



Anti-Bullying Policy

School statement on bullying

At Hillcross Primary School we are committed to providing an environment where every person has the right to be themselves, feel included and be able to learn in a safe and happy environment. Everyone at our school is equal and children treat each other with respect and kindness.

What is bullying?

Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online. There are four key elements to this definition: **hurtful, repetition, power imbalance** and **intentional**. 'Baiting' is also a form of bullying. It is when you intentionally make a person angry by saying or doing things to annoy them, causing the person to react negatively, so that they get into trouble.

Bullying can take many forms, and there are four categories of bullying:

1. Verbal Bullying – This includes teasing, name-calling, inappropriate sexual comments, and taunting.
2. Social Bullying – Often referred to as relational bullying, social bullying happens when someone is trying to deliberately hurt another's reputation. This includes spreading rumours, repeatedly excluding someone, and telling other children not to be friends with someone.
3. Physical Bullying – This includes hitting, pushing, tripping, stealing possessions, and sexual assault.
4. Cyber-Bullying – Cyber bullies use the internet (social media, mostly) to target their victims. Rumours and insults can quickly spread through social media, and it's nearly impossible to eradicate them.

A useful way to remember bullying is:

SEVERAL TIMES ON PURPOSE (S.T.O.P)



Bullying is NOT:

- Excluding someone – if someone does not want to play with another child or doesn't invite someone to a party. However, repeated and deliberate exclusion can be considered bullying (see Social Bullying above).
- Accidental physical harm – a child might unintentionally bump into, hit or trip another child. It is not bullying if it is not deliberate or if it rarely happens.
- Intentional physical or emotional harm – children sometimes hurt one another intentionally (and this is not acceptable), but if this is not repetitive, it is not bullying.
- Disliking someone – some children do not get along. Verbally or non-verbally communicating this, or starting rumours is unacceptable, but a clash of personality is not bullying, unless the behaviours of the children involved fit the criteria above.
- Wanting to be in control – some children like to take on the role of leader. Whilst having someone else direct your play can be frustrating, it is not bullying unless the actions of the person meets the criteria above.
- Joking about, or with someone – is not considered bullying unless the child has been previously made aware that their comments are perceived as inappropriate, hurtful or offensive by others.
- Arguments – we all argue from time to time, and arguments will inevitably happen at school. We cannot all agree with each other all of the time.



While the above behaviours are not ideal, they are not bullying. Conflict and drama are not always bullying, and there is a distinct difference. Bullying is deliberate and repetitive.

Bullying can relate to:

- **Race** (any one of the groups that human beings can be divided into based on shared distinctive physical traits) or **ethnicity** (group of people who identify with one another)
- **Religion or belief**
- **Family and culture**
- **Sexual orientation or gender.** This could be saying someone is acting 'like a boy' or 'like a girl' in a negative manner. It can also focus on the issue of sexuality, as well as gender related issues, based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
- **Sexual harassment** is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature which: violates your dignity makes you feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and creates a hostile or offensive environment. This can happen inside and outside school, in social groups and online. It singles someone out using sexual language, gestures or violence, and victimising someone for their appearance. Sexual bullying is also feeling pressured to act promiscuously and to act in a way that makes others uncomfortable. It is as serious as any form of hate crime and should be treated as such by parents, teachers and society in general.
- **Homophobic or biphobic points of view.** This is saying unkind or nasty things because someone is a lesbian, gay or bisexual, or because you think they are, or because they have two mums or two dads. It is also calling someone lesbian, gay, bisexual on purpose to be unkind or nasty to them, for example 'You are so gay!'
- **Transphobic opinions.** This is saying unkind things because someone is trans, or because you think they are trans, or being nasty about trans people (someone who feels the gender they are given as a baby doesn't match the gender they feel themselves to be).
- **Special educational needs or disability**
- **Someone's appearance** like their weight, body shape, facial features, types of clothing etc.
- **Someone's home or living conditions.**

Remember bullying can happen anywhere: in or out of school or on- line (cyber bullying). Even if this happens when you are accessing inappropriate content (such as games or videos), you **MUST** tell a trusted adult. Rather get into trouble, than be in an unsafe situation. Your safety is of the utmost importance to people who care for you.

What should I do if I'm being bullied?

If you are being bullied it is important to tell someone you trust. Tell an adult or friend, either at school or at home. If you have already told an adult, and nothing has changed or it is still happening, tell them again or speak to someone else. You can:

1. Try not to let the bully know that he/she is making you feel upset.
2. Be assertive - stand up to them, look at them directly in the eye, tell them to stop and mean it.
3. Stay in a group, bullies usually 'pick' on individuals.
4. Get away as quickly as you can.
5. Tell someone you trust – it can be a teacher, a teaching assistant, a midday-play leader, a parent, a friend, a playground buddy, a brother, a sister or a relative. (Tanja Doig is the Anti-Bullying lead in our school)
6. If you are nervous, ask a friend to join you when speaking to a trusted adult.
7. If you aren't ready to talk about it yet, write it down and hand it in to an adult or put it in the class 'I wish my teacher knew box'. Let an adult know your worry has been posted.



