New Horizons
LEARNING CENTRE
Unlocking Potential
through Learning

Anti-Bullying Policy

Date Ratified: March 2025
Review Date: March 2027
Policy responsibility - Pastoral Lead
Policy Location: Statutory

Signed by: Mr Andrew Mclean
Position: Chair of Governors

Contents:

Statement of intent

1. Legal framework
2. Definition
3. Types of bullying
4. Roles and responsibilities
5. Statutory implications
6. Prevention
7. Signs of bullying
8. Staff principles
9. Preventing peer-on-peer sexual abuse
10. Managing Disclosure
11. Confidentially
12. Cyberbullying
13. Procedures
14. Consequences
15. Support
16. Follow-up
17. Bullying outside of school
18. Monitoring and review

Statement of intent

New Horizons Learning Centre believes that all pupils are entitled to learn in a safe and supportive environment, which means being free from all forms of bullying behaviour. This policy outlines how instances of bullying are dealt with, including procedures to prevent occurrences.

These strategies, such as learning about tolerance and difference as part of the school's curriculum, aim to promote an inclusive, tolerant and supportive ethos at the school.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 outlines several legal obligations regarding the school's response to bullying. Under section 89, schools must have measures in place to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. These measures are part of the school's Restorative Behaviour Policy, which is communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents.

All staff, parents, and pupils work together to prevent and reduce bullying at the school, which has a zero-tolerance policy.

Signed By: _____ Print Name: _____

Position: Chair of Governors Date:

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Communications Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Education Act 2011

This policy has been written in accordance with guidance, including, but not limited to:

- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2018) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Restorative Behaviour Policy
- Cyber Bullying Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

2. Definition

For the purpose of this policy, "bullying" is defined as persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group.

Bullying is generally characterised by:

- **Repetition**: Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over a period of time.
- **Intent**: The perpetrator(s) means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
- **Targeting**: Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- **Power imbalance**: Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

Vulnerable pupils are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves.

Vulnerable pupils may include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils with differing SEND.
- Pupils who are in care.
- Pupils suffering from a health problem, including anxiety-driven idiosyncrasies.
- Pupils with caring responsibilities.

3. Types of bullying

Many kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying and related to almost anything.

Teasing another pupil because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, home life, culture, disability, or SEND are some of the types of bullying that can occur.

Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:

- Verbally
- Physically
- Emotionally
- Online (Cyber)

Racist bullying: Bullying another person based on their ethnic background, religion or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.

Homophobic bullying: Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

Transphobic bullying: Bullying based on another person's gender 'variance' or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.

Sexist bullying: Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Inappropriate sexual behaviours may sometimes characterise sexist bullying.

Sexual bullying: Bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal or non-verbal sexual dimension/dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. Sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes commonly underpin this.

Prejudicial bullying: Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics, e.g. SEND or mental health issues.

Relational bullying: Bullying that primarily constitutes excluding, isolating and ostracising someone – usually through verbal and emotional bullying.

4. Roles and responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for:

- Evaluating and reviewing this policy to ensure that it is not discriminatory.
- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring that the school adopts a tolerant and open-minded policy towards difference.
- Ensuring the school is inclusive.
- Analysing any bullying data to establish patterns and reviewing this policy in light of these.

The Executive Headteacher and SLT are responsible for:

- Reviewing and amending this policy, accounting for new legislation and government guidance, and using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in previous years to improve procedures.
- Report the incident on CPOMS, ensuring that it is flagged as a bullying incident and including which type of bullying has occurred to allow for proper analysis of the data collected.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff members.

Tutors are responsible for:

- Corresponding and meeting with parents where necessary.
- Providing a point of contact for pupils and parents when more serious bullying incidents occur.

All staff are responsible for:

- Being alert to social dynamics in their class.
- Being available for pupils who wish to report bullying.
- Providing follow-up support after bullying incidents.
- They are alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and inform the pupil's tutors of such observations.
- Refraining from gender stereotyping when dealing with bullying.
- Understanding the composition of pupil groups, showing sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying.
- Reporting any instances of bullying once they have been approached by a pupil for support.

