

# Habs

HABERDASHERS'  
ELSTREE SCHOOLS

## Anti-Bullying Policy

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Regulation	ISSR: Part 3, 10
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# 1 Related Information

## 1.1 Availability of Statutory Policies

All statutory policies are available on the School's website.

## 1.1 Statutory Guidance

This statutory policy has been reviewed in accordance with the following guidance:

10. The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that bullying at the School is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy.

## 1.2 Supporting Documents

The following related information is referred to in this policy:

Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying (November 2014)
Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff (November 2014)
Education Act 2011
Education and Inspections Act 2006
Equality Act 2010
Keeping children safe in education (September 2023)
Preventing and tackling bullying (July 2017)
School's code of conduct for using ICT
UKCIS Sharing of Nudes and Semi-Nudes

## 1.3 Terminology

**DSL** means Designated Safeguarding Lead.

**Expulsion** is the permanent dismissal of a Student from the School following serious misconduct formally recorded.

**Head**, where not explicitly defined, means either the Headmaster of the Boys' School or the Headmistress of the Girls' School.

**Parents** includes one or both parents, a legal guardian, or education guardian.

**School** means Haberdashers' Boys' School and Haberdashers' Girls' School, as now or in the future constituted (and any successor) part of Haberdashers' Aske's Elstree Schools Limited, the School Trustee of Haberdashers' Aske's Charity.

**School Rules** include any behaviour code or code of conduct.

**Student** or **Students** means any student or students in the School at any age.

**Suspension** is the temporary expulsion of a Student from the School.

## 2 Introduction

This policy is applicable to all Students at the School. It has been developed and reviewed by Students, staff, Parents and Governors. It applies to bullying of and by Students and also applies to bullying behaviour outside of the School. The School will respond to all allegations.

This policy takes into account the non-statutory DfE advice:

- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017)
- Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and School staff (2014)
- Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying (2014).

## 3 Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- To have a clear and agreed understanding of what constitutes bullying including cyberbullying
- To explain how the Schools aim to prevent bullying including helping Students understand why bullying is wrong
- To encourage Students to report cases of bullying, explain the procedure to do so and the support given to victims
- To establish what the Schools do when there is an allegation or suspicion that bullying has taken place including any sanctions or disciplinary actions
- To support the bullies themselves to overcome their difficulties
- To raise awareness of bullying through staff training
- To comply with the School's duties under the Equality Act 2010.

## 4 Definition of Bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Although the definition is 'repeated over time' action should still be taken and records made with one single incident, to prevent repeated actions and to enable the School to spot patterns. Bullying can take many forms, including prejudice-based bullying due to a protected characteristic. It may include hurtful comments and/or behaviour focusing on:

- Race
- Gender or gender reassignment
- Sexual orientation, including homophobia
- Religious and cultural differences
- Appearance and health conditions
- Home circumstances
- Disability and SEND
- Some kind of perceived difference
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Differences in academic performance.

All bullying is aggressive whether it is physical, verbal, non-verbal or emotional but not all aggression is bullying. It can be short or long term, overt or covert. It can be difficult for the victims to defend themselves against the bully.

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is the School's first priority but emotional bullying can be as or more damaging than physical; the School will make its own judgements about each specific case.

Bullying may involve an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways; it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online. Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. The Schools believe that education and early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and is not acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating. The Schools educates students about bullying stating how students can seek help and emphasising the Schools' zero tolerance to bullying.

## **5 Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially wider audience, as people forward on content at a click.

Cyberbullying includes the inappropriate use of social media and networking sites and the use of mobile device cameras to take photos or videos which may cause distress, fear or humiliation.

The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device has been seized by a member of staff, they can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all Schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

If an electronic device that is prohibited by the School Rules has been seized and the member of staff has reasonable grounds to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, then the School will give the device to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable. Material on the device that is suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, or that is a pornographic image of a child or an extreme pornographic image, will not be deleted prior to giving the device to the police.

Habs has systems in place to mitigate the risk of cyberbullying taking place at school by blocking access to inappropriate websites using firewall and filtering software.

