

# Anti-Bullying Policy

Policy written by	SNT/KMC
SLT/Trustee Lead	KMC
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# Anti-Bullying Policy

## Aims and Ethos

Neston High School is committed to *'shaping extraordinary lives'*, through providing a caring, inclusive and safe environment for all students so that they can learn and progress.

Bullying, in any of its forms, breaches Neston High School's rules of *'ready, respectful, safe'* and will not be tolerated. We are committed to upholding the principle that bullying is not acceptable at Neston High School and, should bullying occur, it must cease immediately. We promote our values of aspiration, kindness and community and the understanding that our school community will have diversity amongst all its members.

## Rationale

Every member of the school community:

- is entitled to feel valued and respected
- is entitled to feel safe and secure
- is encouraged to express their thoughts, fears and concerns without embarrassment
- has a responsibility to work towards these aims by showing concern for others.

## Defining Bullying

Neston High School's Anti-Bullying Policy is informed by the law and government advice. More details on bullying and the law can be found at [www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school](http://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school)

There is no legal definition of bullying. However, bullying is defined as *'behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, which intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally'* (DfE definition).

Repeated bullying usually has a significant emotional component, where the anticipation and fear of being bullied seriously affects the behaviour and wellbeing of the victim. However, a single comment can also have a very significant impact and could be regarded as bullying. Also a person may experience the same comment from a wide range of individuals and feel undermined or distressed as a result. The impact of any comment/s or action/s on the victim must be taken into consideration. Any student who is frequently unkind may be contributing to a culture of bullying.

Bullying is usually:

- repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally or humiliate
- often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender, socio economic circumstances or sexual orientation

It takes many forms and can include (but is not limited to):

- physical (e.g., hitting, kicking, shoving)
- verbal (e.g., teasing, name calling, insulting)
- Indirect (spreading malicious information about someone, excluding someone from social groups)
- prejudicial and discriminatory (targeting students belonging to specific groups, e.g., homophobic, transphobic, racist, anti- Semitic, Islamophobic or against children with special education needs or disabilities or who are perceived as different in some way or against students as a result of their physical appearance)
- making threats
- spreading rumours or malicious comments
- seeking retribution following 'alleged snitching'
- taking belongings
- provocation (e.g., throwing things in class, kicking the back of a chair, tripping in a corridor)
- cyberbullying - bullying via mobile phone or online (for example, email, social media networks and instant messenger platforms)

- taking photos or videos without permission

As per the new legislation from Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021, it is important to note that bullying falls within the definition of peer- on- peer (child on child) abuse. Staff at Neston High School will report any concerns regarding peer-on-peer abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. For more information on peer- on -peer abuse see paragraphs 46-49 of [Keeping children safe in education 2021 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/90222/keeping-children-safe-in-education-2021.pdf)

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is *'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'*.

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence. These include:

- violence or assault
- theft
- repeated harassment or intimidation, for example name calling
- threats and abusive phone calls, emails or text messages

Neston High School will report incidents to the police where, in our professional judgement, school has been or will be unable to secure an appropriate resolution for an incident or sequence of events. Parents and students retain the right to report any incident to the police that they believe should be reported. Neston High School will always work closely with the police, taking direction from them where appropriate. Where criminal offences have taken place, Neston High School will inform the police. These include:

- where abuse from bullying constitutes a hate crime
- upskirting (involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.)

Headteachers have the legal power to make sure students behave outside of school premises when their behaviour has a direct impact on the reputation of the school community, for example, when students are wearing school uniform. This includes bullying that happens off the school premises, for example, on public transport or in a town centre.

Further to government advice and the law, Ofsted requires that schools keep records of all incidents of bullying.

### **Education and pro-active approaches**

To promote our values of aspiration, kindness and community, we take positive action to foster an ethos of working together successfully. Strategies that promote this at Neston High School include:

- an effective transition programme (Passport to Neston) that prepares all students for secondary school and the changes they will encounter as their peer group grows
- recognise the importance of building a culture of tolerance at the earliest possible stage
- promoting our school ethos, through our school rules of being 'ready, respectful and safe' with tutor groups, year groups and the House System
- promoting resilience in working with others through the curriculum model that demands students work in different class groupings during their school career
- content in tutor time and assemblies that focuses on personal development, life in modern Britain and British values
- supporting the holistic development of the 'whole child' through our Learning Outside of the Classroom (LOTC) programme
- student leadership programmes
- proactively create opportunities for students to get to know one another
- school council and student voice

- support and empower bystanders and/ or witnesses
- targeted support in school for key students and groups to promote cooperation with others (ELSA, mentoring).

