



Anti-Bullying Policy

*(Written in collaboration with staff and student leaders.
To be read in Conjunction with the Behaviour for Learning Policy,
Safeguarding, Online Safety and Data Protection Policies)*

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Signed

Chair of Governors

Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with our [Action Against Bullying webpage](#) on the College website and the Behaviour for Learning Policy.

College approaches to bullying and anti-bullying were positively reviewed by ESCC in 2024.

Our Aims

At Heathfield we take all forms of conflict, friendship problems, and bullying behaviour seriously. Our aims are:

- To provide a safe and secure environment for all students in our care.
- To create a happy atmosphere in which both parents and staff work together for the welfare of the students.
- Everyone is mutually valued and respected.
- To encourage students to adopt agreed standards of behaviour and values in order to develop a sense of self-discipline and to take responsibility for their own actions.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

We acknowledge that both friendship problems and bullying behaviour can be upsetting and unpleasant but it is important to distinguish between the two, as the responses to friendship problems will be different to the strategies used to address bullying behaviour.

Friendship problems may be an occasional incident where both students disagree and find it difficult to resolve the disagreement without adult intervention. It is unlikely to be repeated behaviour and may even be accidental, where both students will be encouraged to resolve the problem using restorative practices. However, we recognise that repeated friendship problems can sometimes lead to bullying behaviour.

Definition of 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).

Bullying can be a form of peer on peer abuse and can be emotionally abusive; it can cause severe and adverse effects on children’s emotional development.

Bullying can include repeated incidents of: Physical contact, intimidating or threatening behaviour, taunting, spreading of malicious gossip or rumours and intentionally excluding or isolating others.

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 is therefore:

- Deliberately hurtful;
- Repeated, often over a period of time;
- Difficult for recipients to defend themselves against.

Children and young people are most commonly bullied because of a real or perceived difference (sometimes with reference to the protected characteristics):

TYPE OF BULLYING	DEFINITION
Emotional	Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
Physical	Hitting, kicking, pushing, taking another's belongings, any use of violence
Prejudice-based and discriminatory often related to the protected characteristics (ref Equality Act 2010)	Taunts, gestures, graffiti, verbal or physical abuse with focus on • Race, including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin • Faith • sex (i.e. male, female, trans, non-binary, etc.) • sexual orientation (i.e. straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, asexual, etc.) • Disability • Appearance • Class-based • Age • Marital status • Pregnancy or maternity leave
Sexual	Explicit sexual remarks, display of sexual material, sexual gestures, unwanted physical attention, comments about sexual reputation or performance, or inappropriate touching
Direct or indirect verbal	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
Cyber-bullying	Bullying that takes place online, such as through social networking sites, messaging apps or gaming sites

UK law recognises four main forms of discrimination and harassment:

- **Direct discrimination:** Being treated worse than someone else without a protected characteristic in a similar situation
- **Indirect discrimination:** A policy or practice that applies to everyone but disadvantages people with particular protected characteristics
- **Harassment:** Unwanted conduct related to a person's protected characteristic that violates dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment
- **Victimisation:** Being treated badly because you have made, or supported, a complaint about being treated differently

Improper use of AI or other digital tools:

Any use of artificial intelligence, digital editing tools or other technology that leads to recording without permission, deception, impersonation, threats, harassment, bullying or otherwise causing harm to members of the school community or any other person, group or organisation is prohibited and will be treated as a serious breach of the Behaviour for Learning, Safeguarding, Online Safety and Data Protection Policies. This would be sanctioned appropriately in line with the nature of the individual situation.

Creating An Anti-Bullying Climate In The College

Our College's Behaviour Policy explains how we promote positive behaviour in College to create an environment where pupils behave well. Where pupils take responsibility for each other's emotional and social well-being and include and support each other.

There are a number of pieces of legislation which set out measures and actions for schools in response to bullying, as well as criminal and civil law. These may include (but are not limited to):

- The Education and Inspection Act 2006, 2011
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children Act 1989
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986

Our aim is to promote appropriate behaviour through direct teaching, and by creating an emotionally and socially safe environment where these skills are learned and practiced. Our aim is to create a climate where bullying is not accepted by anyone within the College community.

We recognise that bullying can occur not only on the school premises but also on the journeys to and from school, on trips or after school clubs and via cyber bullying at any time.

Preventative action:

Our curriculum will be used to:

- raise awareness about bullying and our anti-bullying policy,
- increase understanding for recipients and help build an anti-bullying ethos, and
- to teach pupils how constructively to manage their relationships with others.