Students sign an AUP which gives clear guidance about unacceptable behaviours in technology, and mobile phones are not allowed to be used during the day below Sixth Form.

## 6 Child-on-Child Abuse

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse). All staff should understand that even if there are no reports in their School, it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported.

Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying)
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, joke and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is now a criminal offence.
- Sharing of nudes or semi-nudes, also known as youth produced sexual imagery
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

## 7 Responding to Reports of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment (KCSIE (September 2023))

- Students may make a report via their Form Tutor/ Head of House/ Head of Year/ Head of Section/ School Nurse/ Counsellor/ DSL or any teacher they feel comfortable talking to. They can call the direct safeguarding line or email [safeguarding@habsboys.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@habsboys.org.uk) or [safeguarding@habsgirls.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@habsgirls.org.uk) including reports about harmful sexual behaviours.
- The School's initial response to a report from a child is important. It is essential that ALL victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe
- A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment nor should they ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report
- All staff are trained as part of the annual child protection and safeguarding training how to raise a concern with the DSL.
- If there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm', a referral will be made to appropriate external agencies.

### 7.1 Action following a Report of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

- Immediate consideration should be given as to how to best support and protect the victim and the alleged perpetrator (and any other children involved/impacted).
- The starting point regarding any report is the School's zero-tolerance approach to any sexual harassment, violence or abuse. Staff will be especially careful not to normalise or allow any implication that such behaviour can be dismissed as 'banter'. The School will carefully consider any report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment. The

DSL (or deputy) is likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the School's initial response.

- The DSL will take into account the wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. Victims should be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered. The school has to balance this against their duty to inform the authorities and will discuss action needed to be taken with the victim.
- The DSL will take into account the ages and developmental stages of the children involved and the nature of the alleged incident(s) including whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour.
- The DSL will take into account any power imbalance between the children e.g. is the alleged perpetrator significantly older, more mature or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?
- The DSL will consider if the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse and consider if there are any ongoing risks to the victim, other children or the School staff and also consider other related issues and wider context in line with contextual safeguarding.

**Please refer to the Safeguarding Policy for more detail on how Child-on-Child abuse is managed**

## **8 Safeguarding**

A bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern if there is reasonable cause to believe that the child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Where this is the case, the School staff should discuss with the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead and report their concerns to their local authority children's social care and work with them to take appropriate action.

No one person works on their own when dealing with a bullying incident and the threshold for referral is discussed in all cases. Trends in bullying cases are reported to Governors at the Annual Child Protection Review.

However, external support can be given to a Student whether or not it is deemed a child protection concern. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, the School may draw on a range of external services to support the Student who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

Bullying can take the following forms:

- Personal and emotional - including threats to exclude or actual exclusion from a group, persistent hurtful comments and gestures
- Physical – such as hitting, pinching, kicking, taking belongings, glaring 'looks,' gestures
- Verbal – name calling, insults, making offensive remarks including rumours
- Indirect – such as spreading rumours about someone verbally; spreading rumours about someone through malicious emails/text messages/posting of unpleasant comments on social networking sites; excluding from social groups; 'borrowing' of property; gestures, looks and silence; secretive letters
- Cyberbullying - including via all areas of the internet such as chat rooms, e-mails, msn, social networking sites e.g. Facebook, blogs, mobile phone calls, text messages and photographs (see also the School's code of conduct for the use of ICT).

## 9 Who is a Bully?

Bullies are not always easily recognisable – be aware of stereotypes and preconceptions. A student may temporarily become a bully as a result of some traumatic event e.g. a death, a family break up.

Bullies tend to:

- Be assertive and aggressive
- Lack empathy
- Have low self esteem
- Lack guilt - they rationalise that the victim somehow deserves the treatment
- Tend to join in group jokes at an individual's expense
- Condone, tolerate and encourage hurtful behaviour
- Seek attention.

An effective bully will continue with their behaviour. Bullies need to change their behaviour (it is the behaviour not the person which is condemned) and in order to do this they will need support.

