

# HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL



## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

“The very highest standards of conduct, respect, effort and personal attainment are our goal.”

*Hitchin Girls' School Prospectus*

This is a statutory policy required of all academies as part of School Behaviour management under the Independent School Standards regulations.

Policy implemented: Spring 2013

Review Date: October 2018

Governing Body approval: October 2018

# **WHOLE SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

## **STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Everyone at Hitchin Girls' School has the right to feel welcome, safe, secure and happy. Only if this is the case will all members of the school community be able to achieve their potential. Bullying of any sort prevents this from happening and obstructs equality of opportunity. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Hitchin Girls' School. It is everyone's responsibility to banish bullying and this policy contains guidelines for doing so.

Where bullying exists students must feel confident to activate Hitchin Girls' School anti-bullying systems. We aim to challenge attitudes about bullying behaviour, increase understanding for bullied students and help build an anti-bullying ethos in the school. We are a TELLING school. This means that *anyone* who knows or suspects bullying is happening is encouraged to tell a member of staff.

This policy applies on school premises and during school hours, on visits and trips, and school events and other occasions related to the school, and any occasions when the students are the responsibility of the staff. The policy applies when the students are off-site on study leave or work experience.

When students are travelling to and from school in uniform they are considered to be representing the school and therefore the school rules apply. This includes Sixth Form students, who remain subject to school jurisdiction even if off site.

The school reserves the right to take interest in and impose sanctions for any misconduct by any student at any time, beyond the bounds of the school day, week and term, where such misconduct prejudices the good order and welfare of the school and its students. (Based on DfE guidance 2015 - please also see our Behaviour for Learning Policy)

## **OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY**

- All governors, teaching and support staff, students and parents/carers should have an understanding of what bullying is and the effect of bullying on others physically, emotionally and legally.
- All governors, teaching and support staff should know the school policy on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported or suspected.
- All students and parents/carers should know the school policy on bullying and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously and we will always take firm action against it. Students and parents/carers should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

## **WHAT IS BULLYING**

Bullying can happen to anyone. There are three points which most definitions share:

- The behaviour is intended to cause distress
- The behaviour is repeated
- There is an imbalance of power between the perpetrator/s of bullying and the target

At Hitchin Girls' School, we work hard to ensure that all students know the difference between bullying and simply 'falling out'.

The DfE document 'Preventing and tackling bullying: What is bullying?' (July 2017) states:

'Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children or perceived differences.'

The document goes on to state:

'Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case'.

Bullying can take place between students, between students and staff or between staff, and can include:

- ✓ name-calling, taunting, mocking and making offensive comments
- ✓ offensive graffiti
- ✓ excluding people from groups
- ✓ gossiping and spreading hurtful or untrue rumours
- ✓ kicking, hitting, pushing
- ✓ extortion of money or property
- ✓ damaging, destroying or taking away belongings
- ✓ acts of aggression or physical abuse on whatever scale
- ✓ other malicious acts or threats
- ✓ cyber bullying – including sending inappropriate, offensive or degrading text messages, emails or instant messages via the internet, setting up websites or social media accounts designed to embarrass or upset individuals or excluding them from social networking sites
- ✓ Inciting others to indulge in any of the above.

Students may be bullied for a variety of reasons, including:

- ✓ ethnic background, religion/belief or culture
- ✓ disability, special educational needs or a particular ability
- ✓ sexual orientation
- ✓ gender (including sexualised bullying)
- ✓ gender reassignment
- ✓ appearance or health conditions including pregnancy and maternity
- ✓ social or economic status (poverty, class)
- ✓ age/maturity
- ✓ home circumstances – certain groups such as students in public care, or young carers, or those with same sex parents/carers or whose parents/carers have mental health difficulties may be particularly vulnerable.

The school recognises that each shall be treated with equal severity.

## **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS**

A student may display signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school or change their usual route
- doesn't want to go to school on the school/public bus or train
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routines

- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins truanting
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions that go 'missing'
- asks for money or starts stealing money
- has dinner or other monies continually 'lost'
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- stops eating at school and/or at home
- becomes aggressive, disruptive, unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- is frightened to express what's wrong
- shows signs of/or discloses self-harm
- gives excuses for any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered as a possibility and should be investigated.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

All members of the school community have a responsibility to follow our 'Charter of Respect' and know what to do if somebody breaks the 'Charter of Respect' and in doing so challenge bullying if it occurs. All staff at the school are made aware of the procedures that they should follow if an incidence of bullying is brought to their attention. The first point of contact for parents should be the student's Form Tutor or the Pastoral Support Team and then the Head of Year. Extended Leadership Team member Mrs K Rowe has ultimate responsibility for the Anti-bullying policy alongside the Headteacher.

