

Countering Bullying Policy



High Close School

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1. Introduction

High Close School aims to create an environment where young people can be supported in addressing their educational, emotional, spiritual, moral, social, and cultural needs and strives to support young people in achieving their full potential.

All forms of bullying interfere with achieving this aim. Therefore, such behaviour will not be ignored. Staff lead by example and behave in a manner that promotes equality and respect for others, openness and honesty while showing a will to challenge behaviour that undermines these values. The staff team are proactive in their use of the strategies and systems in place to address bullying at all levels while providing opportunities for change for those who are bullying and those who are bullied. HighClose aims to work with young people to promote positive relationships and reduce bullying in line with the following legislation and guidance:

Children Act 2004

Education and Inspections Act 2006

Equality Act 2010

Education Act 2011

Preventing and tackling bullying

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020

National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools 2022

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

High Close School Equality and Diversity Policy

High Close School Complaints Procedure

Unit Handbooks (Residential & Day Pupils)

High Close School Promoting Positive Behaviour and Relationships

High Close School Online Safety Policy

2. Definition of Bullying

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 and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups. It might be motivated by actual or perceived differences between children. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical and emotional safety is the school's first priority.

Bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim and can manifest itself in several ways. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves.

It is important to note that not all forms of bullying can be managed within the school. The nature of some bullying behaviours may constitute a child protection referral and/or police involvement (see Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and Barnardo's Safeguarding and Protecting Children policy).

It is also important to recognise that bullying behaviours are not exclusive to young people. It is therefore imperative that as a staff team we remain vigilant and address any indication of bullying by colleagues through the Staff Disciplinary, Grievance and Whistleblowing Policy.

Where bullying is racially motivated staff should refer to Equality and Diversity Policy and use both policies to work with the young person/people to help them understand and create new thought patterns with concerns to race and equality.

It should be recognised that “bully” and “target” are labels that describe behaviour and not the whole person. Bully behaviour is learned and so can be unlearned.

3. Online bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Online bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, as people forward on content at a click.

The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle online bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices.

Online bullying can include:

- **Harassment and trolling** – this is where a person may call someone names, or tease or humiliate them. For example, they might post nasty sexual comments on their social media or within an online game.
- **Gossip, rumours or lies** – this is where someone may share information about a person which is damaging to their reputation. It might be true or made up. For example, they may share gossip about a person’s sexual behaviour.
- **Impersonation** – this is where a person pretends to be someone else online, to share nasty or embarrassing things such as images and videos.
- **‘Outing’** – this is when someone may share personal information about another. For example, this might be publicly announcing someone’s sexuality or gender identity online. They may also share someone’s private images and videos without consent.
- **Excluding people** - this is when a person, or people, leave someone out of a group on purpose – for example, in group chats, apps and games.

Thinkuknow.co.uk advocate the following 5 steps to counter online bullying:

1. Tell an adult you trust.

Bullying can be hard to talk about, but you shouldn’t feel that you have to handle it alone. Talk to an adult you trust. This could be your mum or dad, another family member, or a teacher. They will support you and help you to make it stop. You can also talk to Childline by calling 0800 1111 or speaking to a Childline counsellor online.

2. Talk to someone your age.

Talk to a friend or if you don't want to talk to someone you know, you can post messages and get advice on Childline's Message boards.

3. Block the bullies.

Most websites will let you block people to stop them communicating with you. Find out how on most popular sites.

4. Keep the evidence.

Keep any nasty emails, texts or web pages so you can show someone what's been going on.

5. Report mean videos, pictures, comments or pages to the website you've found them on.

If your nude images have been shared in order to cause you harm and distress or someone is forcing you to take and share one, you can report it to [CEOP](#). CEOP will work with other professionals, which includes other police agencies, to help keep the young person safe

4. Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 defines protected characteristics as:

age

disability

gender reassignment

marriage and civil partnership

pregnancy and maternity

race

religion or belief

sex

sexual orientation

Any behaviour or language which makes a person feel unwelcome or marginalised because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, whether actual or perceived, or because of their association with people who are, or perceived to be, gay, bisexual or transgender (e.g. children of same-sex couples) will be considered as bullying of protected characteristics. Any bullying of this kind will be taken very seriously, and levels listed in this policy will be followed accordingly.

