Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policy

February 2023

Our Behaviour and Anti-bullying Policy is based on the idea that most conflict can be either avoided or dealt with quickly if strong systems are in place which foster a positive and safe learning environment. This policy outlines the steps we take to prevent bullying from taking place and how we aim to foster positive social and learning behaviours.

**Our approach to behaviour management**

Positive Relationship Theory /Research Position

We hope to achieve our aims by working towards a non-behaviourist approach. Behaviourism is the idea that all behaviour can be reduced to a stimulus linked with a response (use of extrinsic motivators: rewards and consequences). Research into motivation, mindsets, learning attitudes and attachment shows that educators searching to develop intrinsic motivation (self-directed learners) should avoid using carrots and sticks in the process. Research shows that behaviourist approaches gain compliance in the short term but do not bring long term change. Our emphasis on teaching, modelling, supporting and discussing learning characteristics will enable children to develop intrinsic motivation to develop positive relationships and behaviour for learning. These are some examples of the current strategies and systems used in school to promote positive behaviour (these are regularly being assessed and updated based on the needs of the children):

* ‘The Book of Kindness’
* ‘Take home praise’
* Growth Mindset Tree
* Jar of Strengths (positive affirmations)
* Mistakes wall
* Class charter
* Team talks/circle times
* SEMH interventions
* Guided conflict discussions
* ‘Just right’
* Opportunities to ‘take a break’ to regulate

Each class teacher is free to use their own behaviour management strategy but this must be intrinsically motivated, positive and not extrinsic reward-based in line with this Policy. For example, the types of behaviour management used in school include writing acts of kindness in the school ‘Book of Kindness’ (displayed by the school notice board. Teachers may also write ‘Take home praise’ to individual children, read out in front of others, to celebrate a certain learning behaviour or positive attribute of that child. We strongly believe that these kinds of intrinsically motivated and positive behaviour management are more effective than any sanctions or extrinsic reward systems. Children are also encouraged to notice and praise their peers and can also contribute to the ‘Book of Kindness’.

Any incidents of poor emotional regulation or so called ‘bad behaviour’ may result in parents being called in for a meeting to discuss ways in which we can best help the child as a parent/teacher team. An example of an intervention the school may suggest and provide is the ‘Just Right’ scheme. This is a simple coloured scaling system (red/orange/green/blue) which encourages children to regularly consider their emotional/sensory wellbeing. In this system, the ‘Just Right’ colour is green (calm, content, ready to learn); the blue colour represents feeling tired/lethargic/low; the orange colour represents feeling anxious/dizzy/stressed/over-stimulated and the red colour represents anger/flipping my lid/melt down/shut down. Children learn to know what helps them feel better (e.g. move from the orange zone back to the green or stimulate themselves out of the blue zone into the green). Some children need an adult to notice their emotional/sensory state to help them regulate).

If appropriate, the class teacher may record any incidents in the school record book (stored securely in the school office).

The Class Charter

The use of a Charter in place of school ‘rules’ is a deliberate choice to bring the children into the heart of discussion and to help them develop into self-controlled, mindful and respectful citizens. We believe that positive behaviour can be taught and shaped like any new skill and is based on trusting positive relationships. Just as we do not assume that a child will develop mathematical concepts by accident, neither do we presume they will develop positive behaviour without discussion, learning and support. We must help our pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour and this is the central premise of forming lasting, positive behavioural habits. We also know that changing behaviour or adhering to rules is not a simple choice for some children and that language is crucial so ‘rules’ which can be ‘broken’ can be unhelpful. Each class Charter is discussed amongst the staff and children and each class will personalise and develop their charter in an age-appropriate way. To support these rights, routines will also be agreed by the class: strong routines support positive behaviour. Involving children in developing these agreements and routines supports ownership and understanding. Over the year, the Charter is reviewed regularly and children and adults evaluate how well the class is doing.

Fostering mutual respect

Children call teachers by their first names and mutual respect is developed between adults and children and amongst children. Community life teaches everybody about the importance of communication, negotiation and compromise as a means of preventing and resolving issues.

Our small size means that any peer group issues must be resolved for positive group dynamics to be maintained. This can be achieved through open and guided communication. We believe that as educators it is our role to not only ensure academic development, but also social and emotional development. We find that children often need to be taught (either explicitly or through modelling) how to resolve conflict, tolerate others and cooperate in a group effectively.