Current affairs, literature and historical events will be chosen to reinforce our anti-bullying approach.

Role plays and stories will be used to show what pupils can do to prevent bullying, and to create an anti-bullying climate in the College.

The College website will carry links to Anti Bullying websites and information on what to do if pupils see or experience bullying which can be found [here](#).

We will use College assemblies to reinforce our message that bullying will not be tolerated.

Posters around the College remind students to Recognise, Report, Respond. Forums to report bullying and unkindness are regularly promoted both in-person, or by email. We have an email address which allows pupils to report anonymously any specific or general concerns about bullying in the College. help@heathfieldcc.co.uk

Student voice and student leaders are a vehicle to challenge any patterns of under-reporting, to understand why and take action to encourage.

Signs of detachment and disengagement are analysed regularly as part of a whole school approach to inclusion to spot the early signs of impact without reporting.

Staff are encouraged (and receive training) to challenge practice and language which does not uphold the values of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect towards others. Train staff to identify bullying, be receptive to the reporting of bullying and follow College policy and procedures on bullying, including recording incidents of bullying. Work with staff and outside agencies to identify all forms of prejudice-driven bullying. Student leader feedback to Curriculum leaders explores the impact of this on an annual basis.

The College takes part in the Anti-Bullying week to raise further awareness.

Through PSHE lessons, assemblies and tutor time, the College regularly seeks to raise awareness of diversity in our society. The PSHE and tutor time curriculum address issues surrounding friendships and bullying behaviour. College assemblies address bullying and raise student's awareness of what bullying looks like, and how they can respond.

We provide support, via the Pastoral team, for pupils who need help in cultivating self-esteem and emotional development.

Supervision: the College ensures that there is a rota of staff and senior staff on duty before school, at break, lunch and after school.

Structures for monitoring and identifying issues

- All data, achievement, attendance and behaviour is monitored and tracked from a curious perspective to determine possible disengagement which may indicate causal factors linked in a lack of belonging.
- Staff and students are encouraged to report any issues that could be described as either unkind actions (language or physicality) or bullying behaviours.
- Reporting structures are promoted via Tutor time, Plasma screens and noticeboards, the school website, Students Leadership Teams and visible posters situated prominently around College.
- Reports are always investigated and proportionate actions or sanctions applied

- Logs of reports of unkind behaviour or bullying are kept, even if unproven, to allow a trend or pattern to be seen which can then lead to escalated responses.

Strategies for responding to bullying behaviour

Where bullying does occur and can be identified this will be followed, by an immediate and appropriate response, including the use of disciplinary sanctions in line with our Behaviour for Learning Policy.

Early identification is the most effective way in minimising bullying behaviour and the effects on the person being bullied. We also acknowledge that the person doing the bullying needs to understand that their behaviour is unacceptable and must stop. They may also need support to change their behaviour and explore the underlying reason for bullying.

Students are encouraged to report any negative behaviour, even if they are not sure whether it is bullying. They can do this through:

- Speaking to their teacher/ tutor / Pastoral Manager / Head of Year or any member of staff
- Speaking to a parent / other adult who then may contact the College in order to raise a concern.
- Students can contact help@heathfieldcc.co.uk if feeling unable to speak with someone directly.
- Students can speak to a peer mentor or student representative who will represent them with a member of staff
- A variety of techniques are used to resolve the issues between those who bully and those who have been, or are being bullied, where possible and where both parties are willing.
- Restorative Approaches can be used where appropriate with agreement from all parties.
- Self-esteem and strength based therapeutic approaches are utilised for those who feel they have been subject to bullying behaviours.

Further to actions being taken by the college, both sanctions and also preventative and ongoing keeping safe strategies, written communication with parents ensures clarity for all on the actions taken and that all are aware of the strategies in place. A record of these actions and strategies is kept on file.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff should be alert and aware to all forms of unkindness and discrimination.
Report and log

Staff who are responsible:

- Interview all parties and Inform parents
- Use a range of responses appropriate to the situation: - solution focused, restorative approach, circle of friends, individual work with person being bullied, perpetrator, referral to outside agencies if appropriate
- Refer to Behaviour for Learning policy and College sanctions and how these may be applied including what actions may be taken if bullying persists
- Follow up with all parties especially keeping in touch with the person who reported the situation, parents/carers
- Support for the person being bullied and the bully
- Record all incidents of bullying type behaviour (confidential log - monitor repeat incidences and escalate sanctions)
- Clear communication with parents about the steps being taken to address behaviours and implement staying safe approaches

Students:

- Not engage with any form of bullying
- Report any concerns to a trusted adult without delay
- Work with College staff to prevent bullying taking place including the national Anti-Bully week in November
- Actively engage with PSHEe and tutor time curriculum
- Make every effort to work with College staff to resolve bullying issues.