## **ACTIONS TO TACKLE BULLYING**

Prevention is better than cure so at Hitchin Girls' School we are vigilant for signs of bullying and always take seriously reports of bullying. We use the curriculum and other appropriate times to reinforce the ethos of the school and help students to develop strategies that combat bullying-type behaviour. We strive to organise our community in order to minimise opportunities for bullying, for example, teacher supervision during open access. We use a variety of methods to help students prevent bullying. As and when appropriate these may include:

- School 'Charter of Respect'
- Statement of Rights, Classroom and Community Ground Rules
- Positive Behaviour Reports, Pastoral Support Contracts and Pastoral Support Programmes
- Use of circle time and managing emotions sessions through Pastoral Support
- Anti-Bullying workshops and use of outside agencies as part of the Learning 4 Life curriculum
- Display materials around the school by a variety of means (posters, website etc.)
- Regular discussions about bullying and why it matters including during assemblies
- eSafety workshops and promotion of the eSafety and ICT Acceptable Use policy
- Bullying surveys
- Kirkland Rowell student survey
- Anti-bullying week activities

Students are told they must report any incidence of bullying to an adult within the school, and that when another student tells them that they are being bullied, or if they see bullying taking place, it is their responsibility to report this to a member of staff.

## **PROCEDURES**

All reported incidents of bullying are investigated and taken seriously. A record is kept of all incidents. If bullying includes racist or homophobic abuse, it is reported to a member of SLG.

The following illustrates the steps that may be taken when dealing with incidents:

- If bullying/hurtful behaviour is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who was witness to it or the person to whom the bullying was reported
- An account of the incident is recorded on a 'Pupil Intervention Sheet' and statements are collected.
- These are passed on to the relevant investigating staff member.
- The incident and outcome is recorded on SIMS by the investigating member of staff.
- Form tutors/class teachers are kept informed and if bullying persists, the tutor/teacher will advise other members of staff as appropriate.
- Parents are kept informed.
- Support systems and/or sanctions in line with our Behaviour for Learning policy are used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned.

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

The parents of both bullies and victims are informed about incidents and the action taken, or to be taken, by the school. Parents are asked to support the strategies which are proposed to tackle the problem. The bully will also be reminded of the possible consequences of bullying and the sanctions imposed for repeated incidents will be clearly explained. If appropriate, the students will undergo a process of reconciliation. Bullying sanctions will be issued in conjunction with the Behaviour for Learning Policy. Persistent bullies may be excluded from school. Parents are reminded regularly through letters and newsletters to inform their children that they must tell someone if they are being bullied. Parents of students moving up from KS2 to KS3 are given a booklet during transition advising them of the steps to take should they feel their child is being bullied.

If a parent is concerned about bullying they should contact the Form Tutor in the first instance and then the Head of Year. If a parent wishes to take the matter further they should contact the Headteacher.

If parents/carers remain unhappy, having followed the school's standard procedures, the school may refer them to relevant outside agencies, such as Herts Young Homeless. Further support for parents/carers can be found at Family Lives (formerly Parentline Plus) on 0808 800 2222 or via the website address [www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk).

## **EXTERNAL AGENCY INVOLVEMENT**

Where necessary we will call on outside resources to aid an investigation, or offer support to a victim and/or the bully. Such agencies include the police, School Health, Attendance Improvement Officer, Youth Connexions Personal Advisor, Outreach Support Workers and the School Counsellor. This will always be done in partnership with parents.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Hitchin Girls' School reviews this policy every 3 years and assesses its implementation and effectiveness on an ongoing basis. This policy is to be promoted and implemented throughout the school. The school also analyses all forms of relevant data to inform future practice and policy.

# Charter of Respect

I will respect others regardless of their:



We are all individuals in this school.  
Look for the best in people rather than the worst.



## ***What happens if somebody breaks the Charter of Respect?***

**❖ DO NOT IGNORE IT**

**❖ REPORT THE INCIDENT TO A MEMBER OF STAFF**

**Anyone who knows that the Charter of Respect has been broken is expected to tell a member of staff.**

**At Hitchin Girls' School we believe such incidents are wrong and are prepared to sort them out.**

**The incident will then be investigated and appropriate action taken.**

***Remember, the system is there to support you!***