



Hartshill Academy

The best in everyone™

Part of United Learning

Anti-Bullying Policy

REVIEWED BY: Richard Christon

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Introduction

At Hartshill Academy, there is a zero tolerance to bullying.

The aims of this policy are:

- To provide a safe, secure environment where all members of the Hartshill Academy community can flourish, thrive, and feel a sense of belonging while fulfilling their potential.
- To be an integral part of Hartshill Academy's behaviour policy.
- To ensure that all members of the Hartshill Academy community understand that bullying is not tolerated, the potential actions that may be taken when bullying occurs, and the role they play in preventing bullying.
- To promote Hartshill Academy as an 'upstanding' community.
- To promote the Hartshill Academy core value of RESPECT.
- To be proactive in the prevention of bullying.
- To raise awareness of what is meant by bullying, the different forms of bullying behaviours, and the strategies used to prevent bullying.
- To deal effectively with bullying behaviours if they occur.
- To monitor and evaluate any data on bullying and identify curriculum/training needs for staff and pupils.

What does it mean by an upstanding community?

Upstander = someone who recognises when something is wrong AND ACTS to make it right.

When an upstander hears/sees someone experiencing bullying behaviour, they speak up and report it.

Bystander = someone who sees or knows about bullying behaviour that is happening to someone but takes no actions to address or report it. Pupils are reminded that bystanding in cases of bullying brings part-responsibility on themselves, and that it is every pupil's responsibility to report observed cases of bullying. Pupils who bystand in cases of bullying behaviour and do not pass on what they see will be subject to investigation and possible sanctions. Pupils must be ready to recognise when behaviour described as 'banter' is an actual case of bullying.

Roles and responsibilities of the Hartshill Academy community

Pupils:

If you are being bullied (TARGET), witness bullying of someone else, or suspect that someone else is being bullied, it is important that you tell someone who may be able to help – be an upstander. This may be a friend, your tutor, a teacher, or any member of the staff you feel you can confide in. Alternatively, you can speak to any one of our pupil ambassadors, detailed on anti-bullying posters, which are in corridors positioned around the school.

You may be allocated an anti-bullying ambassador to mentor you and help rebuild confidence.

If you are a pupil that engages in bullying behaviour/s, you may receive educational intervention to understand how your behaviour has caused distress

to another member of the Hartshill Academy community. This will enable you to learn how to conduct yourself in the future and gain an understanding of bullying behaviour/s and how you can change your behaviour moving forward.

- You may be allocated an anti-bullying ambassador to mentor you.
- You may receive sanctions up to and including permanent exclusion.

Staff:

- Promote a climate where bullying is not tolerated and continually develop best practices based on knowledge of what works.
- Have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in preventing and responding to incidents of bullying.
- Model positive relationships and behaviours.
- Be an upstander: Any adult who has concerns about the bullying of a pupil should report this via CPOMS using the category of bullying concern and behaviour concern.
- If bullying or cyberbullying behaviours raise safeguarding concerns, contact the DSL and be aware of the importance of adopting an 'it could happen here' attitude.
- Actively participate in CPD opportunities when directed (e.g., CPD, KCSIE)

Senior Leadership Team and Governors:

- Provide a member of SLT to oversee anti-bullying at HA – this is Miss Wooldridge.
- Actively participate in national anti-bullying training
- Actively participate in national programmes such as the Anti-Bullying Alliance scheme and the Diana Award Anti-Bullying Ambassador Programme.
- Have a designated safeguarding lead who will escalate incidents to external parties if/when a child's welfare is a cause for concern – this is Mr Christon.
- Monitor and evaluate data on bullying and identify curriculum/training needs for staff and pupils.
- Review the school's anti-bullying policy annually and update it as necessary, based on curriculum developments and national patterns of behaviour.
- Ensure the HART curriculum facilitates pupils in gaining knowledge and understanding of core concepts linked to bullying.

Parents/Guardians:

- Be an upstander: Any parent who has concerns about their child or any other pupil in the school should inform an appropriate member of staff (in most cases, this will be the form tutor or class teacher for that pupil). Details about lines of communication for parents are available via the school's website.
- Be confident that all reported incidents of bullying will be investigated and dealt with.