5. Working Proactively with Young People

Young people joining the school should be introduced to High Close School Code of Conduct to ensure that an understanding of expected and acceptable behaviours is gained. During the Admissions Meeting young people need to be shown the Anti Bullying Charter and Agreement and sign that they understand and agree. They also need to agree and sign the Multimedia contract. Young people will have tailored and creative key working or link working around bullying during their time in the school. All young people will participate PSHE/ASDAN sessions and Computer Science sessions which address interpersonal relationships and online safety. Assemblies and regular whole campus awareness days

and group work residentially will be run. We have anti bullying mentors throughout all year groups in school who meet regularly to discuss issues raised with them and find peer solutions.

Online communication on school systems is monitored through the Smoothwall system to ensure there are no safeguarding issues or bullying issues. Alerts are passed onto relevant staff in school to follow up. If online bullying is reported staff may ask young people to show them their electronic devices and issues may be referred to the police if young people refuse or dependent on content found. Staff may actively monitor young people's online communications if there are safeguarding or bullying concerns.

The school is aware that, unlike at day schools, young people who are at residential schools who are being bullied (offline) cannot escape their bullies for long periods of time as they are not going home as often. Handovers are used to make sure that communication between the education and residential teams is timely and effective and the young person receives the supervision and support they need the help the bullying stop and for the young person to recover from the experience.

6. Procedure

High Close School utilises a levels structure for managing various issues within the school. Staff should strive to deal with incidents of bullying at the lowest level appropriate to the severity of the incident. It will often be the case that incidents can be managed without evoking the levels system.

On observing or having a bullying incident reported to them, wherever that occurs, the member/s of staff should assess the severity of the incident, with colleagues where possible, and decide on the best response. For example, a minor incident may be best managed by facilitating a meeting between the parties involved, working through the incident and agreeing how best to respond. At the other extreme it may be necessary to involve the Senior Leadership Team. If in doubt, consult with your Line Manager or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

6a. Responding to the needs of the target

If a member of staff witnesses a bullying incident or has one reported to them, they should ensure steps have been taken to support the target. The target should be checked in with at the time to ensure they are feeling ok in themselves and they feel safe. The target should be checked on again later on to ensure they are still ok once they have had time to process the incident.

Staff should listen to what the target has to say and take their views into account when responding to an incident. It is important they know that the school takes the incident seriously and will be responding accordingly. Staff should explain to the target that staff will manage incident including a restorative approach and any sanctions that may arise. It should be explained to students that they should not attempt to take any retaliatory action themselves as this is not in line with restorative practice.

6b. Recording

All staff hold a responsibility for ensuring that recording systems are maintained. This means that monitoring systems can effectively work to protect victims of bullying and persistent bullying behaviour can be highlighted and managed.

The young people at the school can report bullying in any way that suits them. It is the staff's responsibility to ensure that each incident is constructively dealt with and that the appropriate recording takes place.

All incidents of bullying should be recorded in Sleuth within 24 hours of the incident. The young people are always involved in the process and their views are recorded as part of a restorative process. If the young people involved refuse to take part then this should be recorded with the reasons why. Staff should record all bullying incidents even if they are resolved with staff at that time to give a clear picture of the extent of bullying. The Sleuth Bullying Log is monitored half termly by Unit Managers and SLT.

Monitoring will highlight individuals who are persistently bullying and being bullied. This will allow the staff team to incorporate work that will help individuals to change behaviours that are negative for them and help those that are being bullied.

Young people may fill in their own record of bullying incidents by filling in a hand written bullying sheet which should be available in the units and all classrooms. Staff who receive the bullying form from the young person should then enter this information on Sleuth and scan the original document to Sleuth.

High Close School has developed a culture that celebrates success and established systems and practices which encourage, acknowledge and reward positive, supportive and friendly behaviour. Young people having the courage to change behaviours that may have been learned out of need must be acknowledged and celebrated in the same ways.

