FOREST HILL SCHOOL POLICY

Anti-bullying

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Introduction

Forest Hill School is committed to creating an environment where all pupils feel safe and secure so that a culture of mutual support exists. School staff work continuously to ensure that all pupils form positive learning and friendship groups, in all areas of school life.

To develop a supportive culture, we take time and care to ensure that incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively. All members of the school community are asked to adhere to this policy.

At Forest Hill School all students and staff know there is a culture in which bullying is not tolerated.

The members of staff at Forest Hill School are aware that most incidents of bullying between students take place in the absence of adults. We are therefore very clear with students about the need to tell adults when incidents of bullying do occur so that we can deal with them promptly and effectively. All staff must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly to address it in accordance with the guidelines laid down in this policy.

Links with other Policies

This policy is linked with the following policies: Behaviour & Relationship Policy; Safeguarding Policy; Teaching and Learning Policy; Health and Safety Policy.

AIM OF THE POLICY
The aim of the anti-bullying policy is to ensure that students learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will pupils be able to fully benefit from opportunities available at school.

Evidence of Consultation

This policy has been updated in collaboration between, students and parents in December 2022.

Definition of Bullying

Through consultation with stakeholders, Forest Hill School defines bullying as:

Any individual person or group who feels bullied is a subject of bullying behaviour.

Bullying can involve people of any age, and can happen anywhere – at home, school or using online platforms and technologies (cyberbullying), this means it can happen at any time.

Bullying behaviours can be repetitive, but are not always. But they are harmful actions against AN individual person or group.

An individual person or group can be subjects of bullying even if the actions have not been repetitive.

Bullying is usually intentional behaviour, but can be intended as a joke or 'banter', and as a consequence, the subject of these jokes or banter may feel bullied.

Bullying can be a form of discrimination, particularly if it is based on a child's disability, race, religion or belief, age, gender identity, sexuality or any other protected characteristic.

Bullying encompasses a range of behaviours which may be combined and may include the behaviours and actions we have set out below – this is not an exhaustive list.

Verbal abuse: name-calling, cat-calling, saying nasty things to or about a child, their family or their group.

Physical abuse: hitting a child, pushing a child, physical assault, taking/stealing personal belongings

Emotional abuse: making threats, undermining a child, isolating / excluding a child from a friendship group or activities and making jokes / banter.

Cyberbullying/online bullying

Cyberbullying/online bullying is complicated, but once a person makes an unkind comment about someone online, it can never be permanently deleted. As soon as someone likes, thumbs up, or agrees to an unkind comment about a person, this is bullying.

Examples of Cyberbullying/online bullying are below, this is not an exhaustive list:

- excluding a child from online games, activities or friendship groups
- sending threatening, upsetting or abusive messages
- creating and sharing embarrassing or malicious images or videos
- 'trolling' - sending menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name.

Some students are more susceptible to being bullied for a wide variety of reasons, usually because they are perceived as being 'different' – for example physically, or in relation to learning, language, status, sexuality or family background - by other students. All staff need to be particularly vigilant for incidents of bullying involving this more vulnerable group.

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming nervous, withdrawn, complaining of illness, taking unusual absences or truanting, showing reluctance to go to or talk about school, becoming aggressive, angry, disruptive or upset with no clear explanation. They may also appear to lose possessions or money on several occasions, have unexplained bruises/cuts or rapidly change their friendship group. During lessons a student who is being bullied may show a change in work pattern, for example a drop in concentration or confidence.

Methods of Prevention and Intervention

There is a clear and unambiguous statement that applies to all pupils, staff and visitors to the school prominently displayed in all classrooms and in key areas around the school including the Main Reception area.

It states '**Any form of racist, sexist, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language or behaviour is completely unacceptable in this school'.**

The school's anti-bullying message is given to the whole school regularly, in the following ways:

PSHCE lessons and assemblies

Bullying is included in PSHCE Schemes of Work and is openly discussed in these lessons. Assemblies throughout the year will support with developing an anti-bullying culture and especially during Anti-Bullying Week each November.

Posters

Will be displayed in all areas of the school to support the culture of Anti-Bullying.

Specialist support

- Pupils and parents can complete an online safeguarding form to alert staff
- Pupils and parents can self-refer to the School Counsellor
- Prefect & House Captains system (these Year 11 Students are expected to be vigilant and report incident of bullying)
- Pupils are encouraged to share concerns they have with the pastoral team – Tutors, Heads of Year, The Inclusion Team, members of the Senior Leadership Team and Mental Health First – Aiders.

