



South Hampstead

*Senior School*

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GDST

# Anti-Bullying Policy

*Senior School*

UPDATED BY

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LAST REVIEWED

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NEXT REVIEW DATE

July 2019

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 completely 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:

<b>Verbal</b>	(e.g. 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)
<b>Physical</b>	(e.g. pushing, kicking, hitting, damaging possessions, blocking someone's path)
<b>Emotional</b>	(e.g. 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);
<b>Cyber-bullying</b>	(e.g. 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 their natural 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 serious, prolonged 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 this type of behaviour between pupils when off school premises.

There is a recognition that some pupils may be more at risk of bullying than others. These include those with special educational needs or a disability, those who identify as LGBT or who are questioning their identity, those who are known to have a particular religious belief or pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school does not tolerate any negative behaviour towards these pupils, on the basis of these differences or because of their vulnerabilities, and is quick to address anything that is seen, heard or drawn to the attention of staff. Pupils behaving inappropriately will be dealt with according to the Behaviour Policy

and / or the Anti-bullying policy and the victim will be supported through the pastoral care system.

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 proceed.

All pupils are taught and reminded, through PSHE, assemblies and form-time activities, that to be a bystander to bullying is to become part of the problem. Every pupil has a responsibility to each other to prevent bullying, through calling peers out on inappropriate behaviour and alerting staff if they have seen or heard such behaviour taking place in school, outside of school or online.

If a situation comes to light, the School would help the girl to consider a range of different ways of dealing with the situation, such as the examples in list 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 and the final strategy may be a combination of these:

- 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;

- Asking the school to investigate the complaint. 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.

Pupils are best placed to decide how they would like their situation handled but the School will encourage the pupil to take some sort of action or allow the School to take some action. Pupils may wish to discuss their chosen approach with their Form Tutor, Head of Year, the Deputy Head Pastoral or any other member of staff with whom they are comfortable. They also may wish to see one of the school counsellors. Something that we emphasise is that doing something about bullying is not 'snitching' 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 will 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 discussed her and time taken to talk through different possibilities
- she will be encouraged to choose a course of action and supported as the strategy is employed
- in serious cases of bullying, it will be necessary to conduct a formal investigation
- in very serious cases of bullying, it may 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. NB - 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, an 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

Any sanctions will be decided upon taking into account the context for the individual pupil concerned, particularly with respect to any specific learning difficulties they may experience (in line with Schedule 10 of the 2010 UK Equality Act). The expectation and action taken for such pupils' behaviour will take into account their specific areas of disability or need. An understanding of the pupil behind the behaviour is key to our behaviour strategy for all pupils and will always be part of the consideration when deciding how best to respond to breaches of the school rules or code of conduct.

Records are kept of all investigatory meetings, meetings with parents, telephone calls etc. based on factual and contemporaneous notes. A log of bullying incidents is also kept, for the purposes of reviewing procedures and outcomes. Often pupils and parents will use the word 'bullying' to describe a situation when pupils have been unkind to each other. All of these situations will be investigated to understand the full extent of the behaviour, however, only those deemed to be bullying, according to the definition above, will be included in the log.

The school follows a range of strategies to prevent bullying, particularly through the teaching across all curriculum areas. The issue is addressed in many areas of the curriculum, in PSHE, year assemblies, whole-school assemblies, form time activities and throughout the general life and culture of the school. Kindness and mutual respect are highly valued and expected by all in the community; acts of serious unkindness or bullying are tackled head-on, both for the sake of those involved and to make clear that such behaviour will not be tolerated.

Our anti-bullying policy and procedures are outlined in each girl's homework diary, in the New Parents' Handbook that all parents receive and in the Staff Handbook. Staff are regularly reminded, through staff meetings and email communication, of the content of the School's Anti-Bullying Policy and the importance of not overlooking inappropriate behaviour.

#### Sources of guidance consulted for this document:

Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies - 2017

Cyber bullying: Advice for head teachers and staff - 2017