

WHOLE SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY INCLUDING ANTI-CYBERBULLYING

This policy applies to all students at the School irrespective of their age, day or boarding status. While this policy focuses mainly on the bullying of students by other students, the School recognises that other forms of bullying may occur. This policy will also apply to bullying behaviour outside of the School, of which the School becomes aware.

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1 Legal framework

This policy has been prepared in accordance with, but not limited to, the following legislation and guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (DfE 2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2026)
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (DfE, 2017)
- The Equality Act (2010)
- Prevent Duty guidance
- National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2026

This Policy operates in conjunction with the following School policies:

- *Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Procedures*
- *Code of Conduct*
- *Behaviour Policy*
- *Acceptable Use of Technology Procedure for Students*
- *Early Years Mobile Phone & Camera Policy*
- *Online Safety Policy*
- *Child on Child Abuse Policy*
- *Surveillance Camera Systems Procedure*

2 Definitions

New Hall School understands that 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 (for instance, cyberbullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a student is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. The School understands that bullying might be motivated by actual differences between students, or perceived differences.

2.1 Bullying

Bullying behaviour is always unacceptable and will not be dismissed as being normal between young people, as 'banter' or simply 'part of growing up'. Bullying will not be tolerated because:

- it is harmful to the person who is bullied, to those who engage in bullying behaviour, and those who support them, and can in some cases lead to lasting psychological damage
- it interferes with the person's right to enjoy their learning, working and leisure time free from intimidation or oppression or abuse
- it is contrary to all our aims and values, our internal culture and the reputation of the School

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, normally repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying includes peer-on-peer abuse, sexual harassment, online abuse, and discriminatory bullying as defined in KCSIE (DfE 2026). The School does not accept bullying in any form.

Bullying may be:

- Physical: Hitting, kicking pushing people around, spitting; or taking, damaging or hiding possessions
- Verbal: Name-calling, taunting, teasing, mimicking, insulting or demanding money
- Exclusionary Behaviour: Intimidating, isolating or excluding a person from a group
- General Unkindness: Spreading rumours, any kind of initiation ceremony or exploitation of another student, or writing unkind notes, mobile phone texts or e-mails
- Cyberbullying: Bullying that takes place using technology (see below)
- Sexual: Talking to or touching someone in a sexually inappropriate way
- Sexist: Related to a person's gender or gender reassignment
- Racist: Related to someone's religion, belief or culture
- Other: Related to a person's sexual orientation, gender identity, to pregnancy and maternity, to a person's home or economic circumstances, to a person's disability, special educational needs, learning difficulty, health or appearance.

2.2 Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using technology including email, digital and mobile device cameras, text messages, social networking sites, gaming sites, web documents and online blogs. It can be used to carry out all the different types of bullying. However, unlike 'traditional' forms of bullying it can have a greater impact because:

- it can also go further, in that it can invade home/personal space and can involve a greater number of people
- of the anonymity of the bully
- it can take place across age groups and school staff and other adults can be targeted
- of the ability to broadcast upsetting messages and images rapidly to a potentially huge audience and to continue to do so repeatedly over a long period of time
- it can draw bystanders into being accessories

Cyberbullying includes:

- threats and intimidation; harassment or 'cyber-stalking'

- vilification/defamation; exclusion or peer rejection; impersonation
- unauthorised publication of private information or images

Cyberbullying is not restricted to school-based activities. Any form of bullying, intimidation or unpleasantness directed at anyone in the New Hall School community that is publicised on such sites or through any form of electronic communication will not be tolerated and will be treated as a serious breach of the school guidelines. Likewise, any posting on such sites that brings the reputation of New Hall School into disrepute will be treated as a serious offence. An incident of cyberbullying will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures in this policy.

See the *Acceptable Use of Technology Policy for Students* for the School rules regarding the use of IT including mobile electronic devices. See *Appendix 1* for student guidelines regarding Cyberbullying.

