HAVANT FEDERATION
OF SCHOOLS
WORKING TOGETHER FOR A BETTER EDUCATION

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

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 can 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 tirelessly to develop respectful behaviours with all our students and we are grateful for the support we receive from parents/carers when trying to enforce high standards and expectations. Increasingly we have experienced some parents expecting schools to deal with and solve all relational conflicts that occur not only in school, but those that occur at weekends and in holidays and on social media. It is very difficult for schools to act as the mediators in these instances, schools will sanction behaviours according to their Behaviour Policies when it is right to do so.

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 most of their work on the learning and progress of the young people. It is important to always state that we will promote respectful behaviours and respond to serious incidents.

- Is the behaviour that your child is experiencing relational conflict or bullying? Is it the same person(s), has it been carrying on for a while and is your child being overly affected by it? This would be the time to contact the child's school following the recommended pathways which might include the child's Form Tutor, Head of Year/House, Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator.
- If the behaviours are more of a relational conflict, then listen to your child and discuss with them how they might approach the next day when they meet the student(s). They could also be encouraged to talk to their Form Tutor or Class Teacher in the first instance. It can often be the case that students fall out with each other one day and the next day they are friends. It is advisable that parents/carers do not contact the school immediately and allow the child to work through it. This also allows them to build the skills to deal with the conflict and the resilience to recognise when behaviours are serious. If the situation persists and the impact is affecting your child or there are safety concerns then contact the school.
- All schools work closely with outside agencies that include the Police to try to resolve 'bullying'. We all work in partnership to try to resolve what can be very complex and difficult cases especially when it involves social media. On occasions the issues have been fuelled by many parties and in some instances parents/carers. In these situations, schools and outside agencies cannot always resolve the situation to everyone's satisfaction and any sanctions that are used with the parties are at the discretion of the school.

The school will investigate and act, under data protection schools are not obliged to report on sanctions used on other students.

- At times, while investigating friendship issues or bullying, it is established that the student reporting the issue has also been at fault. If this is the case, we must pursue appropriate action for all parties. Part of the learning process for young people is to have consistent messages from home and school and that they must accept responsibility for their actions.
- We are aware that parents/carers can become impatient and want a specific outcome immediately. Parents must realise that investigations take time if they are to be done properly and we respectfully ask that parents are mindful of this. When the outcome is not what parents/carers wanted there is the tendency for parents/carers to complain further to other agencies. Parents/Carers are asked to engage with the school to resolve the issues together and to recognise that sometimes this takes longer than expected.

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 the support for what we are trying to achieve is not forthcoming. We are very grateful for most parents/carers who support the schools in what they are trying to achieve with regards to young people's behaviour and relationships.

These statements set 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.