



Statement from the Governing Bodies and Headteachers from the Havant Federation of Schools. Relational Conflict and Bullying

This statement sets out the shared principles and expectations of the Havant Federation of Schools. Each school will implement these principles in accordance with its own published policies and procedures.

The main function of schools is for students to learn and make progress. At the same time schools have a key role to play in conjunction with the students and parents to develop respectful behaviours. As young people grow up and move through adolescence they form and develop friendships with numerous other students and as they move into the latter part of schooling they settle into friendships that are more definite and even in some instances last a lifetime.

In the early years of secondary education students have the opportunity to meet children from other junior schools and they mix with many more students. At this time for some students there can be **relational conflict**, i.e. times when students do not get on socially which can result in such behaviours as name calling, pushing each other, taking each other's property and ignoring someone deliberately. This kind of behaviour is common amongst younger students and as they get older it becomes less frequent and less of a problem. **Bullying** is something that happens in all schools but it is very different from **relational conflict** and it is less common. All the schools in the Federation work to prevent bullying. **Bullying is more serious than relational conflict and is defined by the Anti-Bullying Alliance as the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online. Bullying can be physical, emotional or psychological.** Social media whilst it has many merits also provides an avenue for relational conflict and if it continues from the same person(s) bullying occurs, this often happens outside the parameters of the school day.

All schools in the Federation work tirelessly to develop respectful behaviours and comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010. We foster equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

All schools in the Federation work to develop respectful behaviours with our students and we are grateful for the support we receive from parents/carers in maintaining high standards and expectations. Relational conflict can arise both in and outside school, including at weekends, during holidays and online. Schools cannot mediate every friendship disagreement that occurs outside the school day; however, where off-site or online behaviour affects the safety, wellbeing or education of a student, or has an impact on the orderly running of the school, the school will consider appropriate action in accordance with its Behaviour, Anti-Bullying and Safeguarding policies.

We would be grateful if parents could assist us and consider the following points when they are faced with behavioural issues regarding their children. This would help all schools to focus the majority of their work on the learning and progress of the young people. It is important to state that at all times we will promote respectful behaviours and respond to serious incidents.

- Is the behaviour that your child is experiencing relational conflict or bullying? Consider whether it involves the same person or group, whether it has continued over time, whether there is an imbalance of power and the impact it is having on your child. Parents/carers should contact the school whenever they are concerned about persistence, significant impact, safety, discrimination, harassment or a possible safeguarding issue. Students can also speak to their Form Tutor, Class Teacher, Head of Year/House, Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator or another trusted adult in school.
- Where an issue appears to be an ordinary friendship disagreement or relational conflict, parents/carers can support their child by listening, helping them consider how they might approach the situation and encouraging them to speak to their Form Tutor, Class Teacher or another trusted adult if they need support. Developing the skills to manage ordinary disagreements is an important part of growing up.

Parents/carers are nevertheless welcome to contact the school if they are worried about the impact of the situation or believe that further support may be needed.

- All schools work closely with appropriate outside agencies, including the Police where necessary, to help resolve serious bullying and safeguarding concerns. Cases involving social media can be complex and may involve behaviour outside the school day. Schools will investigate matters that affect students in school or have implications for their safety, wellbeing or education and will take action in accordance with the relevant school policies. Any sanctions are determined by the school. For reasons of confidentiality and data protection, schools cannot disclose to parents/carers the sanctions or personal information relating to another student.
- At times, an investigation into friendship issues or bullying may establish that more than one student has contributed to the situation, including a student who initially reported the concern. Where this is the case, the school will respond fairly and proportionately to the actions of all parties in accordance with its policies. We ask parents/carers to work with us in helping young people understand the impact of their actions, accept appropriate responsibility and learn from the situation.
- We recognise that parents/carers will understandably want concerns resolved as quickly as possible. A fair investigation can take time, particularly where several students, witnesses or online material are involved. We will seek to keep parents/carers appropriately informed while respecting the confidentiality of other students. If a parent/carer remains dissatisfied, they may raise their concerns through the school's published complaints procedure.

All the schools in the Havant Federation want our young people to develop into confident, resilient and respectful citizens of the future. It is important that we all work together to achieve this and we strongly ask parents/carers to support us and follow the procedures that are outlined in this document. Where it is necessary parents/carers will be referred to this document when it is clear that the support for what we are trying to achieve is not forthcoming. We are very grateful for the vast majority of parents/carers who support the schools in what they are trying to achieve with regards to young people's behaviour and relationships.