



South Hampstead

Senior School

GDST

Anti-Bullying Policy

Senior School

UPDATED BY

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NEXT REVIEW DATE

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At South Hampstead, we believe that every member of our community has the right to be safe and happy and to feel that they will be protected if they feel vulnerable. Bullying is also strongly in breach of our School Code of Conduct, which exhorts students to demonstrate respect and care towards each other. The aims of our anti-bullying policy are:

- to make it clear to all students that mutual respect and tolerance are expected from all members of the school community at all times;
- to prevent bullying from taking place as far as possible;
- to make sure that all students feel that they could tell someone that they are being bullied in the knowledge that it will be taken seriously and dealt with swiftly and sensitively;
- to respond effectively to any specific incidents.

Bullying is defined as taking wilful and / or persistent action to hurt, threaten or frighten someone else. Normally bullying involves repeated actions, a pattern of hurt, offence or intimidation, however a single incident that is wilful and extremely hurtful will have a lasting impact on the victim so may also be deemed bullying. It may take the form of verbal or physical attacks, misappropriation of property, persistent hurtful comments or abusive messages, written or electronic. It is not the ordinary give and take of school life, which may include disagreements, joking and friendly teasing.

Bullying can manifest itself in various forms, including:

Verbal	name calling, taunting, mocking, threatening, spreading rumours, teasing, sexism, racism, casual or deliberate use of derogatory language that demeans an individual or group for their culture, beliefs, personal characteristics or personal challenges
Physical	pushing, kicking, hitting, damaging possessions, blocking someone's path
Emotional	deliberate isolation, coercion, being made to feel uncomfortable because of religion, gender, sexuality, disability, appearance (e.g. weight), health condition (e.g. eczema), ethnicity or race
Cyber-bullying	offensive text messaging and emails, posting offensive comments or 'memes' on shared social networking pages, inappropriate use of chat rooms, instant messaging and websites (e.g. personal sites) or posting comments on sites or via apps

The above is not a definitive list. At times, persistent exclusion of an individual from friendship group or social activities, or inciting others to exclude an individual may be defined as bullying. Behaviour on the part of one or more pupils towards another, which causes distress or psychological damage, constitutes serious bullying and will be dealt with as swiftly and effectively as possible. This policy may also be applied to hurtful behaviour between pupils when off school premises.

Girls are encouraged to talk directly to a member of staff if they feel that they are being bullied. This is on the understanding that the member of staff will listen carefully to the issues and help her to decide how best to sort out any problems. We would help the girl to consider a range of different ways of dealing with the situation chosen from the list of options below. On the whole, these options progress from the lowest level of intervention to the highest. Some options would not be appropriate for some incidents. We ask girls to think about the advantages and disadvantages of each option before deciding on a strategy.

- Seeing what happens over the next few weeks – it may have been a misunderstanding or it might not happen again. This option is only discussed within the context of a girl being given every opportunity to talk through any concerns and an understanding that she can seek further advice or help at any time;
- Telling the person – sometimes the person who has made another girl feel uncomfortable or hurt does not realise they have done this. The girl may decide to tell the person what happened, where and when it happened, how it made them feel, the impact it had and what they would like to happen next;
- Writing the person a letter – this involves telling the person the same as above but without having to tell them to their face;
- Asking a friend to help – there may be someone who knows the girl doing the bullying quite well and who could tell them that their behaviour is upsetting someone. This option depends upon the girl who could do this being able to do it professionally and well and not exaggerating the incident;
- Ask a senior girl to tell the person – again, this option depends upon the senior girl being able to do it professionally and well; this girl may be one of the Peer Mentors and may receive guidance from a member of the pastoral team;
- Asking a teacher to arrange a small-group meeting – the girl may feel able to confront the person doing the bullying with her concerns if a teacher is present to make sure things don't get out of hand. This needs to be done without blaming the other girl but trying to get them to understand how hurtful their behaviour can be and how it needs to stop;
- Writing down a complaint and giving it to a girl's Head of Year or another senior member of staff. Sometimes, the bullying can be so serious that it needs to be properly investigated and the person doing the bullying punished. This formal method usually involves communication with parents and other people may be called in to tell of their experiences. The outcome will be decided by one of the Deputy Heads in consultation with the Headmistress.

The only person who really knows which option will be best is the individual concerned. We recommend that girls think carefully about each one and perhaps talk it over with their form tutor, Head of Year, any other member of staff with whom they have a good relationship, with the School Counsellor or with a more senior girl. Something that we emphasise is that doing something about bullying is not 'sneaking' or 'grassing'. It is very important that all cases of bullying are dealt with. Bullying is also a Child Protection issue and cases may be dealt with in conjunction with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy. It is in everybody's interest to bring bullying out into the open, including that of the bully themselves, who will often need help too.

If a case of bullying comes to light, the following procedures will be followed:

- the girl would be assured that her concerns will be taken seriously;
- she will have the opportunity to discuss her concerns with a teacher, a senior girl or another member of staff;
- the range of options will be presented to her and time taken to talk through each one, discussing the advantages and disadvantages;
- she will be encouraged to choose one of the options;
- she will be given support and shown the strategies that will help her follow the option she has chosen effectively. This may include help with arranging a meeting, assisting her in getting an older girl to help, help with writing a letter or support during an investigation process;
- in serious cases of bullying, it will be necessary to conduct a formal investigation
- in very serious cases of bullying, it will be necessary for girl(s) named in the allegations to stay at home pending the outcome of a full and fair investigation without prejudice;
- In cases of cyber-bullying it is best to collect evidence of images/ messages in the form of screen shots or print-outs if possible. *Indecent images should never be forwarded; they should be saved on the pupil's phone and the phone confiscated until Police have completed their investigation
- the students using bullying behaviour will be helped to see that their actions are totally unacceptable and have serious, possibly long-term, consequences; possible causes for their behaviour will be investigated and support put in place for that pupil, in or outside of school
- where appropriate, parents of girls involved will be informed of what has happened and invited to come to school to discuss the issue.
- if it transpires that bullying has taken place, the appropriate sanction will be imposed in order to impress on the perpetrator that what she has done is unacceptable, deter her from repeating that behaviour and signal to other pupils that the behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from doing it.
- fixed term exclusions are a possible sanction and; in the most serious cases, permanent exclusion. In minor cases, sanctions will be given in line with the school's Sanctions Policy.

The school follows a range of measures to prevent bullying, particularly through the teaching across all curriculum areas. Staff are aware of actions which can cause distress and make someone feel that they are being bullied. This issue is addressed in many areas of the curriculum, in PSHE, year assemblies and throughout the general life of the school.

Records are kept of all investigatory meetings, meetings with parents, telephone calls etc. based on factual and contemporaneous notes.

Our anti-bullying policy and procedures are outlined in all girls' homework diary, in the New Parents' Handbook that all parents receive and in the Staff Handbook. Reference to our anti-bullying policy and procedures and/or any changes in these is made to all staff at regular staff meetings, to new staff as part of their induction policy and to all girls as part of their PSHE programme.

The most important thing to remember is that if a girl is feeling upset or hurt as a result of somebody else's behaviour, she should talk to someone about it.