Families:

- Encourage their child to behave in an acceptable manner
- Support College in maintaining a positive ethos where good behaviour is norm
- Communicate concerns in a professional and collaborative manner
- Work in partnership with the College
- Support strategies put in place by the College to address behaviours and ensure keeping safe strategies
- Escalate communication in line with the College Complaints Procedure

Bullying outside school:

If the bullying is taking place outside school we can also help you find support from a range of support agencies. For example

- Bullying Online (<http://www.bullying.co.uk>)
- Bullying.org (<http://www.bullying.org>)
- Anti-bullying alliance (<http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk>)
- **Action against Bullying:** An anti-bullying service. The Action Against Bullying Support Line is now available on: 0845 075 1010. Calls will be handled through trained staff members who will provide information and guidance.
- It is important that bullying-type behaviours away from College or online which are significant, sustained and/or threatening, are reported to the police.

Appendix 1: Framework for anti-racist approaches

Informed by the NEU Anti-Racist framework and the Anna Freud Centre Anti-Racist template. To be read in conjunction with the Behaviour for Learning Policy, Public Sector Equality Duty and Safeguarding Policy

Context: *to be read in context with the College Strategic Plan*

Nationally¹

- Historically the GCSE pass rate for black major ethnic students has been low but has improved in recent years, by 2023 reaching similar levels to other students' groups.
- Black students face greater challenges accessing higher tariff universities, achieving the highest degree outcomes and progressing to highly skilled employment.
- 2025-26 DfE suspension data shows children with Black Caribbean or Romani (Gypsy) and Roma heritage disproportionately experience suspension - Romani/Gypsy/Roma children are 3.8x more likely to be excluded; Irish Traveller children 2.9 times more likely; children with mixed Black and white Caribbean heritage 1.8 times more likely²
- Absence data published in 2024³ shows an overall absence figure of 7.4% in 2022-23, with pupils of GRT backgrounds with the highest absence rates and those from Chinese and black African groups had the lowest absence.

East Sussex is a Diverse Community:

- East Sussex shows a predominantly White British population (around 91% in 2021), but with growing mixed (3.1%) and Asian (3.0%) groups. Between the 2011 and 2021 Censuses the percentage of the population from ethnic minority backgrounds increased from 8.0% to 11.1%.
- English is the primary language, there is an increase in residents whose main language is not English.
- Police and Prevent information show a prevalent concern for activity linked to extreme right-wing threats and sustained narratives about race and immigration which are influenced by national and global events.
- East Sussex absence rates from education are higher than national at 8.2%, patterns of absence mirror national rates for groups of students. Rates of exclusion overall from school are lower than national with the predominant groups excluded with White British and Mixed heritage being the highest rating groups.

The Heathfield student population that does not identify as White British has increased 2% in 5 years (9% to 11% between 2020 and 2025)

Considerations

- Societally there is a growth in intolerance and racism despite anti-racist legislation.

¹ <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9023/CBP-9023.pdf>

² <https://the-difference.com/analysis-dfe-suspensions-data/>

³ <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/education-skills-and-training/absence-and-exclusions/absence-from-school/latest/#by-ethnicity-and-area-overall-absence>

- Young peoples' ideas about race are formed through a variety of influences many of which are outside of school but can be explored within school.
- Sometimes inequalities are not recognised because incidents are not overt or patterns are not recognised. Curiosity is important.
- Intersectionality of background, experiences and protected characteristics can be significant contributing factors. No group is homogenous and all have individual identities.
- Challenging racism is not the sole responsibility of those experiencing it. We cannot assume reporting and need to proactively engage with wellbeing and experience.
- Disengagement can be seen in: attendance, engagement, safety, well-being which can be tracked and analysed by student group, informing detailed student voice.

The College seeks to learn from centres of inclusive learning for best practice and take approaches that are pro-active and preventative as well as clear signposted and supportive reactive structures.

Other bodies and partners:

- RISE Training - Sussex Learning Network (staff and student training)
- Speakers for Schools (speakers)
- Angie Browne: Being Luminary (SLT training)
- The Difference (SLT engagement)
- Mission 44 with Centre for Young Lives (SLT engagement)
- Stand up to Racism (self-evaluation framework)
- NEU Anti Racist framework

Impact is measured through a variety of actions and outcomes indicated in the table below.

