



# St Hilda's School

HARPENDEN

*Caring, Curious & Confident*

## PREVENTING AND TACKLING BULLYING POLICY

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Name of Policy                 | Preventing and Tackling Bullying Policy   |
| Reviewed by                    | Dan Sayers  |
| Review Date                    | September 2025  |
| Next Review Date               | September 2028  |
| To be Read in Conjunction with | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• PSHCE Policy</li><li>• Safeguarding Policy</li></ul>  |
| Legislation Referenced         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DfE guidance 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017).</li><li>• Current KCSIE legislation and guidance in force</li><li>• Equality Act 2010</li><li>• BECTA guidelines regarding E-teaching and the internet.</li><li>• Malicious Communications Act 1988</li><li>• Protection from Harassment Act 1997.</li><li>• Children Act 1989</li></ul> |

Unless otherwise stated, all Policies of St Hilda's School apply to the school in its entirety. This comprises all staff and pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the Junior School (Key Stage 1) and the Senior School (Key Stage 2)

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

St Hilda's School encourages and values the good relationships that are promoted in its aims:

- To achieve the highest standard of education in a happy, purposeful working environment
- To instil in all pupils a love of learning, independent thinking and good manners
- To strive to nurture every girl's individuality, developing talent and ability to the full

Concerns relating to pupils are discussed at staff meetings and minuted. Clear lines of communication with parents are maintained via parents evenings, emails and telephone conversations all of which are recorded and stored appropriately.

The School takes a zero tolerance approach to bullying, and child on child abuse will not be written off as banter, "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up". We acknowledge the negative psychological effects that bullying can have on individuals and the learning environment, and that bullying can cause in extreme cases, self-harm or suicide. We strive to create an environment free from fear.

The school also recognises that it must take note of bullying perpetrated outside of the school that spills over into the school. The school does what is reasonably practicable to eliminate any such bullying.

## 2. DEFINITION

**The Preventing & Tackling Bullying Policy of St Hilda's School has been drawn up with regard to DfE guidance 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017)'.**

"Bullying may be defined as: *Behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally*". Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools (see references above). It should be noted that bullying can also take the form of one serious incident.

Bullying is the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person by physical (including sexual), verbal (including both real-life and online interactions including but not limited to email, text messages and social media), and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory. Bullying does not need to be face-to-face.

Pupils, staff and parents may be perpetrators or victims of bullying. The school defines bullying as deliberately hurtful behaviour, whether physical or psychological, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

It may include but is not necessarily restricted to, the following:

- Physical (e.g. pushing, hitting, kicking, theft of or hiding belongings, invasion of personal space)

- Verbal (e.g. name calling, teasing, insulting remarks for example on race, sexual orientation, religions, cultural differences or gender, unkind notes)
- Social or psychological (e.g. spreading nasty stories, exclusion from a group, staring in an intimidating manner)
- Visual (e.g. texting, phone calls, e-mails, MSN or similar services for social networking, blue tooth, videoing, photography, mobile phones)
- Inter-relationship bullying between classes/groups
- Peer on peer (e.g. banter, sexting, cyberbullying)
- Based on the familial or environmental circumstances of the pupil

### **3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY**

The school's policy on anti-bullying is designed to help staff and pupils to recognise and deal with bullying when it occurs but, even more importantly, to 'prevent' it from occurring wherever possible. The policy follows current Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance.

- To demonstrate that the school takes a zero tolerance approach to bullying.
- To take measures to prevent all forms of bullying within the school and outside of School
- To support all staff and pupils in any action that identifies and protects those who might be bullied
- To demonstrate that the safety and happiness of pupils is enhanced by dealing positively with bullying
- To promote an environment where pupils are encouraged to report bullying and where they feel safe and confident telling someone about bullying, especially in relation to peer-on-peer abuse.
- To promote self-esteem and positive attitudes in pupils so that they feel better equipped to challenge bullying behaviour
- To ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 that protects people against discrimination (including bullying) because of the nine protected characteristics applicable to everyone:
  - Age
  - Disability
  - Gender reassignment
  - Marriage and civil partnership
  - Pregnancy and maternity
  - Race
  - Religion or belief
  - Sex
  - Sexual orientation