Restorative approaches

Restorative approaches are used across the school to resolve incidents of bullying and to repair damaged relationships.

Circle of friends

This method is used primarily to help those pupils who are at risk of isolation or who have become isolated and may therefore be relevant to both those who experience bullying as well as those who bully.

External agencies

The Police Service:
Our Safer Schools Police Officer visits the school regularly and he is accompanied by a PCSO. They play an integral role within the school community. They are present in and around the school at various times, including break-time, lunchtime and after school.

Responding to bullying

All members of the school community have a responsibility to look out for and address bullying.

No child deserves to be bullied. As well as helping the victims of bullying it is our policy and practice to help those who bully or who are bystanders – we do no favours to these students by ignoring their behaviour. Our aim is to develop a culture which makes the challenging of bullying the social norm and to actively seek ways of stopping the behaviour.

What does the law say?

Every school must have measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying.

Safeguarding children and young people

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, the school staff should report their concerns to their local authority children's social care. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, schools may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

Education Inspection Framework – July 2021

'Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings' sets out the approach inspectors should take to inspecting safeguarding in all the settings covered by the framework. It should be read alongside the framework and handbooks.

Inspectors are also required to be familiar with the statutory guidance about safeguarding. They should take this into account when inspecting:

- 'Keeping children safe in education: statutory guidance for schools and colleges on safeguarding children and safer recruitment'
- 'Working together to safeguard children'

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 replaces previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. A key provision is a new public sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5 April 2011. It replaces the three previous public sector equality duties for race, disability and gender, and covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexuality. The Duty has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Maintained schools and Academies are required to comply with the new Equality Duty. Part 6 of the Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to admissions, the way it provides education for pupils, provision of pupil access to any benefit, facility or service, or by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment. In England and Wales Part 6 of the Act applies to maintained schools and Academies and to other independent schools.

Criminal law

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.
If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or 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.

Guidance for staff

Staff must be aware of the Anti-Bullying policy.
All staff must challenge any bullying behaviour.
Staff must remember that verbal abuse is often as intimidating as a physical threat, and that bullying can also be non-verbal.
All staff must be diligent in reporting incidents – even apparent 'one-offs'.
Incidents must be dealt with and seen to be dealt with.

When investigating an incident of apparent bullying, staff should be aware that this may not be the underlying cause of the incident and that students may therefore need further support. Each person involved in an apparent incident must be given the opportunity to present their version of events.

Staff need to be aware of whether the bullying is by an individual or a group of pupils. If students are from different Year Groups, the Heads of Year need to liaise to ensure that the response is consistent and coherent.

Guidance for anyone affected by bullying

If you or a friend of yours is being bullied try to respond in at least one of these ways:
- Make sure that you tell someone as soon as you can.
- Try to walk away quickly and confidently even if you do not feel that way inside.
- Try to be assertive – look and sound confident even if you do not feel that way inside.
- Avoid being alone in places where bullying happens.
- Try not to retaliate.

People who bully like to think they have power over you so, if you can, try not to show them you are upset by what they are doing.

If you feel that you or your friend is being bullied, it is important that school staff are made aware as soon as possible. You can do this by:

- **Telling a member of staff – your tutor, your Head of Year, a member of SLT or Inclusion or a staff member you feel confident talking to.**
- **Putting a note in the Safeguarding Box at reception / outside Mr Haresign's office**
- **Emailing the safeguarding team by emailing SAFEGUARDING@foresthillschool.co.uk**

Guidance for parents

- If you notice that your son is behaving differently than usual, is withdrawn or you think that something isn't quite right. Please speak to them and ask if everything is ok.

- If your son tells you that he is experiencing bullying, reassure him that he has done the right thing to tell you and that it is not his fault that he has been bullied.

- Explain to your son that he should report the bullying to a member of staff and that you will support him if necessary.

- Take what he tells you seriously and try to find out the facts – what has happened, when and where, how many times, who was involved, whether he has told anyone else. Keeping a written diary may help with this.

- Explain that you cannot agree to keep the bullying a secret because of the harm it is causing, and also that the person who is doing the bullying needs support to help them not do it again.

- Communicate with the school by emailing **SAFEGUARDING@foresthillschool.co.uk** and follow this up with a phone call if you do not receive a response within 48 hours (2 working days).