8. When you tell an adult about the bullying, give them as many facts as you can. (What? Who? Where? When? Why? How?)
9. Keep speaking out, until things change and you are no longer being bullied.
10. Never be afraid to do something about it and act quickly.
11. Don't blame yourself for what is happening.
12. You can call **CHILDLINE** at any time on this free number: **0800 1111** or for further support, visit <https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/> They will not share information unless it is necessary.
13. Visit the school website for more help and information: <https://www.hillcross.merton.sch.uk/page/?title=Anti%2DBullying&pid=2121>
14. Don't suffer in silence. This is never an option. You can get help.



What should I do if I think, or know of, someone else is being bullied?

Ask if they are okay, then most importantly, listen while they speak. If they are feeling anxious, offer to join them when speaking to a trusted adult. **Remember, if you do not report bullying you are part of the bullying process- do not be a bystander who allows this to happen to somebody else.** Take action and be an ally! Tell someone immediately! Be a defender, actively get help for (and comfort) the child being bullied. You should speak up and ensure this does not continue. Tell an adult immediately.

Do not be:

- **A child who assists:** these children do not start or lead in the bullying behaviour, but serve as an "assistant" to children who are bullying. They may encourage the bullying behaviour and occasionally join in.
- **A child who reinforces:** these children don't directly get involved in the bullying behaviour, but they give the bully an audience. They might laugh, encourage or provide support for the bullying.
- **A bystander:** these children remain separate from the bullying situation. They neither reinforce the bullying behaviour nor defend the child being bullied.

What will we, as a school, do to stop bullying and to support the children involved?

At Hillcross, we take all accusations of bullying very seriously and will conduct an investigation into your concern before deciding the outcome. We will investigate an accusation fully, by speaking to all parties involved, including pupil, parent and staff voice.

The following are possible outcomes:

- There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so the accusation cannot be upheld (there is the possibility that what has happened is a one-off incident or that it is a falling out amongst friends etc.)
- The accusation is not substantiated by the evidence
- The concern was substantiated in part or in full.

The outcome will be shared with children directly involved, and a letter will be sent to their parents sharing the outcomes and the subsequent action that will be taken. We are unable to discuss personal information about other children involved in this investigation.

Why do people bully?

Although bullying rarely happens at Hillcross, it might happen. Some children who engage in bullying do so because of negative experiences they themselves have had. There are many reasons why people bully - they may themselves feel insecure, lack confidence or have low self-esteem; they may have



difficulties at home; have been bullied themselves; they may feel their friendships and family relationships aren't very secure; they might be pressured by their friends/peers to behave in a certain way; want to be in the 'cool' group; they think it is 'just a bit of fun' and they don't realise how much it hurts others; or it makes them feel powerful or respected. Therefore, children who bully also require support to address the challenges that they may be experiencing so that they can change their behaviour. It can be hard, but we must try to walk in their shoes and understand their feelings too.

"When someone is cruel
or acts like a bully, you
don't stoop to their level.

**No, our motto is,
when they go low,
we go high."**

Michelle Obama

Who do we support and why do we do this?

Bullying is unacceptable and will always be dealt with appropriately. We offer support to all children involved including: the child who has been bullied, the bully, the children who assist, children who reinforce and those who are bystanders. A restorative approach is used to help the 'bully' change their behaviours and become a more responsible, empathetic and compassionate person. The aim is to stop the bully from behaving this way, and to adapt the way in which they treat others. At Hillcross, we will apply our Habits of Mind (such as Listening with Understanding and Empathy and Working Interdependently) as well as our school values of aspiration, compassion, challenge, respect and responsibility to support all children involved to feel safe and valued.

How to keep safe from cyber-bullying:

- Think before you send a photograph or message about yourself or any other people. It doesn't take long for it to be shared with every single person you know (from your best friend, to a family member, to someone you do not know and is potentially dangerous to someone you don't get along with).
- Never give out personal information as it can be shared with others. You may trust your friend, but sometimes you don't know his or her friends.
- Treat your password like a toothbrush- don't let anyone use it.
- If you receive unkind messages, texts, comments etc., block the person sending it immediately and report it to a trusted adult.
- Don't reply to a bullying message, but do keep it- whether it is a picture, message or online communication. For more information visit: <https://www.kidscape.org.uk/advice/advice-for-young-people/dealing-with-cyberbullying/>

Be proactive:

It is a good idea to record a factual (white hat) log of events, so this can be shared with staff. This will be very useful when adults are investigating the accusations and will help you/your parents to be able to refer to specific dates, times and events. Knowledge is power - the more we know, the better we can deal with the situation. You could record these on a log, a copy is attached on the last page of the policy), or in a diary, or place of your choosing.



To ensure everyone at our school feels happy, safe and able to learn, **THINK** before you act. Are your actions and words:

T - TRUE?

H - HELPFUL?

I - INSPIRING?

N - NECESSARY? &

K - KIND?





Bullying Diary

Completed by:

Date	What happened	Details: Who? Where? When? Etc.	Action taken/ Evidence
e.g. 23.11.2020	Mary kept coming up to me today, saying I was an idiot and didn't deserve to have friends.	Mary, break time, adventure trail	Reported to Tanja Doig
<u>Possible witnesses:</u> Jane and Steph			
<u>Possible witnesses:</u>			
<u>Possible witnesses:</u>			
<u>Possible witnesses:</u>			
<u>Possible witnesses:</u>			