Parents are responsible for:

- Informing their child's tutor/class teacher if they have any concerns that their child is the victim of bullying or involved in bullying in anyway.
- Being watchful of their children's behaviour, attitude, and characteristics and inform the relevant staff members of any changes.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Informing a staff member if they witness or are a bullying victim.
- Not making counter-threats if they are victims of bullying.
- Walking away from dangerous situations and avoiding involving other pupils in incidents.
- Keeping evidence of cyberbullying and informing a member of staff, should they fall victim to cyberbullying.

5. Statutory implications

The school understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, it has a responsibility 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 those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The school understands that, under the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, it could have charges brought against it if it allows the rights of children and young people at the school to be breached by failing to take bullying seriously.

The Executive Headteacher and SLT will ensure that this policy complies with the HRA; the Executive Headteacher and SLT understand that they cannot do this without fully involving all staff.

Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications may be considered criminal offences:

- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or in a way that conveys an indecent or grossly offensive message, a threat, or information that is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to pursue any conduct amounting to harassment knowingly.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene, or menacing character by means of a public electronic communications network. It is also unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.
- Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to the police include; violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation and hate crimes.

6. Prevention

The school communicates a whole-school commitment to addressing bullying through a written charter regularly promoted across the whole school.

A staff member will investigate all reported or investigated instances of bullying.

Staff will encourage pupil cooperation and the development of interpersonal skills using group and pair work.

All types of bullying will be discussed as part of the curriculum.

Diversity, difference and respect for others are promoted and celebrated through various lessons.

Seating plans will be organised and altered in a way that prevents instances of bullying.

Potential victims of bullying are placed in working groups with other pupils who do not abuse or take advantage of others.

Participation in special events, such as sporting activities and school trips, provides opportunities to extend friendship groups and develop interactive skills.

All school members are made aware of this policy and their responsibilities in relation to it.

All staff members receive training on identifying and dealing with the different types of bullying.

Available staff on duty, for pupils to go to during free time if they feel threatened.

The teacher supervising the area will speak to pupils to determine the cause of any problems and, ultimately, stop any form of bullying.

Pupils deemed vulnerable, as defined in section two, will meet with a preferred staff member once per week to ensure any problems can be resolved quickly.

SLT will also offer an 'open door' policy allowing pupils to discuss bullying, whether they are victims or have witnessed an incident.

The school will be alert to and address any mental health and well-being issues amongst pupils, as these can be a cause of bullying behaviour.

The school will ensure potential perpetrators are given support as required so outside factors, such as mental health issues, don't negatively influence their educational, emotional, and social development.

7. Signs of bullying

Staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil is a victim of bullying:

- Being frightened to travel to or from school
- Asking to be driven to school
- Unwillingness to attend school
- Truancy
- Becoming anxious or lacking confidence
- Saying that they feel ill in the morning
- Decreased involvement in schoolwork
- Returning home with torn clothes or damaged possessions
- Missing possessions
- Missing dinner money
- Asking for extra money or stealing
- Cuts or bruises
- Lack of appetite
- Unwillingness to use the Internet or mobile devices
- Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages
- Lack of eye contact
- Becoming short tempered
- Change in behaviour and attitude at home

Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental health issues, so they are still worth investigating.

A staff member approaches pupils who display a significant number of these signs to determine the underlying issues, whether they are due to bullying or other problems.

In addition, staff will be aware of the potential factors that may indicate a person is likely to have bullying behaviours, including, but not limited to, the following:

- They have experienced mental health problems, which have led to the pupil becoming aggravated

- They have been the victim of domestic abuse
- Their academic engagement has started to fall, which has meant they are stressed

Suppose staff become aware of any factors that could lead to bullying behaviours. In that case, they will notify the pupil's tutor or class teacher, who will investigate and monitor the situation.

8. Staff principles

The school will ensure that prevention is a prominent aspect of its anti-bullying vision.

Staff will treat reports of bullying seriously, and they will not ignore signs of suspected bullying.

Unpleasantness from one pupil towards another is constantly challenged and never ignored.

Staff act immediately when they become aware of a bullying incident; this applies to all staff.

Staff always respect pupils' privacy, and information about specific instances of bullying is not discussed with others unless it is in a setting the victim has consented to or there is a safeguarding concern.

If a staff member believes a pupil is in danger, e.g., being hurt, they will inform the SLT immediately.

To ensure that bullying has stopped, follow-up support is given to both the victim and bully in the months following any incidents.

9. Preventing peer-on-peer sexual abuse

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of peer-on-peer sexual abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Sexual harassment refers to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that occurs online or offline.