- Be aware that the term 'bullying' is not an umbrella term that can be used for all incidents – bullying behaviour may be isolated incidents and will be dealt with as a behaviour concern.

What is bullying – Raising awareness

In the government document, *Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for Academy Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies* (July 2017), bullying is defined as:

"Behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally, and involves an imbalance of power."

This alludes to three key points:

1. The behaviour is repeated – doing something more than once.
2. The behaviour is intended to hurt others – causing the 3 U's: making others feel upset, uncomfortable, or unsafe.
3. There is an imbalance of power between the perpetrator(s) of bullying and the target.

Bullying can take place between pupils, between pupils and staff, or between staff.

Examples of bullying behaviour

Link to the 3 C's – it is a choice, can be challenged, and can be changed.

- **Verbal** – Including the use of discriminatory language, taunting, making mean statements, name-calling, and using derogatory terms.
- **Indirect** – Emotional, spreading rumours, saying things behind others' backs, offensive graffiti, mocking, excluding others from the group, and cyberbullying (e.g., sending inappropriate text messages, images, emails, misuse of social media, setting up websites designed to embarrass others, trolling).
- **Physical** – Taking belongings, kicking, hitting, pushing, spitting.

Bullying behaviours can be discriminatory and include:

- Racist/Faith/Culture
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender
- Age/Maturity
- Social/Economic Status
- Disablist/SEN
- Appearance and Image

Other Key Terminology Linked with Aspects of Bullying:

Banter:

At times, hurtful comments may be dismissed as mere "banter." Banter is defined as verbal communication between groups of equal power, not the intentional misuse of power to upset another person. However, describing behaviour as "banter" can cause actual cases of bullying to go unreported and be dismissed as insignificant. At Hartshill, we educate pupils about this throughout our HART curriculum.

Child-on-Child Abuse:

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, Sep 2022) emphasizes the duty of academies to guard against the negative impact on children's welfare, happiness, and development caused by child-on-child abuse. The term *child-on-child abuse* has replaced *peer-on-peer abuse*. Annex A of KCSIE (Sep 2022) defines child-on-child abuse as:

"Children can abuse other children. This is generally referred to as child-on-child abuse and can take many forms. This can include (but is not limited to): bullying (including cyberbullying), sexual violence and sexual harassment, physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair-pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm, sexting, and initiating/hazing-type violence and rituals."

Cyberbullying:

Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies (July 2017) defines cyberbullying as:

"The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school."

Cyberbullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click."

The *Education Act 2011* amended the *Education Act 1996* to allow staff to examine and delete data or files on electronic devices (e.g., mobile phones) seized by a formally authorized member of staff when there is good reason to do so. Parental consent is not required to search through a young person's device. At Hartshill Academy, we confiscate any phone which is seen or heard to minimize the risks associated with cyberbullying.

Sexual Violence:

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges (Sep 2021) emphasizes the importance of schools understanding that children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way. This can occur both inside and outside of school.

Sexual violence, as defined in this context, includes offences under the *Sexual Offences Act 2003*:

- Rape
- Assault by penetration
- Sexual assault
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent

Sexual Harassment:

Sexual harassment is defined as “unwanted conduct of a sexual nature” that can occur both online and offline, inside and outside of school.

Sexual harassment is likely to:

- Violate a child’s dignity.
- Make them feel intimidated, degraded, or humiliated.

Examples of sexual harassment include:

- Sexual comments and jokes.
- Physical behaviour (e.g., deliberately brushing past someone).
- Online harassment, including sharing nude or semi-nude images/videos and upskirting (a criminal offence).

Vulnerable Pupils:

Some children with protected characteristics may be more vulnerable to potential abuse by peers. Hartshill Academy acknowledges that these groups often require additional monitoring and support to address bullying and its effects.

Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for Academy Leaders, Staff, and Governing Bodies (July 2017) states:

"Some pupils are more likely to be the target of bullying because of the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. For example, those with special educational needs or disabilities, those who are adopted, those suffering from a health problem, or those with caring responsibilities may be more likely to experience bullying because of differences."

It is essential for staff to recognize that children in these groups might:

- Lack the social or communication skills to report incidents.
- Require accessible mechanisms for reporting.

The *Equality Act 2010* also requires schools to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimization.
- Promote equality and inclusion for all protected groups.

