

BISHOP'S HATFIELD GIRLS' SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Date of last review:	Summer Term 2015
Date of next review:	Summer Term 2018
School Based Policy	

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School recognises and affirms the right of every person within the school to work in a secure and supportive environment and is committed to the development of strategies for preventing and responding to bullying.

We aim to:

- reduce and eradicate, wherever possible, instances in which individuals are subjected to bullying in any form;
- provide support should an incident of bullying occur;
- ensure that all pupils and staff are aware of the policy and fulfil their obligations to it.

Bullying is defined as behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. It can take many forms but the main types are **physical** (examples can be: hitting; kicking), **verbal** (examples can be: name-calling; racist remarks), **indirect** (examples can be: spreading rumours; excluding someone from social groups) or **cyberbullying** (via text messages or the Internet) – DfE Circular ref. 00062-2011

All members of the school have a responsibility to help create an environment in which everyone (children and adults) is encouraged to:

- treat everyone with kindness and respect;
- act with thought and consideration to others;
- behave courteously, being polite and helpful at all times;
- be friendly and co-operative;
- be honest and truthful;
- treat people with respect;

Staff have a responsibility to prevent any member of the school community (adults and children) from:

- making unkind or offensive remarks (including comments about people's appearance, accent or ability or disability);
- behaving in a racist, sexist or homophobic manner;
- using foul or unacceptable language;

- being rude or aggressive;
- using physical aggression;
- damaging property.

All members of the school community need to understand what constitutes bullying and be alert to signs that bullying is taking place. This policy needs to be read alongside the school's policy for Behaviour and RAPAS (Rewards, Praise and Sanctions) that includes clear protocols for dealing with bullying in the Actions and Consequences section. This also includes reference to cyberbullying incidents. Any cyberbullying incident is logged by the Deputy Headteacher responsible for Inclusion.

We believe that pupils should:

- be involved in the development and reviewing of behaviour and anti-bullying policies and practice;
- learn about what constitutes bullying and what to do about it;
- have opportunities to develop the skills to resist bullying and to deal with bullying;
- take part in peer mentoring / support programmes;
- be aware that knowing about bullying by or to others and doing nothing is unacceptable.

We believe that parent, carers and families have an important role to play in helping to deal with bullying by:

- discouraging their children from using bullying behaviour at school, at home or elsewhere.
- taking an active interest in their children's school life, discussing their friendships, how breaks/lunchtimes are spent and the journey to and from school.
- watching out for signs that their children are being bullied or are bullying others and contacting the school if necessary. Parents / carers should contact either the Form Tutor or Head of Year in the first instance.

Where there are concerns that a child may be suffering significant harm as a result of bullying at the school the Child Protection School Liaison Officer will be contacted by Mr A. Dudley (the Designated Senior Person for Child Protection).

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DEALING WITH BULLYING

Every instance of alleged bullying will be judged individually and is likely to have its own set of unique circumstances and those involved. The Headteacher also has the power to regulate pupils' conduct when they are not on the school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of the school staff. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre. (Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)

This means that employing standard responses would be inappropriate. However, certain common procedures will be used when dealing with cases of alleged bullying. These are:

- The teacher who interviews the pupil(s) concerned will record instances of alleged bullying.
- When an allegation of bullying has been made, a teacher will need to interview those being accused and often other possible witnesses. They may be asked to write their accounts of any incidents.
- The outcomes of these interviews will be recorded.
- If the pupil making the allegation, and/or her parents say that they do not wish any other girls to be interviewed, then the investigation cannot proceed and no further action can be taken. This will also be recorded.
- If bullying is proven, the parents of the girl(s) responsible will also be involved. They will be notified of any sanctions to be imposed and also of the standard of behaviour expected of their daughter(s) in the future. Fixed term exclusions may well be imposed and in extreme circumstances permanent exclusion considered.
- Other actions may be taken to limit the contact between the girls involved e.g. moving form and/or teaching groups, separate seating.
- **Any serious incidents of bullying are recorded by the Deputy Headteacher responsible for Inclusion.**

Two examples of how the school may deal with different instances of bullying are shown on the attached sheet.

DEALING WITH BULLYING – EXEMPLARS

Example 1

A pupil discovered that someone had logged on to her computer area and had written unpleasant comments on her work. On investigation the culprit was identified, parents notified and invited in to school to discuss the matter.