Sexual harassment violates a child's dignity and makes them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated, and can create a hostile, sexualised or offensive environment. If left unchallenged, sexual harassment can create an atmosphere that normalises inappropriate behaviour and may lead to sexual violence.

Sexual violence refers to the three following offences:

- **Rape**: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis. B does not consent to the penetration, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- **Assault by Penetration**: A person (A) commits an offence if s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else; the penetration is sexual. B does not consent to the penetration, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- **Sexual Assault**: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

The school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy outlines our stance on addressing peer-on-peer sexual abuse, and the procedures in place will be adhered to if any instances of sexual harassment or sexual violence are uncovered.

To prevent peer-on-peer abuse and address the broader societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate pupils through the curriculum, assemblies, and PSHE lessons about abuse, its forms, and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others.

The school will also ensure that pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum in PSHE lessons, RSE and group sessions. Such content will be age and stage-of-development specific and tackle issues such as the following:

- Healthy relationships
- Respectful behaviour
- Gender roles, stereotyping and equality
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- Prejudiced behaviour
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong
- Addressing cultures of sexual harassment

All staff will be aware that pupils of any age and sex are capable of abusing their peers and will never tolerate abuse as "banter" or "part of growing up".

All staff will be aware that peer-on-peer abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting and gender issues, such as girls being sexually touched or assaulted and boys being subjected to hazing/initiation type of violence, which aims to cause physical, emotional or psychological harm.

All staff will be made aware of the heightened vulnerability of pupils with SEND, who are three times more likely to be abused than their peers.

Staff will not assume that possible indicators of abuse relate to the pupil's SEND and will always explore indicators further.

LGBT children can be targeted by their peers. In some cases, children who are perceived to be LGBT, whether they are or not, can be just as vulnerable to abuse as LGBT children.

The school's response to boy-on-boy and girl-on-girl sexual violence and sexual harassment will be equally as robust as it is for incidents between children of the opposite sex.

Pupils will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled – this includes the process for reporting concerns about friends or peers.

If a child has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to Access and Response Team (ART).

10. Managing disclosures

Victims will always be taken seriously, reassured, supported and kept safe.

Victims will never be made to feel like they are causing a problem or made to feel ashamed.

If a victim's friend makes a report or a staff member overhears a conversation, staff will act – they will never assume that someone else will deal with it. The basic principles remain the same as when a victim reports an incident; however, staff will consider why the victim has not made a report themselves. The discussion will be handled sensitively and with the help of ART where necessary. If staff are in doubt, they will speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

The DSL will be informed of any abuse allegations against pupils with SEND. They will record the incident in writing and, working with the SENCO, decide what course of action is necessary, with the pupil's best interests in mind at all times.

11. Confidentiality

The school will only engage with staff and agencies required to support the victim and/or be involved in any investigation.

If a victim asks the school not to tell anyone about the disclosure, the school will not make this promise.

Even without the victim's consent, the information may still be lawfully shared if it is in the public interest and protects children from harm.

The DSL will consider the following when making confidentiality decisions:

- Parents will be informed unless it will place the victim at greater risk.
- If a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger or has been harmed, a referral will be made to ART.
- Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes – reports containing any such crimes will be passed to the police.

More information regarding the school's stance on preventing peer-on-peer sexual abuse is available in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The school's Confidentiality Policy will be adhered to at all times.

12. Cyberbullying

The school has a Cyberbullying Policy that outlines its zero-tolerance approach to cyberbullying.

The school views cyberbullying in the same light as any other form of bullying and will follow the consequences set out in section 14 of this policy if it becomes aware of any incidents.

The school will support pupils who have been victims of cyberbullying by holding formal and informal discussions with them about their feelings and whether the bullying has stopped, in accordance with sections 15 and 16 of this policy.

In accordance with the Education Act 2011, the school has the right to examine and delete files from pupils' personal devices, e.g., mobile phones, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools, and parental consent is not needed to search a young person's mobile phone.

If a staff member seizes an electronic device and there is reasonable ground to suspect that it contains evidence related to an offence. In that case, the device must be given to the police as soon as possible.

If a staff member finds material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, the Executive Headteacher and SLT will decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of the relevant policies.

