



**POLICY FOR**

**ANTI-BULLYING**

**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**

**ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER**

**DATE LAST REVIEWED**

**MAY 2022**

**NEXT REVIEW DUE**

**MAY 2023**

### **Statement of Intent**

The Holmesdale School is committed to ensuring that all students are able to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied. Bullying is an antisocial behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at The Holmesdale School. If bullying does occur, all pupils should know who to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. It is hoped that all students take ownership of the ECCO values both in and out of school.



**Figure 1 – The ECCO values**

### **What Is Bullying?**

Bullying is any behaviour which is perceived by the target individual, or any other person, as intending to hurt, intimidate, frighten, harm or exclude. It is usually **persistent** and an abuse of power, leaving the targeted individual feeling defenceless.

Bullying can be:

**Emotional:** being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures, spreading rumours)

**Physical:** pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence

**Racist:** racial taunts, graffiti, gestures

**Sexual:** unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments

**Homophobic/Biphobic/Transphobic:** because of, or focussing on, the issue of sexuality

**Verbal:** name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

**Cyber/E-bullying:** all areas of internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse. Mobile threats by text messaging and calls. Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities.

Cyber bullying differs from other forms of bullying in that it can take place at any time and can invade previously safe places such as the home. The audience can be very large and reached very quickly. The perpetrator may never be in the same physical space as their target and may attempt to remain anonymous. Many cyber bullying incidents can themselves act as evidence and it is important that in all settings staff and adults know how to deal with incidents.

### **The difference between bullying and friendship issues**

At times students may become confused on the difference between bullying and friendship issues. Bullying is ongoing and repeated, whereas friendship issues are often single isolated events that are often a falling out between peers. As a school we still take friendship issues seriously and follow some of the same protocols outlined below.

### **Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. The school has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

### **Aims of the Policy**

- To assist in creating an ethos in which attending school is a positive experience for all members of the school community.
- To make it clear that all forms of bullying are unacceptable at school.
- To enable everyone to feel safe while at school and encourage pupils to report incidences of bullying.
- To deal effectively with bullying.
- To support and protect targets of bullying and ensure they are listened to.
- To help and support bullies to change their attitudes as well as their behaviour and understand why it needs to change.
- To liaise with parents and other appropriate members of the school community.
- To ensure all members of the school community feel responsible for combating bullying.

### **Parental Involvement**

The school is firmly committed to working in partnership with parents and believes that the best outcomes emerge when professionals and parents/carers are able to work together when bullying occurs. We recognise the important influence which parents/carers have on their children and would wish to enlist their support when their child is involved in bullying – either as victim or a perpetrator. We kindly request that parents refrain from engaging with any perpetrator and allow the school to

investigate and issue the appropriate consequence.

### **What will we do as a school?**

The following strategies have been put in place to reinforce the anti-bullying ethos at the school:

- Not to use teaching materials or equipment which gives a bad or negative view of any group because of their ethnic origin, or gender.
- Encourage pupils to discuss how they get on with other people and to form positive attitudes towards other people. This includes a review of what friendship really is.
- We are in the process of recruiting members of our school community to become anti-bullying ambassadors.
- Encourage pupils to treat everyone with respect both in school, out of school and when communicating electronically.
- At whole school level – through assemblies when children will be informed of the schools' zero-tolerance policy and the actions that will be taken to prevent bullying taking place.
- Anti-Bullying Week will be used as an opportunity to raise the profile of this issue.
- At classroom level – especially through The Holmesdale School Code and PSCHE the focus will be on developing strong anti-bullying messages.
- Students can report incidents of bullying to any member of staff.
- Reports of bullying behaviour will be recorded on our DRB system and timely interventions put in place for all parties concerned

The school recognise that there are particular times when students may be more vulnerable to bullying – lunch and break times and the beginning and end of the school day. Arrangements will be made to ensure that at such times there is a high level of supervision available to reduce the risk of bullying incidents. Students can report incidents of bullying or friendship issues to a member of duty staff. Well-being staff are also identified through purple hi-vis and DSL team via a blue lanyard.

Anti-bullying ambassadors will be available for those students requiring extra support and be encouraged to organise anti-bullying campaigns in school and discourage the “bystander culture”.

Stereotypical views are challenged and pupils encouraged appreciating and viewing positively the differences in others whether arising from race, culture, gender, sexuality, ability or disability.

### **Action**

If bullying is suspected, we talk to the suspected victim, the suspected bully and any witnesses. All teachers who pick up a bullying incident will support the student and pass to the appropriate Student Support Manager/DSL team. The incident will also be recorded on the DRB system to ensure appropriate sanctions and support are put in place.

Help, support and counselling will be given as is appropriate to both the victim and the bullies:

We also support the victims in the other ways:

- By offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience with their student support manager, DSL or a Senior Leader or another teacher if they choose.