Despite this, the situation did not improve with other pupils in the form encouraged to become involved. Anonymous notes were written to the victim, her purse hidden and property removed from the purse. Other incidents occurred which, quite clearly, were of a bullying nature. Parents were informed that the culprit's behaviour was of a bullying nature and the catalogue of incidents was outlined to them. It was made clear to both parents and pupil that this behaviour was unacceptable and had to stop.

Course of action that was taken:

- The Head of Year, the victim and the bully were involved in a discussion of what had caused the problems between them e.g. the arguments, hurtful comments and unkind behaviour.
- The bully agreed that her behaviour was unacceptable and that she would not behave in this way any more.
- The form was spoken to by the Head of Year and made aware of how unacceptable their behaviour had been.
- Parents were fully informed and involved in working with the bully on her behaviour at home.
- Situation between the pupils was monitored to ensure that there were no further incidents of bullying.
- Written accounts were kept of all incidents and outcomes.

Example 2

Two pupils who used to be friends at primary school had 'fallen out' because of problems outside of school. One pupil is in Year 9 and the other in Year 8.

The younger pupil alleged that the friends of the older pupil were bullying her: pushing her and making comments about her. Previous incidents had been investigated by her Head of Year and, where a clear case of unkind behaviour was established, the culprit was spoken to and told clearly that this was not to happen again.

However, another incident occurred with the same pupil. Her mother was invited into school and informed immediately that the pupil's behaviour would not be tolerated. The parent was asked to support the school in helping to ensure that this did not happen again and the possible consequences of any further incidents happening was made clear such as exclusion.

On another occasion, the younger pupil's father contacted the school to say that his daughter had been spat on after school by one of the friends of the older pupil, that the

school had not done anything about the previous incidents and, if nothing was done this time, that he would be contacting the police about these pupils harassing his daughter.

The Deputy Headteacher responsible for Inclusion investigated the incident and interviewed the younger pupil and the two pupils who were with her. Pupils who were alleged to have been involved were also interviewed and their responses recorded.

However, there were conflicting accounts between the younger pupil and her friends as to which of the older pupils had been present even with the use of school photographs to help. Also, names were given of pupils being present and involved but who, it was later established, could not have been there. The older pupils denied that they had done anything and said that they had been deliberately keeping out of the pupil's way to avoid being involved in anything to do with her.

A letter was sent to the father to explain what had been done about this incident, the nature of the conflicting evidence and how there had been no supporting evidence to suggest who had spat at her. It was also explained that, as this had happened outside of school, he was entitled to contact the police about the matter. It was also explained to him what had been done about the previous incidents reported to the Head of Year.

Another telephone call was received from the father to inform us that there had been another incident where one of the older pupils was alleged to have said that she would trip his daughter up deliberately. A letter was also received from him, in response to the one sent to him, stating his unhappiness with the fact that we had not been able to find enough evidence to identify the person who had spat on his daughter.

Once again, the new incident was investigated and pupils were interviewed and statements taken. The younger pupil said that it was her friend who had told her of the comment who, when asked couldn't be sure as to who the pupil was who had said this though suggested a name. The younger pupil said that, in a different incident to this one, the older pupils had clearly been talking about her but that she didn't hear what they had been saying. When interviewed the older pupils said that they were now pointing the younger pupil out whenever she was nearby so that they would not say or do anything that might be misinterpreted by the younger pupil while she was there. They were told that this obvious highlighting of the younger pupil was bound to be upsetting for her and that this was to stop.

The pupil alleged to have made the comment (reported by the younger pupil's friend) denied saying it but, as a precautionary measure, her mother was contacted and the situation explained. The mother was asked to talk to her daughter about this which she agreed to do.

As the situation did not seem to be improving the two pupils who had originally been friends were talked to again individually and it was suggested that it might be helpful if they got together and talked through the problems they were having. They both agreed and parents were contacted to get agreement for this course of action which was received.

The pupils were then seen together and both agreed that they wanted to sort things out between them. This they did and the problems stopped.

The younger pupil's father was contacted and he was thrilled with the outcome, saying that he was pleased with how the school had dealt with the problems and apologised for his attitude before which he agreed had not been acceptable.

There has been informal monitoring of the situation since then and there have so far been no further problems to date.

Course of action that was taken:

- All pupils involved in each incident were interviewed.
- Parents of 'bully' were informed if evidence of bullying was established and asked to work with the school on stopping any further occurrences.
- Parent of 'victim' was informed of the outcomes of the later investigations.
- Deputy Headteacher and the two pupils originally involved in the problem were involved in a discussion of what had caused the problems and how to resolve them.
- Written accounts were kept of all incidents.