3 Prevention

3.1 Anti-Bullying culture

New Hall School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and students to share this commitment. Tolerance, understanding and care for the welfare of others should be a characteristic of the School community. Preventative strategies include staff training, pupil education, boarding supervision, and regular monitoring of behaviour trends. Boarding houses are identified as higher-risk areas requiring enhanced supervision. Our expectation of all members of the School community is that:

- everyone will uphold the School guidelines.
- a student or member of staff or volunteer who witnesses or hears of an incident of bullying will report it - there is a community responsibility to prevent anyone being hurt, threatened, upset or frightened. School should be a safe and secure environment with a supportive climate.
- a complaint of bullying will always be taken seriously.
- no-one will tolerate unkind actions or remarks or stand by when someone else is being bullied.
- members of staff, volunteers and senior students are vigilant at all times but particularly:
 - in Boarding Houses, particularly in bedrooms
 - before lessons e.g. outside classrooms and in corridors
 - as students move between lessons
 - at social occasions e.g. on Saturday nights

3.2 Equal opportunities

In School and in every year group:

- discriminatory words and behaviour are treated as unacceptable
- respect for others, within and outside the school is encouraged through the curriculum and tutorials, with particular regard to the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010

3.3 Governing Body

The Governing Body, as proprietor, has overall responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of students at the School, ensuring that those in leadership and

management positions actively promote student well-being. This includes ensuring that policies and procedures are in place and implemented effectively to:

- minimise the risk of bullying at the School so that students feel safe and secure
- deal swiftly with allegations of bullying at the School so that students feel confident that all incidents will be dealt with appropriately

3.4 Staff

Through their training and experience, members of staff are expected to promote an anti-bullying culture by:

- celebrating achievement
- anticipating problems and providing support
- disciplining fairly, consistently and reasonably, taking into account any special educational needs or disabilities of the student and the needs of vulnerable students
- making opportunities to listen to students
- acting as advocates for students

Our systems for detecting and dealing with bullying are designed to operate:

- vertically, through all Year Groups
- horizontally, within Year Groups and in the classroom and other activities

3.5 Students

Through our pastoral care systems, students are informed and taught that bullying will not be tolerated in the School. They are encouraged:

- to celebrate the effort and achievements of others
- to hold and promote positive attitudes
- to feel able to share problems with staff
- to turn to someone they trust, if they have a problem
- not to feel guilty about airing complaints
- to treat meals as pleasant social occasions
- to be kind, considerate and tolerant towards others
- to be aware of the impact their behaviour can have on others
- to challenge their peers if they are unkind to others
- to use IT safely and securely and to be aware of the risks and impact of the use of ICT on themselves and others

3.6 Meetings

Bullying is regularly discussed in meetings between:

- members of the Senior Leadership & Management Team (SLMT)
- Lead DSL, DSLs and DDSLs
- Heads of Boarding (HoB)
- Heads of Division (HoDiv)
- Tutors and students in their tutor group
- Health & Wellbeing Centre staff
- Teaching Staff

The purpose of these meetings is to feedback information about friendship patterns, particular incidents, any student who seems to be isolated, any growing 'power base' and any known conflict between a member of staff and a student, or between students so that strategies can be developed to prevent bullying incidents.

3.7 Education & training

Bullying behaviour issues are discussed regularly in PSHEE sessions to:

- educate students about bullying, including cyberbullying and this policy.
- educating students and informing parents about online safety

In the Senior Divisions, students have been involved in developing the *Acceptable Use of Technology Policy for Students* to help protect them from cyberbullying and on reporting cases they experience. They will have a voice through the School Council, Pupil Voice sessions and Willow.

Students in all Divisions will be educated about bullying, including cyberbullying, through a variety of means: assemblies, conferences, Anti-Bullying Week, visits from specialists and/or groups who work specifically with school-aged children, projects (Computer Science, PSHEE, Drama, English, etc.).

Parents will be provided with information and advice on cyberbullying via literature, talks, etc.

Staff and Governors receive training in identifying cyberbullying and understanding their responsibilities. In the Senior Divisions, the E-Safety Committee will liaise with the Head of Computer Science and the IT Manager on this matter. In the Preparatory Divisions, the Subject Leader for PSHEE will liaise with the Subject Leader for ICT and the IT Manager.

All staff will be helped to keep up-to-date with the technologies that children are using.