13. Procedures

Minor incidents are reported and flagged on CPOMS, marked for the victim's tutor/class teacher to follow up on, who investigates the incident, sets appropriate sanctions for the perpetrator and informs the SLT via CPOMS of the incident and outcome.

When investigating a bullying incident, the following procedures are adopted in line with the Restorative Behaviour Policy:

- The victim, alleged bully and witnesses are all interviewed separately
- Staff members ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the pupils being interviewed, including electronic communication.
- If a pupil is injured, staff members immediately take the pupil to a designated first aider for an opinion on the extent of the injury.
- A room is used that allows for privacy during interviews
- A witness is used for serious incidents
- If appropriate, the alleged bully, the victim and the witnesses are asked to write down details of the incident; this may need prompting with questions from a staff member to obtain the complete picture.
- Premature assumptions are not made, as it is important not to be judgemental at this stage.
- Staff members listen carefully to all accounts, are non-confrontational, and do not attach blame until the investigation is complete.
- All concerned pupils are informed that they must not discuss the interview with other pupils.

Due to the potential for sexist, transphobic, sexual, etc bullying to be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviour, staff members involved in dealing with the incident are required to consider whether there is a need for safeguarding processes to be implemented.

14. Consequences

If SLT are satisfied that bullying did take place, the pupil will be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and warned that there must be no further incidents.

SLT informs the pupil of the type of consequence to be used in this instance (internal exclusion, fixed-term exclusion, etc.) and future consequences if the bullying continues.

If possible, the SLT will attempt reconciliation through the restorative process and obtain a genuine commitment to not repeating the bully's behaviours. This will be face-to-face or in writing to the victim (and/or witnesses if appropriate), but only with the victim's full consent. Discretion is used here; victims will never feel pressured into a face-to-face meeting with the bully.

By speaking to staff, the perpetrator is made to realise that some pupils do not appreciate the distress they are causing and that they should change their behaviour.

Parents are informed of bullying incidents and what action is being taken.

The tutor/class teacher informally monitors the pupils involved over the next term.

15. Support

For a month after the initial complaint of bullying, the tutor/class team holds an informal discussion weekly in tutor time to check whether the bullying has stopped.

A member of SLT holds a formal meeting monthly to check whether the bullying has stopped. These formal meetings will continue to occur once a month until the SLT member and victim are confident the bullying has stopped. The meeting will be minuted, and records will be logged to evidence the impact of the intervention.

If necessary, group dynamics are broken up by staff members by assigning class places.

The victim is encouraged to tell a trusted adult in school if bullying is repeated.

The school will work with the victim to build resilience, e.g. by offering emotional therapy or in-house mentoring.

The school realises that bullying may be an indication of underlying mental health issues. Perpetrators must attend mandatory EL sessions and/or in-house mentoring to explore and assist with any underlying mental health or emotional well-being issues.

The school will work with the perpetrator regarding any underlying mental health or emotional well-being problems.

16. Follow-up support

The progress of both the bully and the victim is monitored by their tutor team.

One-on-one sessions to discuss how the victim and bully are progressing may be appropriate.

If appropriate, follow-up correspondence is arranged with parents one month after the incident.

Pupils who have been bullied are supported in the following ways:

- Being listened to
- Having an immediate opportunity to meet with SLT or a member of staff of their choice
- Being reassured
- Being offered continued support
- Being offered EL/in-house mentoring, where appropriate

Pupils who have bullied others are supported in the following ways:

- Receiving a consequence for their actions
- Being able to discuss what happened
- Being helped to reflect on why they became involved
- Being helped to understand what they did wrong and why they need to change their behaviour
- Appropriate assistance from parents

17. Bullying outside of school

The Executive Headteacher has a specific statutory power to discipline pupils for poor behaviour outside the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives the Executive Headteacher the power to regulate pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and, therefore, not under the lawful charge of a school staff member.

All staff can discipline pupils for misbehaving outside of school. This can relate to bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it is investigated and acted on.

In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, staff members can only discipline the pupil on school premises or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the staff member, e.g. on a school trip.

The Executive Headteacher is responsible for determining whether it is appropriate to notify the police or the anti-social behaviour coordinator of the action taken against a pupil.

If the misbehaviour is criminal or poses a serious threat to a public member, the police are always informed.

18. Monitoring and review

The Executive Headteacher, SLT and the DSL review this policy every two years.

The scheduled review date for this policy is January 2025.