Approaches

Aspect	Actions
Leadership	• Strategic approaches to training on racism and anti-racism, unconscious bias. • Public Sector Equalities Duty Objectives annual review and accountability to Governors. • Strategic approaches to supporting reduction of exclusion and absence. • Strategic approaches to ensure Pastoral, Curriculum and SEND staff work with an <i>informed</i> approach. Trend analysis of KPIs by student group informs actions. • Strategic approaches to reducing attainment gaps, spotting of patterns and trends in performance by group. • Strategic approaches to representation in student leadership and wider curriculum. • Strategic approaches to anti-racism in the curriculum. • Strategic approaches to highlighting diversity, positive representation and opposing discrimination through the cultural calendar: tutor time activities and assemblies, visiting speakers. • Uniform policy written in line with diversity guidance.

Aspect	Actions
Curriculum, Teaching and Learning	• Annual analysis of curriculum for representation and opportunities to challenge misconceptions and colonialism through content, examples and resources used. Promoting positive representation. • PHSEe curriculum on discrimination, equality and diversity • Proactive sharing of information to enable adaptive teaching for all. • Use of Super Curricular to highlight learning about diversity beyond the prescribed curriculum. • Use of the Wider Curriculum Days to highlight and promote diversity. • Careers focus on diversity of backgrounds and destinations.
Student Voice and belonging	• Student Values Leaders meetings with Curriculum Leaders. • Proactive encouragement and positive discrimination for leadership roles. • Form, House and Executive Council open forum for issues to be raised and reported. • Mentoring and Peer-mentoring focused on black students. • Focused student voice on specific groups: Year 7 belonging survey and Annual students voice analysed by student demographic. • Attendance and absence analysis; Missed learning analysis by group. • Proactive engagement with EAL team.
Environment	• Use and promotion of the Heathfield Habits to underpin diversity and equality as part of rewards and sanctions. • Photo boards and school display diversity and representation. • Canteen diversity of culture through menus. • Library content and visiting authors of diversity. • External visits and international links for representation and education • Proactive links with local bodies (police, LA etc) to ensure current knowledge of patterns and trends
Behaviour and dealing with bias and discrimination	• Every student a trusted adult: pastoral manager, form tutor. • Regular enquiry through feedback and surveys with proactive follow up. • Review of patterns of behaviour logging from the data for perpetrators and victims to ensure patterns are picked up with a curious perspective. • Private, and online referral and reporting options. • Clear guidance and education on upstanding/bystanding and allyship. • Mentoring and expert mentoring for students who have experienced racism. • Logging of all “unkindness” language or physicality in addition to racist incidents as hate: involvement of police and external agencies as appropriate. • Clear sanctions and re-education when incidents are reported. • Escalation to safeguarding and Prevent when thresholds reached.

Appendix 2: Framework for approaches to gender equality

Informed by the DfE Sexual and sexist bullying: Developing effective Anti-bullying practice. To be read in conjunction with the Behaviour for Learning Policy, Public Sector Equality Duty and Safeguarding Policy

Context: *to be read in context with the College Strategic Plan*

Regionally and Nationally

- There is national action on Violence against Women and Girls: domestic abuse, sexual assault or stalking
- Surveys indicate 2 in 5 teenagers (England & Wales) have experienced emotional or physical abuse in intimate relationships.
- There is a growing national focus on Boys engagement and achievement, mental health: Boys Commission.
- East Sussex key statistics in 2024/25 include a 2.1% increase in domestic violence crimes (from 6,020 to 6,149) and a 6.3% increase in sexual offence reports (from 1,711 to 1,819). Female victims account for a significant majority of these crimes, including 90% of rapes, 79% of other sexual offences, 72% of domestic violence crimes, and 66% of stalking and harassment incidents.
- East Sussex statistics show men and boys make up approximately 48% of the total population and have a lower life expectancy compared to females. Public Health in East Sussex noted higher rates and risk of suicide in men, particularly middle aged.
- The claimant rate for Universal Credit/Jobseeker's Allowance among young men (aged 18-24) was 7.2% in January 2025, which is higher than for young females (5.2%).

The Heathfield student population has remained broadly equal in number between boys and girls since 2021.

Considerations

- Societally there is a growth in intolerance. Schools have a responsibility to adopt a curious “it could happen here” approach and a legal duty⁴ to create an environment where sexism is not tolerated; where personal space of students and staff is respected; where sexist language and comments are challenged; and where students and staff feel empowered to highlight issues.
- Young peoples’ ideas about gender are formed through a variety of influences many of which are outside of school but can be explored within school.
- Sometimes inequalities are not recognised because incidents are not overt or patterns are not recognised. Curiosity is important.