6c. Levelled Response

At High Close we believe that all incidents should be dealt with as close to the 'problem' as possible; and that the management of the problem should involve the pupil(s) and staff concerned. Management of incidents at a personal level follows a process of conflict resolution and works within the ethos of Therapeutic Crisis Intervention, TCI.

Where difficulties are not resolved or where specific behaviour patterns are exhibited by pupils, a levelled response will occur. Parents/carers are to be informed from level 1.

Levels must involve the young person, be clearly focused upon statistical and observable behaviour, provide strategies for change, provide target behaviour to move towards, and provide a time-scale within which behaviour will be re-assessed. The meeting is to be minuted by the member of staff who convened the meeting and the behaviour of the pupil(s) monitored and recorded afterwards.

Level 1:

On the first incidence of bullying:

Meeting with young person to be called by tutor and key/link worker to attend

Pupil on report to tutor for 1 week.

Pupil performance discussed at daily handover.

A restorative chat and/or conference is held with the target.

Parents/carers to be informed by telephone or face-to-face by key/link worker

Level 2:

If there is a bullying incident whilst on level 1 report OR

Where 3 incidents have been recorded within a rolling 6 week period

Meeting with young person to be called by Unit Manager and/or Assistant Principal/Head of Primary.
Parents to be invited to this meeting.
Review Level 1 report if applicable.
A restorative chat and/or conference is held with the target.
Pupil on report to Unit Manager and/or Assistant Principal/Head of Primary for 2 weeks.
Pupil performance to be discussed at Unit Managers/ELG meetings.

Level 3:

If there is a bullying incident whilst on level 2 report OR

Where 6 incidents have been recorded within a rolling 12 week period

Meeting with young person to be called by Deputy Principal/Head of Care. Parents to be invited to this meeting.
Review Level 1 and 2 reports.
A restorative chat and/or conference is held with the target.
Pupil on report to Deputy Principal/Head of Care for 2 weeks.
Pupil performance to be discussed at SLT meetings
LA to be informed of outcome of meeting.
Referral to the Bridge (sept 2021) for targeted intervention work.

Level 4:

If there is a bullying incident whilst on level 3 report OR

Where 9 incidents have been recorded within a rolling 12 week period

Meeting Chaired by Principal. Parents and LA invited.
Parents/carers to be informed by letter.

At all levels, restorative meetings MUST occur and specific consequences relevant to the bullying will be put in place.

In discussion with SLT, pupils can be accelerated through the levels as a response to the severity of the incidents.

It is expected that meetings arranged are 'proportional' to the behaviour being exhibited by the young person and that claims made by staff can be substantiated with statistical and objective information.

There is a young person's guide to Levels which details the process in a more child friendly way.

BULLYING LEVEL MEETING RECORD

Date:	Class:
Name:	
Present:	
Unit:	
Incident/s leading directly to the Level Meeting	
Pupil's View	
Concerns	
Actions and Agreed Plan	
Review Date	

HIGH CLOSE SCHOOL – YP BULLYING SHEET

NAME:		UNIT:	CLASS:
DATE:	TIME:	PLACE:	
What Happened:			
How do you feel?			
Young Person’s Signature:..... Date:.....			
Action Taken by Staff:			
Staff Member’s Signature:..... Date:.....			
Issued resolved or further action required? (please state)			
Date:			

HIGH CLOSE SCHOOL

OUR ANTI-BULLYING CHARTER

We are working with staff, young people and parents to create a school community where bullying is not tolerated. We have worked together to agree the following statements

- We want to hear about bullying in our school and we will listen
- We will talk about bullying, and make sure everyone knows what to do if they are being bullied and what help there is at our school
- We will check our Anti-Bullying Policy regularly and make sure that everyone is following it
- We will work together so that bullying concerns are dealt with so that pupils feel 'Safe to Learn'
- We will make sure that bullying is dealt with sensitively and that our 'Level System' is followed by all

Signed.....
(Head of Care)

Signed.....
(Deputy Principal)

Date.....



Signed.....
(Young Person)

Signed.....
(Keyworker)