## 10 Who is a Victim?

Staff should be aware of stereotypes; bullies pick on the vulnerable but who is vulnerable may not be obvious. A Student may be bullied because they seem different in some way, wear glasses, are overweight or have other pronounced physical characteristics. On the other hand, they may be bullied because they are clever, attractive or have a particular talent. One sign that a Student is being bullied is a change in the behaviour or academic progress of the Student.

Other signs of being bullied may include a combination of the following:

- Under-achievement academically
- Absenteeism
- Reluctance to come into the School
- Crying easily
- Low self esteem
- Sitting alone in lessons or at lunchtime
- Opting out
- Spending 'free time' alone
- Anxiety and insecurity
- Younger Students may follow staff
- Over dependence on adult company
- Losing books, pens, money etc.
- Becoming aggressive or disruptive
- Becoming withdrawn/depressed
- Making frequent visits to the medical room or toilet
- Being jumpy when a cyber-message is received
- Suffering from headaches, stomach ache, anxiety, irritability
- Sleeping problems.



Some victims of bullying may bury the experience but most will exhibit some of the signs listed above. Bullying is serious and can cause psychological damage and even suicide. Victims may see themselves as inadequate and friendless and may begin to feel they deserve the treatment they are getting.

## **11 Preventing Bullying**

Raising awareness of the problems of bullying is an important part of Students' pastoral education. In the Senior School, this is delivered in a variety of ways. Relevant pastoral staff reiterate messages around the subject of bullying towards the beginning of each academic year. The message given to all Students is that bullying is entirely unacceptable, and that all Students share responsibility for preventing bullying from happening by making it socially unacceptable. In the Pre-Preparatory, Preparatory and Junior Schools the subject of bullying is dealt with in PSHCEE (Boys' School)/PSHCE (Girls' School) lessons, assemblies and, if necessary, at any time should it be deemed appropriate. Students are taught the part they can play to avoid bullying by not tolerating this conduct when they find themselves to be bystanders. Students are actively involved in designing the School's anti-bullying posters. Annual Student questionnaires include questions on anti-bullying to help inform staff when reviewing policy.

There are procedures in place to ensure the adequate supervision of Students around the School campuses. The School is aware that lunchtimes and break times are the most obvious occasions when bullying can take place. Regular staff duty patrols are organised to make sure that there is a visible staff presence around the site, including the outdoor areas. Prefects in the Senior School are trained to share in this responsibility and have particular duties around lunch queues and at break times for example. Sports teachers are particularly vigilant in preventing opportunities for bullying arising in their area. All staff and particularly form tutors watch for early signs of distress in Students which may include deterioration in work, spurious illnesses, isolation, erratic attendance and sudden changes in behaviour. All teaching staff are trained in classroom management e.g., deciding groupings and partners, can encourage Student awareness and help avoid possible tensions.

## **12 Dealing with Bullying**

All Students are strongly encouraged to tell a member of staff if they are being bullied or if they know/think others are being bullied. They are encouraged to think of this as positive behaviour and Parents are invited to share with the School any reports of bullying they hear from their child. It is important that staff take any allegations seriously and report any alleged bullying behaviour to an appropriate senior leader at the School. The School also has an anonymous reporting system and details are shared with the students at the start of the year. There are posters around the School with details about how to report.

These staff will then arrange for the matter to be investigated, which will include discussions with the victim, the alleged bully and any witnesses and an appropriate strategy will be put in place for dealing with the matter. Parents will be consulted in the event of repeated or substantial allegations being made.

Every effort is made to provide prompt, sensitive and effective support for victim and bully. Support from external services will be sought where appropriate. The motivation behind the bullying behaviour will be considered. Frequent monitoring occurs after incidents to prevent repetition.

A record of incidents of bullying is kept by the Designated Safeguarding Lead of the School and regularly reviewed to enable patterns over time to be identified.