4 Reporting concerns

4.1 Context

Sometimes, victims of bullying behaviour do not want to tell anyone because of:

- a fear of what the person responsible for the bullying behaviour (or others) might do
- a fear of what could happen if the person responsible for the bullying behaviour is punished
- a desire not to 'tell tales'
- a belief that one must accept bullying behaviour
- a belief that bullying behaviour is in some way deserved

However, if a student is experiencing bullying behaviour or if a student is aware that another student is experiencing bullying behaviour (or is a witness to this) a report must be made to a member of staff for the following reasons:

- Reporting a concern of bullying behaviour will help to ensure that the behaviour is addressed
- Bullying behaviour thrives on secrecy; once bullying behaviour is addressed it is less likely to continue
- Reporting bullying behaviour may save others from becoming victims of the same bullying behaviour

4.2 Reporting procedures for students

A student who is being bullied, or who is worried about another student being bullied, should report this without delay and can do so in the following ways:

- Tell their parents, Tutor, HoDiv/ HoB, Class Teacher (Preparatory Divisions), the Health & Wellbeing Centre staff, a member of SLMT, Lead Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Chaplain, Student Support Manager, a member of staff or volunteer or a responsible older student
- Contact the School Counsellor or Independent Listener
- Contact a School Doctor or School Nurse
- Contact ChildLine (0800 1111) or the Children's Commissioner (0800 528 0731)

Parents who are concerned that their child is being bullied should inform their child's HoDiv and/or HoB without delay.

4.3 Reporting procedures for staff

This policy focusses mainly on the bullying of students by students, although it is recognised that a staff member could be a victim and on occasion may be perceived to be guilty of bullying. Staff members who are concerned about being bullied or harassed should refer to the School's relevant policies in the Staff Handbook. Students and parents who feel that a member of staff is bullying should report this in accordance with the procedures set out above. Complaints against teachers will be dealt with in accordance with staff disciplinary procedures.

All incidents must be recorded, analysed for patterns, and reviewed regularly by safeguarding leads and governors.

5 Investigation and response

5.1 Initial response

A member of staff or volunteer who learns of alleged bullying behaviour should:

- respond quickly and sensitively by offering advice, support and reassurance to the alleged victim.
- listen carefully and keep an open mind
- not ask leading questions
- reassure the child but not give a guarantee of confidentiality
- report the allegation to the HoDiv/HoB/Tutor/Class Teacher (Preparatory Divisions) of the victim and the alleged perpetrator as soon as possible

5.2 Investigation

The victim's HoDiv/HoB/Tutor/Class Teacher (Preparatory Divisions) will interview the victim and any witnesses without delay in order to complete an investigation and establish the facts of the case. The investigator will consider:

- the nature of the incident(s)
- if the incident involves an individual or a group
- if the incident is a part of a pattern of behaviour by an individual or a group
- the injury/injuries caused
- available Surveillance Camera footage
- who needs to be informed (HoDiv/ HoB/Parents/Lead DSL/Social Services/Police)

Concerns about a student's welfare because they are the perpetrator or victim of bullying behaviour must be reported in accordance with the *Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Procedures* and appropriate action taken.

At this stage, the possible outcomes for an incident of bullying behaviour which is not serious include:

- a misunderstanding which can be explained sympathetically to the alleged victim with advice to the alleged perpetrator. It is possible that the person responsible for the bullying behaviour has not appreciated the distress caused and will be immediately and genuinely repentant. Not all perceived bullying is deliberate or intended to hurt. Some individuals may see their hurtful conduct as "teasing" or "a game" or "for the good of" the other person. These forms of bullying are equally unacceptable but may not be malicious and can often be corrected quickly with advice and without disciplinary sanctions
- an upheld complaint justified in whole or in part, with further actions required (see 'Range of Action', below)

5.3 Serious incident

If at any stage the alleged bullying behaviour raises a safeguarding concern, the matter should be reported in accordance with the School's *Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Procedures* before further investigation is carried out. Otherwise, the following procedures should be followed.

If a HoB/Tutor/Class Teacher (Preparatory Divisions) believes that serious bullying behaviour has occurred involving a student in their Boarding House/year group or has recurred after warnings have been given to the perpetrator, they must inform the HoDiv and the School's Lead Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

The HoDiv will then make arrangements to interview the alleged victim, perpetrator and any witnesses separately, in order to establish the facts of the case and to decide on the action to be taken in accordance with the 'Range of Action' set out below.

Students may be accompanied at interviews by an adult of their choice, which may include parents. The adults would be present as observers and the interview and investigation process would be outlined to them prior to the student interview taking place.

The investigation, hearing and outcomes must be clearly documented.

The Head of Division will notify the parents of the victim and perpetrator giving them details of the case and the actions being taken.