De-escalation strategies our staff may use:

* Move to a private area: if it seems safe to do so, it may be helpful to move the child away from the communal/public and into a calm space to talk (school office or library)
* Be empathetic and non-judgmental: focus is placed on understanding the person’s feelings. Whether or not you think those feelings are justified, they’re real to the other person
* Respect personal space: if possible, stand 1.5 to three feet away from the person (allowing personal space tends to decrease a person’s anxiety and can help de-escalate the situation). Do not block exits unless the child’s safety is at risk
* Avoid overreacting: remain calm, rational, and professional. While you cannot control the person’s behaviour, how you respond to their behaviour can affect whether the situation escalates or defuses
* Empathise with feelings, not behaviour: “I understand you are…, but it’s not okay to shout at staff”
* Allow silence: by letting silence occur, you are giving the person a chance to reflect on what’s happening and how to proceed

Positive Handling

The use of positive handling at the Hove Micro-School is aligned to the DfE 2013 (reviewed 2015) ‘Use of Reasonable Force Guidance’, where upon all professionals within the school are empowered to undertake a ‘professional safety/risk assessment’ with regards to the imminent safety of a child (or others) and should the need arise ‘positive handling’. (Parents would be informed of this and support put in place for the child, once regulated.)

Exclusion

We would hope to never resort to excluding a child from our community however, exclusion of children remains a legal right all schools are given. Exclusion is a last resort and there are many systems in place at our school, as discussed in this policy, which should avoid exclusions from taking place. However, if despite a considerable level of support, a child persistently disrupts the good order of the school or regularly puts themselves, others or property in danger or performs a uniquely dangerous act – at this point the school can decide to permanently exclude a child. If parents / carers do not agree with the school’s decision to exclude their child then they have a right to appeal. The letter informing parents /carers of the exclusion also informs them of how they can appeal against the decision.

**Preventing and responding to bullying**

Bullying is “behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally”. (DfE “Preventing and Tackling Bullying”, July 2017) A pupil- friendly version of this definition is “bullying is a behaviour which happens several times on purpose and hurts others”.

Bullying can include: name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments; physical abuse; taking belongings; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours. This includes the same unacceptable behaviours expressed online, sometimes called online or cyberbullying. This can include: sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos. Bullying can be a form of child on child abuse and can be emotionally abusive; it can cause severe and adverse effects on children’s emotional development and well-being. It is important to consider both the intent and the impact of bullying behaviour.

Bullying can happen to anyone. This policy covers all types of bullying including:

* Bullying related to race, religion, nationality or culture
* Bullying related to SEND (Special Educational Needs or Disability)
* Bullying related to appearance or physical/mental health conditions
* Bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic bullying)
* Bullying of young carers, children in care or otherwise related to home circumstances
* Sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying
* Bullying via technology, known as online or cyberbullying

We believe our Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policy prevents bullying as it creates and supports an inclusive environment which promotes a culture of mutual respect, consideration and care for others, which will be upheld by all. We recognise that bullying can be perpetrated or experienced by any member of the community, including adults and children (child on child abuse). We openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as: religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related differences, as well as children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities. As a staff team, and with parental and child consent, we may teach children about specific disabilities or conditions a child in our school may have, to educate all children in order to prevent potential bullying. We challenge practice and language which does not uphold the values of tolerance, nondiscrimination and respect towards others. We encourage responsible use of technology, especially mobile phones and social media and actively discuss concerns with parents/carers.

Staff responsibilities

All staff must:

* Report incidents in the school record book and inform the head of school in line with the school’s Safeguarding Policy
* Consider a range of opportunities and approaches for addressing bullying throughout the curriculum and other activities, such as: through displays, assemblies, peer support, circle times/PSHE lessons
* Provide systematic opportunities to develop pupils’ social and emotional skills, including building their resilience and self-esteem (for example using the mistakes wall, growth mindset tree, affirmation jar etc).
* Monitor behaviour and intervene when it becomes necessary to address friendship problems and prevent bullying from happening
* Deliver PSHE lessons which develop understanding of safety and how to stay safe, develop understanding of bullying, its impact and ways to respond to bullying situations. PSHE lessons should also be used to develop understanding of similarity and differences and the unacceptability of all forms of prejudice and bullying
* Facilitate regular ‘circle times’ or ‘team talks’ in classes provides opportunities for dealing with issues that have arisen in the class and wider, and a time to reflect