- Informing the victims' parents/guardians.
- Informing the parents of the perpetrator
- By offering continuing support when they feel they need it.
- Arrange for them to be escorted to and from the school premises.

### **Consequences**

Each incident of bullying is dealt with on a case by case basis. The following measures are a general guide to some of the strategies we may use when responding to cases of bullying.

- By talking about what happened, to discover why they became involved.
- Informing the bully's parents/guardians.
- By continuing to work with the bullies through a series of specialist sessions that are designed to get rid of prejudiced attitudes as far as possible.
- By taking one or more of the disciplinary steps described below to prevent more bullying.

### **Disciplinary steps**

- They will be warned officially to stop offending.
- Informing the bullies' parents/guardians.
- They may be put in the inclusion room internal exclusion.
- They may have a care and concern meeting with our local PCSO team.
- They may be excluded from the school premises at break and/or lunch times.
- We may arrange for them to be escorted to and from the school premises.
- If they do not stop bullying, they may be excluded for a fixed period.
- If they then carry on, they will be recommended for exclusion for a further fixed period.

Alternative strategies are also used to help the 'bully' and the 'victim'. These include individual and group counselling, peer group monitoring and other supportive measures.

Positive approaches to improve behaviour are also used.

While we are not complacent, we feel that bullying incidents at the schools are much less than the national figures quoted for schools. We also feel it is significant that many of the incidents reported have 'roots' outside of school which make resolution more time consuming.

Parents must help us to ensure we have a culture of tolerance and respect at school by promoting this at home. We urge parents to contact their child's student support manager as soon as possible should they have a concern about bullying.

The school will maintain a log of all reported bullying incidents to ensure that all are reviewed and acted upon to a satisfactory conclusion.

## Appendix 1

### Staff handbook –

#### **AS STAFF WE RECOGNISE THAT THE FOLLOW ARE POSSIBLE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF BULLYING**

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber-message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

## Appendix 2 – Advice shared with Students

### **What can you do if you are being bullied?**

#### **Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon!**

- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied, and that it is wrong!
- Be proud of who you are. It is good to be individual.
- Try not to show that you are upset. It is hard but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
- Stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers.
- Go straight to a teacher or member of staff.
- Fighting back may make things worse.
- Generally it is best to tell an adult you trust straight away. You will get

immediate support.

Teachers will always take bullying seriously and will deal with bullies in a way which will end the bullying and will not make things worse. It would be helpful to list some of the things that might happen.

### **If you know someone is being bullied**

- Take action! Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own.
- If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult immediately. Teachers have ways of dealing with people who bully without getting you into trouble.
- Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with someone who is a bully

### **Appendix 3 – Parental Guidance**

Parents who believe their child is the victim of bullying should share their concerns with school at the earliest opportunity and be prepared to work with school to keep their children safe. All expressions of concern will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly. Where parents have concerns with regard to bullying they should contact their child's SSM in the first instance.

Look for unusual behaviour in your child. For example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard.

Always take an active role in your child's education. Enquire how their day has gone, who they have spent their time with, how lunch time was spent etc. If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the school immediately. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.

It is important that you advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse. Make sure your child is fully aware of the school policy concerning bullying, and that they will not be afraid to ask for help.

Contact details to report incidents of bullying:

Tel no: 01634 240416

Email: [office@holmesdale.kent.sch.uk](mailto:office@holmesdale.kent.sch.uk)

## Appendix 4 – THS Student Anti-Bullying Charter



### The Respect Charter

At The Holmesdale School bullying is not tolerated.

In our school we have the right to feel safe. Bullying is extremely hurtful and can affect the victim both physically and mentally.

***Bullying is a behaviour that is targeted at an individual or small group. It is repeated and is intended to cause physical or emotional harm.***

To ensure that no student at our school has to suffer from bullying in any form, we have drawn up a charter of behaviour. This charter explains the behaviour that, we at The Holmesdale School find unacceptable.

We, as students, find the following behaviour unacceptable:

- Repetitive rude gestures or actions
- Verbal and physical attacks
- Threatening or intimidating behaviour
- Repetitive nasty comments
- Being threatened or attacked by e-mail, text message or social media
- Nasty comments or threats being posted on any and all social media sites
- Rumours being spread about individuals
- Forcing another into a state of isolation
- Being singled out because of age, gender, race, belief or sexual orientation
- Offensive comments about family members

We as students feel that any unacceptable behaviour towards other students is immoral and wrong. Every student is responsible for their own actions and should behave in a positive and respectful manner to their classmates.

**We accept that if we bully another student we will be held accountable for our actions and we will accept the consequences.**

By signing this charter, you are helping to make The Holmesdale School a **Bully Free Zone**.

I agree to follow the guidelines set down in this charter.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Reg Group \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