In order to deliver the aims stated above, St Hilda's undertakes to:

- Deliver an anti-bullying programme as part of the PSHCE curriculum, Circle Time and pastoral sessions and assemblies, to raise awareness, promote self-esteem and refer to the anti bullying policy in age appropriate terms
- Encourage teaching staff to take opportunities as appropriate in the course of their teaching to highlight issues that relate to bullying. Examples may include elements of projects, drama, stories, literature, historical events, current affairs as well as other subject areas
- Use Form times to explore these issues

- Challenge racist or homophobic language, acknowledging diversity and difference and the right everyone has not to be bullied due to a protected characteristic
- Encourage pupils to keep a record of any bullying via text, e-mail or messaging services.
- Avoid drawing undue attention to differences of SEN pupils
- Discuss these issues at School Council Meetings if appropriate
- Create relevant displays
- Hold regular school assemblies to address the issue, including National Bullying Week.
- Pay attention to the results of pupil questionnaires
- Discourage any exclusive or unfriendly behaviour by staff or pupils
- Ensure that the Designated Senior Person (the Headmaster) reports termly to the nominated Governor for Safeguarding/ Child Protection
- Provide support to Form Teachers and other staff in order to raise awareness, and to enable action to be taken to reduce the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is deemed most likely

## **4. SPECIFIC TYPES OF BULLYING**

### **4.1 Racist Bullying**

This type of bullying is when an individual is targeted for representing a group based on colour, background, culture or religion. This type of bullying can take the following form: name calling, racist jokes, graffiti, offensive mimicry, physical threats/attacks, provocative use of badges, racist literature, inciting others to be racist and refusing to co-operate in lessons or **co-curricular** activities with others.

### **4.2 Homophobic Bullying**

Pupils do not necessarily have to identify as LGBTQIA to experience bullying around sexual orientation. This type of bullying can take the form of any of the aforementioned behaviour.

### **4.3 Special Educational Needs and Disability Bullying**

This type of bullying can take the form of any of the aforementioned behaviour.

### **4.4. Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying is an increasingly common form of bullying that can involve Social Networking Sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat, emails and mobile phones, used for SMS messages and as cameras, and can be defined as deliberate, hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others. The scale and scope of cyberbullying can be far greater than for other forms of bullying.

### **4.5 Child on Child Abuse**

Child on child abuse can manifest itself in many ways and will be taken seriously and acted upon. It will not be dismissed as “banter” as “growing up” or as “just having a laugh”. These issues will be part of the PSHCE lessons and discussions. Victims will be fully supported by the School. Any incident will be reported through the usual Safeguarding channels.

## **5. SIGNS OF BULLYING**

Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in their behaviour, mental or emotional state, e.g. becoming shy and nervous, withdrawn, feigning illness or suffering genuine illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. Other behavioural changes which may present themselves include changes in work patterns, a lack of concentration, truancy and/or lateness, lost belongings, isolation and under-achievement.

## **6. PROCEDURES TO DEAL WITH BULLYING**

All reported incidents will be treated seriously and investigated fully; all parties will be heard and given appropriate support.

### **6.1 What staff should do**

- If any member of staff or School Helper witnesses overt bullying, the incident should immediately be reported to the Form Teacher.
- The Form Teacher should then inform a senior member of staff.
- The senior member of staff will speak with the pupils involved and take written notes of the incident.
- If the incident is of a serious nature, the Headmaster will be informed immediately.
- Any incidents involving members of staff should be reported directly to the Headmaster.
- If the incident involves the Headmaster/SMT it would be reported directly to the Governors for immediate action. Written logs of all such incidents are kept securely in an Incident File.
- All incidents must be logged on Engage and the Bullying Log. Incidents will be allocated a category (including the nine protected characteristics) to determine if there is a pattern.