General Awareness of the Term Bullying

At Hartshill Academy, we emphasise the importance of understanding that the term ‘*bullying*’ is not an umbrella term to describe all negative interactions. Isolated incidents, or disagreements among friends, are not always considered bullying and are treated as behaviour concerns.

For situations where friendships break down over time, these may not meet the criteria of bullying. HA works diligently to help all pupils understand the distinction between bullying and ‘*falling out*.’

Staff and pupils are reminded of the three key elements that define bullying:

1. **Repetition** – The behaviour is repeated over time.
2. **Intention** – The behaviour is intended to harm or upset.
3. **Imbalance of Power** – There is an unequal dynamic between the individuals involved.

Where Bullying Can Occur

Bullying can happen in various places, including:

- The journey to and from the school.
- Before lessons begin.
- Corridors during lesson changes.
- Break and lunchtimes.
- Toilets and changing rooms.

To minimize these opportunities, Hartshill Academy ensures staff are on duty in these key areas before school, during lesson transitions, breaks, lunches, and after school. This presence acts as both a deterrent and an immediate support system for anyone experiencing bullying behaviours.

Signs of Bullying

All members of the Hartshill Academy community are encouraged to be vigilant for signs of distress in pupils, which may indicate bullying. Early identification and intervention are critical. Signs may include:

- Reluctance or fear of walking to/from school or using school transport.
- Requests to be driven to school instead.
- School avoidance or non-attendance.
- Difficulty participating in regular school activities.
- Visible physical injuries.
- Declining mental health or emotional wellbeing.
- Symptoms such as headaches, stomach aches, anxiety, panic attacks, or sleep disturbances.
- Behavioural changes, such as withdrawal, shyness, or aggressive tendencies.
- Involvement in risky behaviours, such as substance or alcohol misuse.
- Drastic changes in appearance or behaviour inappropriate to age.
- Abusive behaviours toward others.

Staff and pupils are encouraged to report concerns to a trusted adult immediately.

Proactive Measures to Prevent Bullying

At Hartshill Academy, prevention is our priority. We remain vigilant for signs of bullying and respond swiftly and effectively to any reports. A variety of initiatives and methods are in place to minimize the risk of bullying.

Core Value of RESPECT:

The school fosters a culture of RESPECT (one of the HART Values), which serves as a foundation for positive behaviour and a sense of belonging. Bullying behaviours directly contradict this core value.

Zero-Tolerance Approach:

Hartshill Academy has a clear zero-tolerance stance on bullying, which is communicated regularly to all members of the school community.

Upstanding Ethos:

We encourage all pupils, staff, and parents to adopt an 'upstanding' attitude, where individuals actively stand against bullying behaviours.

National Programmes and Recognitions

At Hartshill Academy, we actively participate in the **Diana Award Anti-Bullying Ambassador Program**. As part of this, we boast a number of Anti-Bullying Ambassadors in each year group whom are held up in a similar way to pupil leaders within the school.

Safeguarding and Curriculum Integration

- **Safeguarding Lead:** HA has a designated safeguarding lead, **Richard Christon**, who escalates incidents to external agencies if a child's welfare is at risk.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Data on bullying is continuously monitored, with curriculum and training needs identified for both staff and pupils. This is overseen by a member of the Senior Leadership Team, **Georgina Omelasz**, with actions recorded by the pastoral and welfare teams.
- **PSHE Curriculum:** Hartshill Academy ensures its HART curriculum addresses key concepts linked to bullying behaviours, including:
 - Healthy and respectful relationships.
 - Consent and equality.
 - Stereotyping, discrimination, and prejudice.
 - Body confidence and self-esteem.
 - Sexual violence and harassment.These topics are detailed on the school's website.

Staff Training and CPD

Hartshill Academy ensures all staff receive regular and up-to-date training, focusing on:

- Legal responsibilities under **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)** guidelines.
- Online modules on topics such as:
 - Harmful sexual behaviours.
 - Preventing bullying.
 - Peer-on-peer abuse awareness.
 - Equality and diversity.
 - Online safety.

