

# HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL



## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

**2025-2026**

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# Aspiration Perseverance Kindness Respect Positivity

## Community - Family - Relationships

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This policy has been written with reference to the guidance set out in the Department for Education's (DfE) publication, '[Preventing and tackling bullying - Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies](#)' and '[Cyberbullying - Advice for headteachers and school staff](#)'.

Parents/carers are also signposted to the Department for Education's publication, '[Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying](#)'. Please also see section 8 of this policy for additional useful websites.

Hitchin Girls' School uses the following two platforms to record data around incidents of bullying: [Go4Schools](#) and [CPOMS](#) (Child Protection Monitoring System).

## 1. Introduction

- Everybody at Hitchin Girls' School has the right to feel welcome, safe, happy and supported and should be free from all forms of unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour, discrimination and harassment.
- Our aim is to create an environment in which all members of the school treat each other with kindness and respect, are tolerant and celebrate diversity.
- We are committed to working with all stakeholders to create and maintain a community where our five core values - positivity, aspiration, perseverance, kindness and respect - are upheld and unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour, discrimination and harassment are not tolerated.
- We take bullying behaviour seriously; it is everyone's responsibility to prevent and stop bullying behaviour and this policy contains guidelines for doing so. Our key aim is to prevent bullying behaviour as far as is reasonably practicable, by reinforcing a positive ethos and being proactive in our response to both staff and students.
- Our Anti-Bullying policy is underpinned by the school's Behaviour for Learning policy which should be read in conjunction with this document.

## 2. Definition of bullying behaviour

- Bullying behaviour can be experienced by anyone. While there is no single definition of bullying behaviour, the DfE identifies three points which most definitions share:
  - ❖ The behaviour is intended to cause distress
  - ❖ The behaviour is repeated over time
  - ❖ Many experts say that bullying behaviour involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator/s and the target which could manifest itself in several ways

- Preventing and tackling bullying, Department for Education (DfE), 2017) states that:

*'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, cyberbullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences'.*

- It goes on to say:

*'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'.*

- We recognise that bullying behaviour can take place between students, between students and staff or between staff and that bullying behaviour can take many different forms. It can be direct or indirect:
  - ❖ Physical: nudging, pushing, jostling, punching, kicking, spitting
  - ❖ Verbal: name-calling, threatening, teasing, sarcasm, spreading rumours, belittling
  - ❖ Emotional/psychological: isolating others/excluding individuals, hiding or damaging property, tormenting or intimidating individuals, threatening gestures, spreading rumours, ridicule, humiliation, manipulation, coercion
  - ❖ Sexual: unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films
  - ❖ Cyber/online: malicious calls or messages via emails, texts or posting on social media, sharing photos or private information online, creating fake accounts to impersonate or harass someone, social exclusion
  - ❖ Prejudice-based: targeting someone because of their actual or perceived identity, such as race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or gender (often related to the Equality Act's protected characteristics)

Please note that the above list is intended to *indicate the types of bullying behaviours but is not an exhaustive list*. Hitchin Girls' School records incidents in line with these categories.

- A checklist to help all members of the school community to establish if an incident is unkind/hurtful or bullying behaviour can be found in Appendix A.
- All staff will, where relevant, help the students to distinguish between simply 'falling out', one-off instances of hurtful or unkind behaviour and bullying behaviour.

### **3. Preventing and tackling unkind/hurtful behaviour and bullying behaviour**

- Unkind/hurtful or bullying behaviour of any kind is unacceptable. It is important that such behaviour is dealt with effectively, as it could affect the emotional and educational development of both the young person who displays the behaviour (perpetrator) and the young person who has been in receipt of it (target).
- It is essential that we create a climate of trust and confidence in school. Students should feel able to speak out about unkind/hurtful and bullying behaviour, understanding that it will not be tolerated and be secure in the knowledge that it will be dealt with effectively and sensitively. Students need to know that confiding in an adult about such an issue will make matters better and not worse.
- The Charter of Kindness and Respect, created in conjunction with the students and set out in Appendix B reinforces the fact that members of the school community must work together to create a safe positive environment in which unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour, harassment, physical threats or abuse and intimidation are not tolerated and where students are safe and feel safe and everyone is treated respectfully.
- The school will ensure that students know where to go, what to do and who to speak to if unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour occurs. They will be signposted to speak to a member of the safeguarding team, a trusted adult in school or at home or to report an incident via the Google Form available in their tutor group Google Classroom.