## **Identifying Bullying**

Changes in behaviour that may indicate a student is being bullied include (but are not limited to):

- unwillingness to go to school or return after a break
- belongings suddenly going missing or being damaged
- change to established habits (e.g., giving up extra activities, sitting inside instead of going out, changing usual routines for break and lunch)
- diminished levels of self-confidence
- inability to concentrate
- anxiety, depression, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- repressed body language and poor eye contact
- frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- reluctance to leave the classroom at the end of lessons or day
- choosing the company of adults
- frequent visits to a form tutor, student services or year leader
- unexplained injuries
- difficulty in sleeping, nightmares
- talking of self-harm or running away.

## **The Policy in Action**

### **I. Student Action**

Students who are experiencing bullying or have a concern regarding a friend should report their experience. They can do this by speaking to **any adult** at Neston High School to report what is happening. For example, their Form Tutor, Pastoral Learning Mentor, Learning Support Assistant or Raising Standards Leader. No issue is too big or small to seek help.

### **II. Parent/ Carer Action**

We will work to ensure that parents/ carers have a good understanding of issues relating to bullying.

If parents/ carers suspect that their child is being bullied, they should contact their child's Form Tutor for an initial, confidential discussion. In cases of cyber bullying, it may also be appropriate to inform the police.

### **III. Staff Action**

Staff at Neston High School should be familiar with the changes in behaviour that may indicate a student is being bullied and take action if they suspect bullying in their class.

Staff will frequently highlight the ways in which students are bullied and seek to raise awareness of key bullying issues, such as bullying of students with SEND and Transphobic bullying.

Neston High School uses a secure online system to help with the management and recording of behavioural issues and incidents of bullying. Staff will be sensitive to the possibility of bullying and be ready to talk to any student who wants to speak to them. We acknowledge that actions following a disclosure of bullying should be discussed with the student. The agreed plan should be mindful of the fact that in some cases students who report bullying may experience further bullying as a result.

Staff at Neston High School will also seek to understand the causal factors of why a student has bullied another student, or group of students, in order to educate and support the 'bully' and prevent repeat occurrences.

## **Steps Taken to Investigate an Allegation**

Pastoral Learning Mentors will investigate any disclosure thoroughly. Investigations will be treated sensitively with anonymity protected, where possible, in the evidence gathering process. An investigation may involve actions over a period of days in school and is likely to involve several of the following:

- all students cited in a disclosure will meet with a member of staff to discuss and statements will be completed as required
- statements will be completed by other students. This can include friends of the students involved in the incident or events, but it may also extend to students who may be judged by the Pastoral Learning Mentors to be independent
- seeking information from teachers or support staff
- seeking information from parents/ carers
- establishing a timeline of events, including reviewing previous events and considering whether they now form part of the current sequence being investigated.

## **Restorative Strategies**

The nature of bullying means that every incident is different. Members of the Inclusion/ Pastoral Teams will use their judgement to select appropriate strategies and actions to resolve an incident. These will include some of the following:

- immediate action to secure a student's safety
- positive reinforcement to a victim that disclosure was the right decision
- sympathy and empathy
- interviewing peers separately and agreeing future actions and behaviour
- appropriate sanctions and/or contracts
- restorative conversations between peers
- offer a mentor
- informing and / or meeting parents
- additional supervision or monitoring of a student or students for a period of time
- asking relevant staff to monitor a situation and report any further concerns
- referral to school nurse or other agency
- ensuring the needs of the victim are met
- support and educate students who might genuinely not know or understand they have done something wrong
- consideration of and actions to meet the needs of students who have been found to be bullying others.

## **Resolution**

A resolution will be reached at a point where the following thresholds have been achieved.

1. The student being bullied believes bullying has stopped and/or the incident has concluded and they can continue their school career feeling safe
2. Clear expectations for future conduct of the student who has found to be bullying have been shared and understood.

## **Recording**

All bullying incidents will be recorded on the school's central record for incidents of bullying. Pastoral Learning Mentors will also record their actions of investigation and restorative strategies. These records will be reviewed regularly by the Inclusion Leader, Safeguarding Teams and Senior Staff who oversee each Year group in school.

## **Review**

All aspects of this policy will be reviewed. This will be done through:

- school council
- student and parent questionnaires

## **Accountability**

Neston High School will be held to account regarding bullying in the following ways:

- reporting to the Board of Trustees committee responsible for students and standards
- safeguarding records that may be scrutinised by Ofsted and/ or the local authority
- central records that may be scrutinised by Ofsted
- the school's complaints procedure for parents
- regular reviews of the Anti-bullying Policy by the Senior Leadership Team and Board of Trustees

## **Linked Policies**

The Anti- Bullying Policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Behaviour and Discipline (including exclusions) Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Remote/ Blended Learning Policy
- Trans and Diversity Policy
- SEND Policy