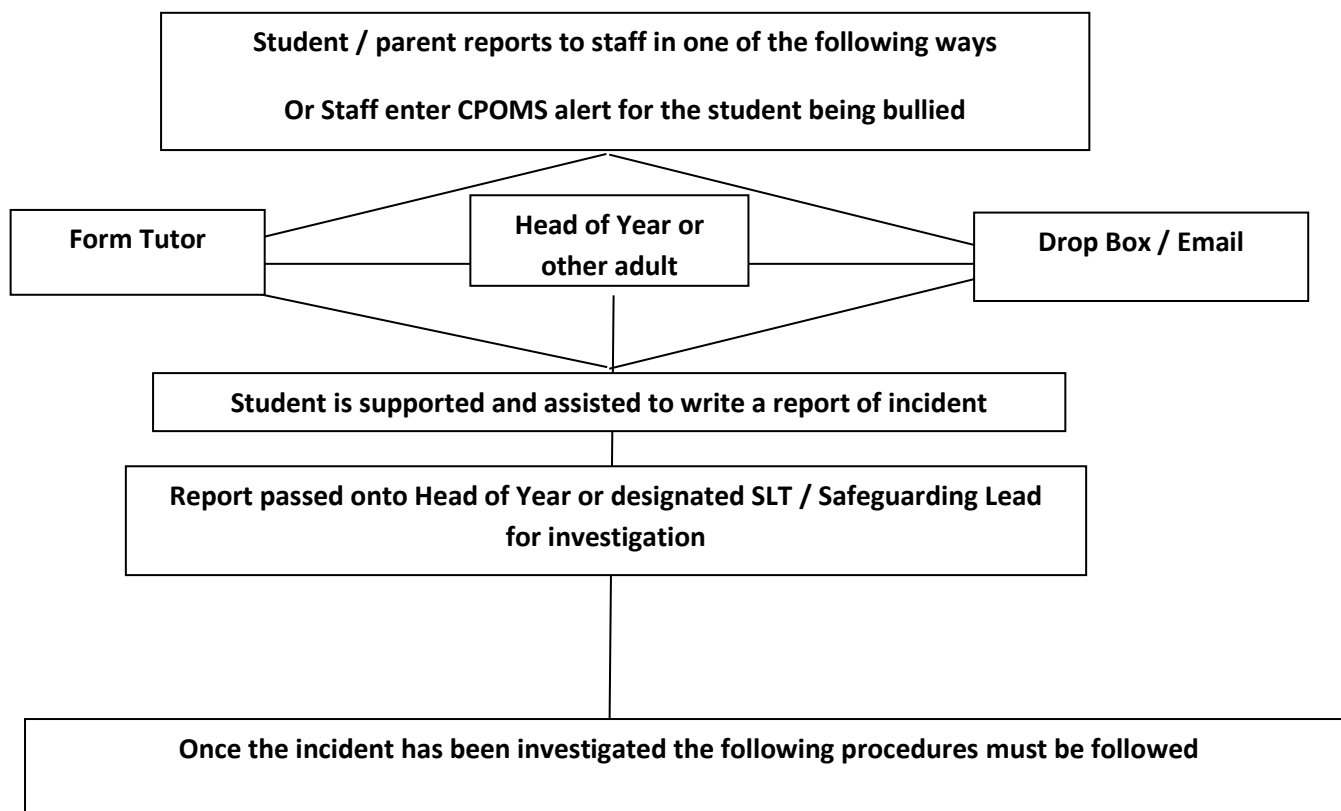**Procedures for working through an incident of bullying**

Whilst students are at school their safety is the responsibility of every adult who works in Forest Hill School. Staff and parents/carers have a duty to work together to resolve any incident of bullying that may occur.

Implementation

The following steps will be taken when dealing with incidents:

1. If bullying is suspected or reported, initially the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has received the report.

2. A clear account of the incident will be will be recorded.

3. Following discussion between relevant staff, a decision will be taken swiftly as to who will lead on addressing the incident. All concerned will be interviewed and a decision taken about what action will be taken; the plan for action will then be implemented and the outcomes monitored.

4. A written record of both the incident and subsequent actions will be made and kept by the school. Heads of Year, Form Tutors and other key staff will be responsible for monitoring bullying situations when incidents are closed.