Responding to bullying

Our commitment is that when a pupil or parent/carer speaks out about bullying:

1. They will be listened to
2. Their concerns will be taken seriously
3. The matters will be investigated
4. Together we will find a way to tackle it
5. Someone will be there to help and support them

The following steps may be taken when dealing with all incidents of bullying reported to the school:

* If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be reported, and investigated and dealt with by an appropriate member of staff. The first responder will give immediate physical and emotional support and report the incident(s) to the head of school
* The school will provide appropriate support for the person being bullied – making sure they are not at risk of immediate harm and will involve them in any decision-making, as appropriate
* The school will also work with and provide support as appropriate to the person who has carried out the bullying behaviour to ensure it does not happen again
* The head of school/ designated safeguarding lead or another member of staff will be informed and interview all parties involved
* The designated safeguarding lead will be informed of all bullying issues where there are safeguarding concerns
* The school will inform other staff members, and/or parents/carers, where appropriate
* If necessary, other agencies may be consulted or involved in line with the school’s Safeguarding Policy
* Where the bullying takes place off school site or outside of normal school hours (including cyberbullying), the school will ensure that the concern is fully investigated. Appropriate action will be taken, including providing support and informing parents/carers
* A clear and precise account of the incident will be recorded by the school in accordance with existing procedures. This will include recording appropriate details regarding decisions and action taken. Records will be stored securely in the filing cabinet in the school office
* The situation will be monitored and reviewed to ensure it is not repeated

Online bullying

When responding to online bullying concerns, the school will:

* Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified
* Provide appropriate support for the person who has been bullied online and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again
* Encourage the person being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation
* Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. This may include:
  + Looking at use of the school systems; identifying and interviewing possible witnesses; contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary
  + Work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation. This may include:
    - Support reports to a service provider to remove content if those involved are unable to be identified or if those involved refuse to or are unable to delete content
    - Confiscating and searching pupils’ electronic devices, such as mobile phones, in accordance with the law and with agreement by the parent/carer
    - Requesting the deletion of locally-held content and content posted online if they contravene school behavioural policies
* The school will take steps to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully, as well as ensuring access to any additional help that they may need (including being supported by external organisations)
* Inform the police if a criminal offence has been committed
* Provide information to staff and pupils regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online. This may include:
  + advising those targeted not to retaliate or reply
  + providing advice on blocking or removing people from contact lists
  + helping those involved to think carefully about what private information they may have in the public domain

**Hate or Prejudice Based Incidents and Bullying**

In Brighton and Hove, a victim-focused, harm-based approach to hate crime, hate incidents and antisocial behaviour was introduced by public and voluntary sector partners whereby the risk of harm to victims/targets is assessed based on three themes; frequency, vulnerability and impact. If the risk to a victim or target is high, a multi-agency response will be facilitated. We ask these four risk assessment screening questions:

1) Is the victim unsafe? (if they are, consider immediate response)

2) Is the victim vulnerable or especially upset?

3) Has the victim experienced this prejudice based incident or prejudice based bullying before?

4) Has the reported incident(s) had an impact on the wellbeing of the victim? Or on a group of individuals such as a family?

If the victim or target answer yes to any of the four questions then we will offer the family the option of a referral to the police or the Community Safety Team who will then offer a full Hate and Anti Social Behaviour Risk Assessment and if necessary coordinate a multi-agency response taking into account the victims wishes.

Supporting victims

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

* Reassuring the pupil and providing continuous support
* Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their teacher, the head of school, or a member of staff of their choice
* Being advised to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience as appropriate
* We will inform/liaise with parents/carers of both the bullied and the person engaging in bullying behaviours, ensuring they are aware of the schools plans to deal with the situation
* Working towards restoring self-esteem and confidence
* Providing ongoing support; this may include: working and speaking with staff or engaging with parents and carers
* Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this could include support through Early Help or Specialist Children’s Services, or support through Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or the Community Safety Team.

Supporting perpetrators:

Pupils who have perpetrated bullying will be supported by:

* Discussing what happened, establishing the concern and the need to change
* Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude and behaviour of the child
* Providing appropriate education and support regarding their behaviour or actions. This may include: working and speaking with staff, and/or engaging with parents and carers
* If online, requesting that content be removed and reporting accounts/content to service providers
* Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this may include involvement from the Police or referrals to Early Help, Specialist Children’s Services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or The Community Safety Team as appropriate

Supporting adults

Our school takes measures to prevent and tackle bullying among pupils; however, it is equally important to recognise that bullying of staff and parents, whether by pupils, parents or other staff members, is unacceptable.

