

BISHOP'S HATFIELD GIRLS' SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Date of last review: Autumn Term 2023

Date of next review: Autumn Term 2025

Approved by Governors:

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

1. Rationale

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 The school's Anti-bullying Policy has been developed with due regard for our duties and obligations under existing legislation and public sector duties for the safeguarding and wellbeing of our pupils
- 1.3 The school recognises its responsibility in accordance with Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (DFE 2023 and annual updates thereafter) to treat bullying as a child protection concern (under the Children Act 1989) where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. The duties and powers afforded to the school are extended to include preventing/responding to bullying that happens outside school, where it is reasonable to do so (Education and Inspections Act 2006).

2. Aims

The school aims 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 Anti-Bullying Policy and fulfil their obligations to it
- provide an environment of positive working relationships
- challenge any behaviour by or towards any member of the school community which amounts to intimidation or bullying

3. Definition

- 3.1 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; any form of violence), **verbal** (examples can be: name-calling; racist remarks; threats), **indirect** (examples can be: spreading rumours; excluding someone from social groups; graffiti) or **cyberbullying** (via text messages or the Internet in terms of inappropriate use of social media) – DfE Circular ref. 00062-2011.
- 3.2 Bullying is any behaviour by an individual or group that:
 - is meant (intended) to hurt - the person or persons doing the bullying know what they are doing and meant to do it
 - is not just a one-off incident but happens over time
 - involves an imbalance of power - the person being bullied will usually find it very hard to defend themselves
- 3.3 Relationships between pupils can break down and this can cause distress, but this should not automatically be construed as bullying.

- Simply not liking someone is not an act of bullying. However, in a culture of kindness, at Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School we believe that you do not have to be friends to be friendly and that everyone should respectfully consider the thoughts and feelings of others.
- Arguments and disagreements do not constitute bullying. Falling out with a friend, arguing and saying something unkind, is not an act of bullying. Relationships often break down and with the support of school staff, relationships can be, and often are repaired through restorative justice.
- One off incidents of unkindness are not bullying. Whilst these are unacceptable and will be addressed, they do not constitute bullying.
- Perceived non-verbal unkindness, for example, 'dirty looks' are not bullying

3.4 Bullying can take a range of forms and it is important to recognise that bullying is a form of child on child abuse and can include acts of a sexual nature including sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes or 'banter' and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse. For more information about child on child abuse, please refer to our Child Protection Policy.

Staff are made aware of behaviours that might be seen as discriminatory in relation to protected characteristics and have been urged to report any behaviours of this nature, however minor they may seem. The protected characteristics are:

- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

When there are concerns about sexual abuse or serious or persistent physical or emotional abuse the school may refer to Children's Services or the Police if bullying (either direct or indirect) involves an allegation of a crime. This may include hate crimes linked to the protected characteristics.

Please refer to the Protected Characteristics and Prejudice-Related Incidents Policy for more information on dealing with this form of bullying.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 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

4.2 **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, including references to gender identity
- using foul or unacceptable language that may or will cause offence to others
- being rude or verbally aggressive
- using physical aggression
- damaging property.

4.3 Single or unintentional incidences of any of these acts are not necessarily bullying (see 3.3). However, they will be viewed as unacceptable and may result in appropriate and proportional sanctions.

4.4 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 for Learning and the RAPAS handbook (Rewards, Praise and Sanctions) that includes clear protocols / sanctions for dealing with bullying in the Actions and Consequences section. This also includes reference to cyberbullying incidents. Any cyberbullying / inappropriate use of social media incidents should be logged using CPOMS.

4.5 We believe that **pupils** should:

- refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying
- report any witnessed instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy
- not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out
- 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, to deal with bullying and to build resilience when faced with bullying
- take part in peer mentoring / support programmes/ Anti-bullying Week activities
- be aware that knowing about bullying by or to others and doing nothing is unacceptable.

4.6 We believe that **parents, 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

- advising their child to report any bullying to staff, explaining the implications of allowing bullying to continue unchecked
- advising their child not to retaliate violently to any forms of bullying and explaining that this is likely to lead to sanctions by the 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
- cooperating with the school if their child is accused of bullying by supporting any investigations and any subsequent sanctions
- notifying the school of situations out of school that may come into school and create frictions or unpleasantness amongst the pupils.

4.7 The **Governing Body** of the school has an important role to play. Governors will:

- review the school's policy regularly
- consult all interested parties in revising the policy when necessary
- ask for information to enable them to monitor the implementation and evaluate the effectiveness of the policy.

5. Prevention

- 5.1 The school is committed to prevention programmes to empower pupils who may be susceptible to bullying, discourage bullying and promote positive relationships.
- 5.2 Form Anti-bullying Ambassadors in years 7-11 will be elected annually and will form the Anti-bullying Committee. The committee will work together on activities to help discourage bullying, celebrate diversity and to promote the school values of kindness and respect for all.
- 5.3 The school will use a range of opportunities to teach pupils about bullying. These will include: Life Skills lessons; form time activities; assemblies; annual Anti-bullying Conference; extra-curricular clubs that build self-esteem; awareness raising (such as through themed weeks. e.g. National Anti-bullying Week/Mental Health Week).