5. Parents/carers, students and relevant staff will be kept informed throughout.

Flow chart for working through an incident of bullying

Student / parent reports to staff in one of the following ways

Or Staff enter CPOMS alert for the student being bullied

| Form Tutor | Head of Year or other adult | Drop Box / Email |

Student is supported and assisted to write a report of incident

Report passed onto Head of Year or designated SLT / Safeguarding Lead for investigation

Once the incident has been investigated the following procedures must be followed

1. Incident is recorded as a safeguarding incident for the bullied student on CPOMS
2. Incident is recorded on Bromcom as a Level 2 behaviour incident for the bully/ies
3. Level 2 sanction applied to bully/ies
4. Families of all parties contacted by phone and discussion of incident with families
5. Counselling offered for bullied student/s
6. Support / guidance offered for bully/ies
7. Restorative meeting led by Head of Year / SLT member / Inclusion Team
8. Incident to remain on file for involved students whilst at Forest Hill School
9. Relationship between parties to be monitored
10. All students involved encouraged to report any further instances of bullying

Notes

1. *It is recognised that the wrongdoers and the bullied may be students in the plural.*
2. *Any student dissatisfied with the outcome may approach the Head directly (accompanied by a friend / advocate if necessary) for clarification / further investigation.*
3. *SLT will review bullying data at least termly and report to the Governing Body as necessary*

Support for those who are bullied and those who bully

Restorative approaches will be used as one way of resolving incidents of bullying. This process includes developing agreed ways forward and identifying support needed for both the person or people experiencing bullying and those exhibiting bullying behaviour.

More specialist support e.g., counselling, Inclusion Team mentoring or external support will be made available, where appropriate, to both those on the receiving end of bullying and those exhibiting bullying behaviour.

Constructive supervision – having a chat to pupils while on duty etc can help both students at risk of being bullied and those at risk of bullying.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

The review of this policy will take place once every two years within the school's policy review cycle.

Further sources of information

Specialist organisations

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA): Founded in 2002 by NSPCC and National Children's Bureau, the Anti-Bullying Alliance brings together over 100 organisations into one network to develop and share good practice across the whole range of bullying issues. The ABA has also put together a fact sheet outlining the range of support that is available to schools and young people from the anti-bullying sector which can be accessed here

https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/aba-our-work

Kidscape: Charity established to prevent bullying and promote child protection providing advice for young people, professionals and parents about different types of bullying and how to tackle it. They also offer specialist training and support for school staff, and assertiveness training for young people.

https://www.kidscape.org.uk/advice/advice-for-parents-and-carers/
https://www.kidscape.org.uk/advice/advice-for-young-people/
https://www.kidscape.org.uk/advice/advice-for-adults-working-with-children/

NSPCC: The UK's leading children's' charity
https://www.nspcc.org.uk/

Cyberbullying / Online Bullying Support

ChildNet: Specialist resources for young people to raise awareness of online safety and how to protect themselves.
https://www.childnet.com/

Think U Know: resources provided by Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) for children and young people, parents, carers and teachers.
https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/

The UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS): UKSIS is a collaborative forum through which government, the tech community and the third sector work together to ensure the UK is the safest place in the world to be online.

https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-council-for-internet-safety

LGBTQ+
EACH (Educational Action Challenging Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia): provides a national freephone Actionline for targets of homophobic or transphobic bullying and training to schools on sexual orientation, gender identity matters and cyber-homophobia.
https://each.education/

Schools Out: Offers practical advice, resources (including lesson plans) and training to schools on LGBTQ+ equality in education.
http://www.schools-out.org.uk/

Stonewall: An LGBTQ+ equality organisation with considerable expertise in LGB bullying in schools, a dedicated youth site, resources for schools, and specialist training for teachers.
https://www.stonewall.org.uk/

SEND
Mencap: Represents people with learning disabilities, with specific advice and information for people who work with children and young people.
https://www.mencap.org.uk/

Cyberbullying and children and young people with SEN and disabilities: Advice provided by the Anti-Bullying Alliance on developing effective anti-bullying practice.
https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/online-bullying/online-bullying-and-sendisability

Racism
Show Racism the Red Card: Provide resources and workshops for schools to educate young people, often using the high profile of football, about racism.
https://www.theredcard.org/

Kick it Out: Uses the appeal of football to educate young people about racism and provide education packs for schools.
https://www.kickitout.org/

Anne Frank Trust: Runs a schools' project to teach young people about Anne Frank and the Holocaust, the consequences of unchecked prejudice and discrimination, and cultural diversity.
https://www.annefrank.org.uk/