community will be encouraged to follow the following advice which is displayed throughout Hackberry.

- 1) Always respect others - be careful what you say online and what images you send.
- 2) Think before you send - whatever you send can be made public very quickly and could stay online forever.
- 3) Think before you post.
- 4) Treat your password like your toothbrush - keep it to yourself. Only give your mobile number or personal website address to trusted friends.
- 5) Block the bully - learn how to block or report someone who is behaving badly.
- 6) Don't retaliate or reply!
- 7) Save the evidence - learn how to keep records of offending messages, pictures or online conversations.
- 8) Make sure you tell:
  - a) An adult you trust, or call a helpline like Childline on 0800 1111 in confidence
  - b) The provider of the service; check the service provider's website to see where to report incidents
  - c) Your school - they will be able to help.

If you see cyberbullying going on, support the victim and report the bullying. How would you feel if no one stood up for you?

#### Responding to Cyberbullying

##### Investigating incidents - the aggrieved

The person being bullied should keep examples of texts or emails received to aid an investigation.

To contain the spread of cyberbullying consideration must be given to -

- Contact the service provider or host (e.g. the social networking site)
- Confiscate phones

- Contact the police (in relation to illegal content)

Members of the Hackberry community will be advised on steps they can take to avoid recurrence. This will include-

- Not to retaliate or reply
- Being provided with appropriate contact details of service providers
- An awareness of changing contact details, blocking contacts, or leaving a chatroom.

All allegations of bullying will be taken seriously.

Working with the perpetrator and sanctions.

Steps should be taken to change their attitude and behaviour as well as ensuring access to any support that is required.

The following factors should be considered when determining the appropriate sanctions:

- The impact on the victim: was the bully acting anonymously?
- Was the material widely circulated and humiliating?
- How difficult was controlling the spread of the material?
- The motivation of the bully: was the incident unintentional or retaliation to bullying behaviour from others?

Technology-specific sanctions for children engaged in cyberbullying behaviour could include removing the right to bring a mobile phone into Hackberry. Professional judgment will be used in choosing from a range of strategies to remind individuals and groups of their responsibility to prevent bullying and help deal with it if it happens. Parents of both the aggrieved and the perpetrator (where known) will be informed so that the process of restorative justice can be implemented at an early stage. External agencies will be involved when this is deemed appropriate especially where there has been a breach of criminal law.

Recording incidents

All incidents of cyberbullying will be recorded by Hackberry staff on a Hackberry Bullying Incident Form. The same process for recording any other form of bullying will be followed – see Section 5.

## 8. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Parents and children are encouraged to use our complaints procedure (which is published on our web site) if they feel that their concerns about bullying (or anything else) are not being addressed properly.

## 9. BULLYING INFORMATION, SUPPORT & HELP-LINES

Additional sources of guidance and information:

Outside agencies who can offer support are:

Childline: 0800 1111

NSPCC: 0800 800 5000

Samaritans: 08457 90 90 90

Map safe routes to Hackberry (software available from MAP IT Ltd 01487 813745)

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)

ACE Education, 72 Durnsford Road, London, N11 2EJ

Tel helpline: 0300 0115 142 (Mon-Wed 10am-1pm).

Advice line for parents Children's Legal Centre

Tel: 01206 714650

Publications and free advice line on legal issues.

Kidscape

2 Grosvenor Gardens, London, SW1W 0DH.

Tel: 0207 730 3300 Fax: 0207 730 7081

Has a wide range of publications for young people, parents and teachers.

Bullying counsellor available Monday to Friday, 10-4.

Stand up to Bullying

[www.standuptobullying.co.uk](http://www.standuptobullying.co.uk)

Advice for parents and children about dealing with bullying.

Bullying UK

[www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)

Telephone: 0808 800 2222

Advice and help for parents and children

Useful reading:

'Bullying; Wise Guide' by Michele Elliott

'Don't Pick on Me: How to Handle Bullying' by Rosemary Stone

'Your child bullying' by J Alexander

'101 Ways to deal with bullying' - a guide for parents, by M Elliott

'Keeping Safe: A practical guide to talking with children, by Kidscape

'Helping children cope with bullying' by S Lawson

'Confident children: a parents' guide to helping children feel good', G Lindenfield

'Bullying and how to fight it: A Guide for families', by A Mellor

'Fighting, teasing and bullying: Simple and effective ways to help your child', by J Pearce

'The bullying problem: How to deal with difficult children, by A Train

## 10. LINKS TO OTHER RELATED POLICIES

Safeguarding

Whistleblowing

Health and Safety

Missing Child

ICT Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Rewards and Sanctions

Behaviour Management

Complaints

This policy was written by S Trevethan (Director)

Policy updated 02/09/2026

Signed by S Trevethan/R Childs

Review 09/2027