6. Dealing with bullying

- 6.1 **Where there are concerns that a child may be suffering significant harm as a result of bullying at the school the Designated Lead for Safeguarding should be contacted.**
- 6.2 The school through its Form Tutors, Heads of Year and Senior Leadership Team will aim to ensure that:
- victims and witnesses of bullying know that it is "OK to tell" and that they will receive practical help if they do so (see Appendix 1 which is in the Pupil Planner to guide pupils as to 'what to do if...')
 - anyone who bullies is aware that they are bullying
 - bullying behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated

- bullies understand that repeated acts may cause serious school sanctions if staff warnings and advice / guidance is not regarded or acted upon
- bullies who need help and support will receive it
- victims of bullying will receive support over a period of time if necessary
- all investigations into alleged bullying are recorded
- anti-bullying is a whole school responsibility and is addressed as such
- staff act as positive role models for the pupils
- the Governing Body is fully aware of its Anti-bullying policy and practice.

IT IS VITAL THAT PUPILS AND/OR PARENTS/CARERS TELL US THEIR CONCERNS. WITHOUT THIS INFORMATION WE CANNOT TAKE APPROPRIATE STEPS TO MANAGE SITUATIONS.

- 6.3 Every instance of alleged bullying will be judged individually and is likely to have its own set of unique circumstances for 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), i.e. **when representing the school / in school uniform.**

Although the Headteacher has the power to sanction behaviour that takes place outside the school premises, there are obvious limits on the ability of the school to investigate and therefore fairly apply such sanctions. Where bullying occurs outside school, parents or carers will be encouraged to report incidents to the police if appropriate and any other relevant schools or agencies will be informed and advice/support obtained. If the issues impact upon relationships in school, we reserve the right to carry out an investigation and take action if deemed necessary.

- 6.4 Pupils who experience/witness bullying should report it as soon as possible to a member of staff. Depending on the circumstances this could be:

- the classroom teacher
- Head of Year
- Form Tutor
- Lunch/break duty staff
- A member of SLT

- 6.5 If a pupil does not feel comfortable with reporting bullying then parents/carers should try to support them in doing so and may report bullying on their behalf.

- 6.6 Certain common procedures will be used when dealing with cases of alleged bullying. These are:

- The member of staff who interviews the pupil(s) concerned will record instances of alleged bullying
- When an allegation of bullying has been made, a member of staff 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/carers say that they do not wish any other pupils to be interviewed, then the investigation cannot proceed and no further action can be taken. This will also be recorded.
- 6.7 If bullying is proven, the parents/carers of the pupil(s) responsible will usually 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. Sanctions will be in line with the school's RAPAS/Actions and Consequences document and may involve: a verbal warning; referral to a member of SLT; detention; internal exclusion from all/some lessons; isolation at break/lunch. Fixed term exclusions may well be imposed and in extreme circumstances permanent exclusion considered.
- 6.9 It is important to recognise that accusations of bullying can cause upset to all parties and therefore pupils, staff and parents/carers should be cautious in making such accusations without foundation (see 3.3). Labelling individuals as a 'bully' will not necessarily help resolve matters, though it is important that bullying behaviour is recognised as such and tackled in accordance with this policy.
- 6.10 Although we recognise that victims of bullying and their parents/carers will want to know what sanctions have been applied, we have a policy of not publicising sanctions. Public 'shaming' of bullies is unlikely to help the situation and may make it worse. All pupils have a right to privacy. The school will take each case on its own merits and may inform victims and/or parents in general terms as to what action has been taken.
- 6.11 Other actions may be taken such as:
- moving form and/or teaching groups
 - separate seating
 - behaviour contracts being agreed between the pupils
 - mediation
 - exclusion from certain areas of the school premises
 - referral to outside agencies

7. Related policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour for Learning
- Disability Equality
- Equalities
- Child Protection
- Dealing with Abusive Parents
- Online Safety
- Race Equality
- SEND
- Social Media
- Protected Characteristics and Dealing with Prejudice-Related Incidents

Appendix 1

What to do if ...

.... you are having trouble understanding/getting on with work in lessons:

- o It is important that you ask your teacher for help – that is what they are there for! Don't be shy about letting teachers know that you don't understand something. Teachers want to help you to learn, so they will always try to find ways to make things easier.

... you have already spoken to your teacher about problems you are having, but things have not improved:

- o Ask to speak to the Head of Faculty in that subject. You can find them in their Faculty Office, or you can contact them via the school email system to let them know that you would like to speak to them.

.... you haven't understood a piece of homework:

- o Try to find the subject teacher before the lesson to let them know and see if they can help. You can also get help in the Homework Club which takes place every day before and after school in Room 113.

.... you are having trouble with friendships in school:

- o The first person to talk to is your Form Tutor. They will talk to you about the issue and may be able to offer some advice.
- o If things get too difficult then speak to your Head of Year, but it is a good idea to speak to your Form Tutor first.

.... you feel that you are being bullied, or you witness bullying taking place:

- o Speak to your Form Tutor first, they can talk to you about what has been going on.
- o If things get more serious, then speak to your Head of Year.

Sometimes it can be difficult to go and speak to staff, you may feel worried about bothering them, or unsure what to say. It is important to learn to speak to staff. If you do this in a respectful and responsible way, then they will always try to help and support you.