Adults (staff and parents) who have been bullied or affected will be supported by:

* Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the concern with the head of schoolL
* Advising them to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience, as appropriate
* Where the bullying takes place off school site or outside of normal school hours (including online), the school will still investigate the concern and ensure that appropriate action is taken in accordance with the school’s Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policy
* Reporting offensive or upsetting content and/or accounts to the service provider, where the bullying has occurred online
* Reassuring and offering appropriate support
* Working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance

Adults (staff and parents) who have perpetrated the bullying will be helped by:

* Discussing what happened with a teacher or head of school to establish the concern.
* Establishing whether a legitimate grievance or concern has been raised and signposting to the school’s official Complaints Procedures
* If online, requesting that content be removed
* Instigating disciplinary, civil or legal action as appropriate or required

**In conclusion**

Our exceptionally small pupil to staff ratio ensures that incidences of bullying or of potential bullying are ‘nipped in the bud’. Strong relationships between staff and pupils ensure that all children in our care know they have a safe, reliable and trustworthy adult to turn to if they need to talk about any issue they may face. Parents and teachers maintain regular communication which also helps to ensure any bullying or potential bullying is dealt with effectively and swiftly.

‘Working together to safeguard children’ states:

*‘… that effective safeguarding is achieved by putting children at the centre of the system….’ (Working together to safeguard children’, HM Government, July 2018, p.9)*

Hove Micro-School epitomises a child-centred approach to safeguarding. It is a place where the views of the child are constantly being expressed and heard, in particular, there are frequent opportunities for regular meeting times with parents/carers or children. The small school size allows for these unique opportunities for discussion.

Perhaps the three most important and difficult safeguarding challenges that the school is faced with today are the issues of online safety, sex and relationships and, to a lesser extent, self-harm. These are issues which any school, and many families, in the United Kingdom confront. However, Hove Micro-School is uniquely positioned to manage these issues because of its democratic nature and structures – with open and frequent communication with parents/carers.

Abuse of any type and of any degree can only occur when there exists some sort of power differential and Hove Micro-School goes further than any other school to reduce, as much as possible, the power differential that can exist not only between students, and between adults and students, and thereby reducing the safeguarding risk. The reduction in the power differential at Hove Micro-School is achieved through its unique philosophy of education. Further, this reduction in the power differential ensures that there is a high level of open, honest communication and trust between the adults and students and parents/carers, in a smaller than usual structure.

Regular ‘team talks’ or ‘circle times’ are used not only to develop speech and language of our pupils, but to manage difficulties and to teach emotional regulation. These are conducted within classes as well as on a whole school basis.

The daily life of the school is governed by the meetings with parents/carers and teachers as well as with the children. Parent/teacher meetings are held termly, during which everybody has their say. The meetings are used to create, confirm, and amend all the school policies which form the structure of expectations for the community of adults and students.

Hove Micro-School holds policies which the children and adults feel are right and appropriate; they have the backing of children and adults in the school and that is why the policies are adhered to. It is our policies and our method of creating and enforcing them which could be described as our ‘behaviour policy’.

In conclusion, all children at our school are taught that they have an opportunity to make a choice before they react to a feeling or thought and we aim to provide them with the tools they need to make the right choice.

This policy is informed by a wide range of government documents, both statutory and non-statutory. They include, but are not limited to, the following:

* *Keeping children safe in education (September 2022)*
* *Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (September 2018) which is incorporated in the above named document*
* *What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused - Advice for practitioners (March 2015)*
* *Working together to safeguard children (July 2018, updated Feb. 2019)*
* *Information Sharing – Advice for practitioners providing services to children, young people, parents and carers (July 2018)*
* *Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales (July 2015)*
* *The Prevent duty: Departmental advice for schools and childminders (June 2015)*
* *The use of social media for online radicalisation (July 2015)*
* *Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges. Advice for governing bodies, proprietors, headteachers, principals, senior leadership teams and designated safeguarding leads. (May 2018)*
* *Teaching online safety in school. Guidance supporting schools to teach their pupils how to stay safe online, within new and existing school subjects (June 2019)*
* *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2019)*

This policy will be reviewed at least annually, and following any concerns and/or updates to national and local guidance or procedures.