⁴ - Under the Equality Act 2010 schools as public bodies must eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

- Intersectionality of background, experiences and protected characteristics can be significant contributing factors. No group is homogenous and all have individual identities.
- Challenging sexism is not the sole responsibility of those experiencing it. We cannot assume reporting and need to proactively engage with wellbeing and experience.
- Disengagement can be seen in: attendance, engagement, safety, well-being which can be tracked and analysed by student group, informing detailed student voice.

The College seeks to learn from centres of inclusive learning for best practice and take approaches that are pro-active and preventative as well as clear signposted and supportive reactive structures.

Other bodies and partners:

- Speakers for Schools (speakers)
- The Difference (SLT engagement)
- Priority 254 workshops (Maps to Manhood, Steps to Success)
- Believe in You (mental health, resilience)

Impact is measured through a variety of actions and outcomes indicated in the table below.

Approaches

Aspect	Actions
Leadership	• Strategic approaches to training on sexism and anti-misogyny. • Public Sector Equalities Duty Objectives annual review. • Strategic approaches to supporting reduction of exclusion and absence. • Strategic approaches to ensure Pastoral, Curriculum and SEND staff work with an <i>informed</i> approach. Trend analysis of KPIs by student group. • Strategic approaches to reducing attainment gaps, spotting of patterns and trends in performance by student group. • Strategic approaches to representation in student leadership and wider curriculum. • Strategic approaches to anti-sexism in the curriculum. • Strategic approaches to highlighting diversity, positive representation and opposing discrimination through the cultural calendar: tutor time activities and assemblies, visiting speakers • Uniform policy written in line with diversity guidance.
Curriculum, Teaching and Learning	• Annual analysis of curriculum for representation and opportunities to challenge misconceptions through content, examples and resources used. Promoting positive representation. • PHSE curriculum on discrimination, equality and diversity • Proactive sharing of information to enable adaptive teaching for all. • Use of Super Curricular to highlight learning about diversity beyond the prescribed curriculum. Wider Curriculum Days to promote diversity. • Careers focus on backgrounds and destinations.

Aspect	Actions
Student Voice and belonging	• Values Leaders meetings with Curriculum Leaders • Proactive encouragement and positive. discrimination for prefect roles and student leadership, tour guides for new students and staff. • Form, House and Executive Council creates open forum for issues to be raised and reported. • Mentoring/Peer-mentoring. • Focused student voice on specific groups; Year 7 belonging survey and Annual students voice analysed by student demographic. • Attendance and absence analysis by group. • Missed learning analysis by group. • Proactive engagement with EAL team.
Environment	• Use and promotion of the Heathfield Habits to underpin diversity and equality as part of rewards and sanctions. • Photo boards and school display diversity and representation. • Library content and visiting authors of diversity. • External visits and international links for positive representation and education. • Proactive links with local bodies (police, LA etc) to ensure current knowledge of patterns and trends
Behaviour and dealing with bias and discrimination	• Every student a trusted adult: pastoral manager, form tutor. • Regular curious enquiry through feedback and surveys with proactive follow up. • Review of patterns of behaviour logging from the data for perpetrators and victims to ensure patterns are picked up with a curious perspective. • Private, and online referral and reporting options. • Clear guidance, education and reminders of upstanding/bystanding and allyship. • Mentoring and expert mentoring for students who have experienced sexism. • Proactive intervention for those displaying emerging signs of discriminatory actions. • Logging of all “unkindness” language or physicality in addition to sexist incidents as hate: involvement of police and external agencies as appropriate • Clear sanctions and re-education when incidents are reported. • Escalation to safeguarding and Prevent when thresholds reached.

Appendix 3: Framework for responding to a hate incident

Drafted in alignment with ESCC Schools Hate incident and prejudice based bullying guidance

What is 'a hate incident'?

Any incident, which may or may not constitute a criminal offence, which is perceived by the victim or any other person, as being motivated by prejudice or hate based on: a) Race b) Religion/Belief c) Sexual Orientation d) Disability and learning difficulties e) Gender or gender identity

What is 'a hate crime'?

"Any hate incident, which constitutes a criminal offence, perceived by the victim or any other person, as being motivated by prejudice or hate" (ACPO 2005).
Hate crime should be reported directly to the police

Note: The underpinning rationale behind a hate incident is perception. It is the perception of the victim or any other person (e.g. a witness) that is the determining factor.

INCIDENT FLOW CHART