National Awareness Campaigns

Hartshill Academy actively participates in national initiatives such as **Anti-Bullying Week** and **Internet Safety Week**. These are supported by:

- Social media awareness campaigns through the school's platforms.
- Dedicated PSHE lessons and assemblies.
- Whole school awareness events (e.g. odd socks)

Community Engagement and Presence

- **Surveys and Feedback:** Regular surveys capture the voices of pupils, parents, and staff. Feedback is reviewed and used to inform policy and practices.
- **Staff Presence:** Hartshill Academy maintains a strong staff presence during key times (lesson changes, breaks, lunch, and after school) to act as a deterrent and to provide immediate support for anyone experiencing bullying behaviours.

Actions in Cases of Bullying

Hartshill Academy is committed to addressing bullying effectively, both on and off-site, if it impacts the well-being of its pupils..

Procedure:

1. **Investigation:** All cases of bullying or suspected bullying are thoroughly investigated. All parties involved are given a fair opportunity to share their perspectives with an appropriate staff member.
2. **Record Keeping:** Proven cases of bullying are documented through **CPOMS** for accountability and follow-up.
3. **Action:** Appropriate disciplinary actions are taken in line with school policies, including measures up to **permanent exclusion** if necessary.

External Behaviour: For incidents occurring outside the school premises or time, Hartshill Academy works in partnership with parents and other relevant parties to address the behaviour and ensure the well-being of its pupils.

Potential Actions in Cases of Proven Bullying

Hartshill Academy takes a proactive approach to addressing and resolving proven cases of bullying. The key aims are to:

- Ensure the bullying behaviour is recognized and addressed.
- Educate those involved to prevent future incidents.
- Deter further instances of bullying behaviours.

Actions may include:

1. **Educational Awareness Training:** To help pupils understand the impact of their behaviour and learn healthier interpersonal skills.
2. **Conflict Resolution:** Facilitated sessions to help involved parties resolve their issues constructively.
3. **Mediation:** A neutral third party mediates discussions between the affected pupils to rebuild relationships.
4. **Investigations:** Thorough fact-finding to determine the extent and nature of the bullying.
5. **Internal Exclusion:** Where necessary, removing the perpetrator from the general school environment temporarily.
6. **Parental Meetings:** Direct engagement with parents to discuss concerns, outline consequences, and seek their support in addressing behaviour.
7. **Peer Mentoring:** Support and guidance provided to both the victim and perpetrator by trained anti-bullying ambassadors.

Managing Child-on-Child Abuse

Hartshill Academy recognises the importance of addressing **child-on-child abuse** promptly and effectively.

Our approach includes:

- **Immediate Reporting:** Staff report incidents to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** who assesses whether it constitutes a safeguarding concern.
- **Engagement with Authorities:** In cases where there is significant harm or risk, the DSL liaises with local authority children's social care to ensure appropriate action is taken, as outlined in **KCSIE 2024**.
- **Support Structures:** Ensuring that both the victim and the alleged perpetrator receive appropriate emotional and practical support.
- **Educational Interventions:** Facilitating understanding of appropriate boundaries, respect, and empathy through HART sessions and targeted training.

Bullying and the Law

Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, Hartshill Academy acknowledges various legislations that assist in addressing it effectively.

Relevant Legal Frameworks:

1. **Education Regulations 2014:** Mandates an effective anti-bullying strategy.
2. **Children Act 1989:** Bullying incidents that cause significant harm are addressed as child protection concerns.
3. **Sexual Offences Act 2003:** Applied where sexual violence or harassment is identified.
4. **Harassment and Threatening Behaviour Laws:** Criminal laws applicable to harassment, malicious communications, and threatening behaviour.

Policy Notes:

- **Sanctions:** Proven bullying incidents may result in consequences up to and including **expulsion**.
- **False Allegations:** Malicious accusations of bullying will be treated seriously, with appropriate disciplinary actions.

Sources and Guidance Referenced in This Policy

The Hartshill Academy Anti-Bullying Policy is aligned with the following guidelines:

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE):** Statutory guidance for schools and colleges (September 2024).
- **Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges:** Guidance (September 2021).
- **Preventing and Tackling Bullying:** Advice for headteachers, staff, and governing bodies (July 2017).
- **Cyberbullying:** Advice for headteachers and school staff (November 2014).
- **No Place for Bullying:** Ofsted Report (June 2012).

Hartshill Academy remains committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for all pupils and staff, promoting awareness, education, and action to combat bullying.