5.4 Range of action

When a complaint of bullying behaviour is upheld the range of responses will include one or more of the following:

- Consideration as to whether the bullying incident should be addressed as a safeguarding concern and if so, the School's *Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Procedures* will be followed
- Advice and support for the victim and, where appropriate, establishing a course of action to help the victim, including support from external services where appropriate

- Advice and support to the perpetrator in trying to change their behaviour. This may include clear instructions and a warning or final warning, and involvement of the School Counsellor
- Consideration of the motivation behind the bullying behaviour and whether external services should be used to tackle any underlying issues of the perpetrator which contributed to the bullying behaviour. If these considerations give rise to safeguarding concerns relating to bullying, the School's child protection procedures will be followed
- A supervised meeting between the perpetrator and the victim to discuss their differences and the ways in which they may be able to avoid future conflict (only with the victim's express agreement)
- A disciplinary sanction against the perpetrator, in accordance with the School's *Behaviour Policy* and *Code of Conduct*. In a very serious case or a case of persistent bullying, a student may, after a fair hearing, be required to leave the school permanently in accordance with the School's *Permanent Exclusion and Required Removal Policy*
- Action to break up a 'power base'
- Confiscation of mobile electronic devices, increased monitoring procedures or limiting access to the school's internet and email facilities if cyberbullying (see the *Acceptable Use of IT Policy*)
- Moving either the perpetrator or victim to another class/tutor group/room after consultation with the student, his/her parents and the relevant staff
- Notifying the parents of one or both students about the case and the actions taken
- A medical referral may be made if the School deems it to be necessary or if the parents request it

5.5 Monitoring

The position should be monitored for as long as necessary thereafter by the relevant HoDiv/HoB/Class Teacher (Preparatory Divisions). Action may include:

- sharing information with some or all colleagues and with students so that they may be alert to the need to monitor certain students closely
- on-going counselling and support
- vigilance
- mentioning the incident at staff meetings
- reviewing vulnerable individuals and areas of the School
- liaison between the HoDiv/HoB/Class Teacher (Preparatory Divisions)
- monitoring and examination, where possible, of all electronic communication between the perpetrator and the victim, including the use of social networking sites.

5.6 Formal complaint

If the victim's parents are not satisfied with the action taken, they should be advised to make a formal complaint, according to the *Whole School Complaints Procedure*. The School also has a *Boarding Student Complaints Policy* setting out the options open to boarders to raise concerns.

6 Record keeping

Staff maintain records of the welfare and development of individual students on MyConcern. In addition, every complaint or report of bullying is recorded centrally on MyConcern and

monitored. All bullying incidents, including those involving boarding students or occurring in boarding settings, must be recorded and monitored for trends. Oversight is maintained by the HoDivs/HoBs to ensure that patterns are identified and addressed across all areas of school life. The School ensures that all staff actively promote and safeguard the health, safety and welfare of students. The School has appropriate systems in place to identify, assess and control risks to student welfare posed by bullying issues and that sufficient staff are competent to assess risks to student welfare. The HoDiv and HoB have overall responsibility for ensuring that, when significant risks to student welfare are identified, those risks are assessed and the findings implemented and recorded. They are also responsible for ensuring that adequate monitoring and review of these assessments and the control measures put in place occur. The format of risk assessments may vary and may be included as part of the School's overall response to a bullying issue.

7 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation changes. Responsibility lies with the HoDivs, HoB, DSLs and Governing Body.

The Governing Body will be involved in the regular review of this policy to ensure compliance with safeguarding obligations under KCSIE, ISS, and the NMS. This includes evaluating whether policy outcomes effectively reduce incidents and improve student wellbeing.

CYBERBULLYING GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using technology. It can be used to carry out all the different types of bullying.

Students should remember the following:

- Always respect others - be careful what you say online and what images you send
- Think before you send - whatever you send can be made public very quickly and could stay online forever
- If you or someone you know is being cyberbullied, TELL SOMEONE. You have the right not to be harassed or bullied online. Tell an adult you trust - your parents, any member of staff or volunteer, the School Counsellor on 01245 467 262 or a helpline such as ChildLine on 0800 1111
- Do not retaliate or reply online
- Save the evidence - learn how to keep records of offending messages, pictures or online conversations. Ask someone if you are unsure how to do this. This will help to show what is happening and can be used by the School to investigate the matter
- Block the bully. Most social media websites and online or mobile services allow you block someone who is behaving badly
- Don't do nothing - if you see cyberbullying going on, support the victim and report the bullying
- You may find the following websites helpful:
 - <http://www.childnet.com/young-people>
 - <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>
 - <https://www.childline.org.uk/Explore/Bullying/Pages/online-bullying.aspx>

Please see the School's *Acceptable Use of Technology Policy For Students* which sets out the School rules regarding the use of technology including mobile electronic devices.