## **13 Sanctions**

Cases of bullying are handled sensitively by all staff at the School. It is recognised that these are difficult and complex situations which need to be dealt with in a thoughtful manner. Careful calibration of the School's response, so as to ensure that the incident is dealt with seriously without overreaction is at the heart of the School's policy. The key aim of the School's pastoral action will be to bring the bullying to a halt, and to help the bully understand the inappropriate nature and impact of their actions and to provide a deterrent effect. Disciplinary measures will be applied fairly, consistently and reasonably taking into account any special educational needs or disabilities of the Student and the needs of vulnerable Students. Sanctions may include staying inside at playtime (Junior School); a School detention; a series of detentions; suspension from the School; in the most serious of cases sanctions may include expulsion.

In severe cases of bullying or persistent bullying, strong sanctions will be applied including suspension or expulsion. In relatively less serious cases the School will apply its full range of other sanctions. Parents may be called into the School to speak with a senior member of the pastoral team or where appropriate another member of the Senior Leadership Team.

It should also be noted that, although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal act in the UK, some types of harassing or threatening behaviour or communications could be a criminal offence. If the School feels that an offence may have been committed the Head may decide to seek assistance from the police. It is vital that Parents and the School work together to ensure that all Students are aware of the serious consequences of getting involved in anything that might be seen to be bullying of any kind.

Bullying can have extremely serious implications for the wellbeing of Students at any School and can lead to physical or psychological damage for both the victim and the bully. It is recognised that a perpetrator of bullying is usually an unhappy Student, who has often experienced bullying themselves. The School makes every effort to support the perpetrators of bullying, by helping them to recognise the error of their ways and offering counselling where appropriate.

## **14 Bullying which Occurs Outside the School Premises**

The School staff members have the power to discipline Students for misbehaving outside the School premises. Sections 90 and 91 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006 say that a School's disciplinary powers can be used to address Students' conduct when they are not on School premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of School staff, but only if it would be reasonable for the School to regulate Students' behaviour in those circumstances. This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the School

premises, such as on the School or public transport, outside local shops, or in a town or village centre. Where bullying outside of the School is reported to the School staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The Head will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a Student. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed. While the School staff members have the power to discipline Students for bullying that occurs outside of the School, they can only impose the disciplinary sanction and implement that sanction on the School premises or when the Student is under the lawful control of the School staff, for instance on a School trip.

## **15 Staff Training**

### **15.1 At the Boys' School**

As part of the regular mandatory training staff are reminded of the Anti-Bullying Policy. All members of staff are trained in procedures to prevent and deal with bullying as a critical part of child protection training, and issues are regularly discussed in tutor, Head of House and Head of Section meetings, the Pastoral Board meeting in the Senior School and meetings in the Preparatory and Pre-Preparatory Schools. Prefects and coach stewards are also encouraged to report any concerns they have over bullying via the Transport Manager.

Some staff have undertaken training in LGBTQ+ and dealing with banter and the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language. The School organises a Diversity Week to address issues related to bullying and homophobia and all staff have undertaken an EduCare course on Diversity and Inclusion. Assembly and PSHCEE programmes regularly address issues of bullying, acts of kindness, friendship, body image and sexual identity. As part of their initial training, prefects or House Mentors discuss various scenarios and are made aware of the possible signs of bullying that they should look out for.

### **15.2 At the Girls' School**

As part of the regular mandatory training staff are reminded of the Anti-Bullying Policy. All members of staff are trained in procedures to prevent and deal with bullying as a critical part of child protection training, and issues are regularly discussed in tutor and Pastoral Leaders meetings, and in Staff Briefings in the Junior School. Prefects and coach stewards are also encouraged to report any concerns they have over bullying via the Transport Manager. This is reinforced for all staff during anti-bullying week and for those leading PSHCE and form time sessions which address issues related to bullying, diversity and identity. Additionally, assemblies throughout the academic year reinforce issues about bullying, as well as acts of kindness, resilience, body image and respect for the School community and wider community. As part of their initial training, prefects discuss various scenarios involving bullying and are made aware of the possible signs of bullying that they should look out for. All staff have undergone Diversity and Inclusion training, including the importance of dealing with "banter" and avoiding prejudice-based language.