### **6.2 What pupils should do**

- If a pupil witnesses or experiences bullying, the incident should immediately be reported to any member of staff. Pupils are encouraged to confide in Form Teachers, Classroom Assistants, Mentors or Senior Staff.
- Pupils should be reassured that their concerns are taken seriously.
- Pupils will be encouraged to keep a record of any bullying via text, e-mail or messaging services.
- All reported incidents will be treated seriously and fully investigated; all parties will be heard and given appropriate support.

### **6.3 What Parents Should Do**

If a parent is aware that their child is being bullied, he or she should:

- Provide an open, non-judgemental environment and listen to the child while she talks about her problem.
- Tell them they have been understood and support will be given. Remind them they have the right to feel safe.
- Suggest they speak to a member of staff, such as their mentor, with whom they feel comfortable and safe.

- If the problem seems particularly serious, or ongoing, the parent should contact the Form teacher or Headmaster immediately.
- Try to avoid an angry or emotional response.
- Recognise that actions such as phoning the parent of the bully and discussing the matter with other parents can inflame the situation.
- Contact the school straight away if the issue continues to be unresolved.
- Trust the school to carry through actions that will solve the problem.

**When bullying is found to have occurred, appropriate action will be taken to:**

- Ensure the immediate safety and well-being of those involved.
- Provide ongoing support and counselling for the individual being bullied.
- Inform the individual who has been responsible for the bullying that this behaviour is unacceptable.
- Investigate the cause of bullying behaviour, and whether these are in relation to an underlying issue or concern.
- Counsel the individual to understand the implications of bullying.
- Establish whether further support and/or counselling are required to rectify behaviour.
- Advise the individual of the consequences of further bullying.
- Discipline the offender as appropriate.
- Inform the parents if considered necessary.
- Follow up with the individuals to provide any necessary support.

## **7. CYBERBULLYING – PREVENTATIVE MEASURES**

In addition to the preventative measures described above, St Hilda's School:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its charter for the safe use of the internet. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department monitors pupils' use.
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- Issues all pupils with their own personal school email address.
- Adheres to the BECTA guidelines regarding E-teaching and the internet.
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in PSHCE lessons, which covers blocking and removing contacts.
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- Does not permit mobile phones in school.

## **8. DISCIPLINARY MEASURES**

Usually parents will be invited into the school and appropriate action will be taken. This may include a disciplinary hearing. Disciplinary sanctions may include a formal warning and contract of good behaviour, suspension, removal of privileges or specific supervision and there may also be a requirement that the bully has specialist counselling. In serious or repeated incidents the outcome of the disciplinary hearing may require removal or expulsion.

In all cases, both the victim and the offender will be monitored until such a time as both parties are confident that the situation is resolved to the School's satisfaction. In all instances both victim and offender will receive support, the former to ensure the restoration of self-confidence and the latter to ensure a fuller understanding of the impact of her behaviour and to ascertain any underlying cause for concern and to seek to support the perpetrator.

## **9. SAFEGUARDING**

Some incidents of bullying may also be a child protection issue. A bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection issue under the **Children Act 1989** when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. These concerns must be reported to the member of staff in school responsible for child protection and then reported to the local authority's children's social services.

## **10. CRIMINAL OFFENCE**

Most bullying incidents are not crimes. But some types of bullying are illegal and should be reported to the police. This includes bullying that involves violence or assault; theft; harassment and intimidation over a period of time including calling someone names or threatening them, making abusive phone calls, and sending abusive emails or text messages (one incident is not normally enough to get a conviction); and anything involving hate crimes.

Some cyberbullying activities could be criminal offences under a range of different laws, including the **Malicious Communications Act 1988** and the **Protection from Harassment Act 1997**.

## **11. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The school's Preventing and Tackling Bullying policy is the responsibility of the Board of Governors. The policy's effectiveness and implementation is reviewed annually by the Headmaster.

(Information on specific responsibilities of Governors is available on the School website.)

**This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Senior Management Team, in line with the school's review schedule for policies.**