- Staff will reinforce the key message that we are a **telling** school and which means that *anyone* who knows or suspects hurtful/unkind/bullying behaviour is happening has a responsibility to report it. When it comes to bullying behaviour think **STOP**:

Several	Start
Times	Telling
On	Other
Purpose	People

- The school will take opportunities to reinforce the ethos of the school and raise students' awareness of key issues such as unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour, respect and relationships with others, cyber-bullying, equality and prejudice related behaviour, social rules and tolerance through a variety of methods. This will involve the Learning for Life curriculum, the tutor time programme including Headstrong, assemblies and the social action project(s) of our trained team of Diana Award Anti-Bullying Ambassadors (click [here](#) for further information on this programme).
- The school will take responsibility for non-teaching parts of the day by having staff on duty.
- The school will assure students that they will be listened to and incidents acted upon, in line with the Behaviour for Learning policy. Furthermore, the school reserves the right to maintain jurisdiction over students and offences caused off-site in relation to any form of unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour (including cyber bullying).
- The school will also seek opportunities for student voice and student perception of unkind/hurtful bullying behaviour through the SLT (Student Leadership Team) and regular student panels in addition to consulting with parents/carers and staff through surveys.

## 4. Roles and responsibilities

### Board of Trustees will:

- Monitor the Anti-Bullying policy and work with the Assistant Headteachers with responsibility for behaviour, to review the frequency and type of unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour incidents that have occurred and the support that has been put in place.

### Headteacher and Senior Leadership Group will:

- Ensure that the Anti-Bullying policy is reviewed in line with DfE guidance.
- Ensure that the Anti-Bullying policy is used and followed by all members of staff so that the school upholds its duty to promote the safety and well-being of young people.
- Support Heads of Year in managing serious and persistent incidents of bullying behaviour.
- Have robust self-evaluation procedures in place to regularly monitor students', parents/carers' and staff perception of unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour.

**All staff will:**

- Follow the school Charter of Kindness and Respect and ensure that difference and diversity is recognised, valued and celebrated.
- Take all forms of unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour seriously, and seek to prevent it from taking place.
- Need to remember their duty to report unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour and their responsibility to challenge unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour if it occurs.
- Be made aware of the procedures that they should follow if an alleged incident of unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour occurs in order to respond effectively.
- Issue consequences/sanctions to those students demonstrating unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour in line with the school's Behaviour for Learning policy.
- Use Go4Schools and CPOMS to record incidents of unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour.
- Be expected to present positive role models to students.
- Where relevant, talk with the students in their care about unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour and what they should do as an individual if they are on the receiving end, or are witness to or are aware of any unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour.
- Be vigilant in recognising when unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour may be occurring and understand that bullying behaviour can be a form of child-on-child abuse as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

**Parents/carers will:**

- Contact the school immediately if they are concerned that their child has been the target of unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour or suspect that their child may be the perpetrator. This can be done via a telephone call, by email (please use the general admin email [admin@hgs.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@hgs.herts.sch.uk) if you need to contact staff) or via the school website by completing a contact form found in the 'contact us' section. Please see the school's Communications Policy for more details.
- Support the school in reducing incidents of unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour by reinforcing that such behaviour is never acceptable and modelling positive relationships - being kind and respectful to others.
- Monitor their child's access to and use of the internet and mobile technology.
- Work with their child and discuss together how to handle difficult situations.
- Make sure their child knows where to go for help
- Support the strategies which are proposed to tackle any concerns.
- Exercise reasonable confidentiality around incidents in which the child is involved and must not attempt to resolve matters informally.

- Accept the limited input school can have when it comes to cyber/online bullying behaviour issues. Where we feel it is necessary, we will recommend to parents/carers that they contact the police to help resolve the matter.

**Students will:**

- Follow the school's Behaviour for Learning policy and the Charter of Kindness and Respect and ensure that individual differences and diversity are recognised, valued and celebrated.
- Ensure that they understand the procedure to report an incident should it occur.
- Recognise that it is their responsibility to take action if somebody breaks the Charter of Kindness and Respect by reporting it to a trusted adult in school (or at home) or via the Google Form link that can be found in each tutor group Google Classroom.
- Be an **upstander** not a **bystander** - **report it**.
- Remember to keep on letting people know if a situation is not resolved.
- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity. This includes gossiping about a situation with others, in person or online.

## 5. Procedures to deal with unkind/hurtful behaviour or bullying

- All witnessed or reported incidents of unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour are taken seriously.
- They are investigated and recorded in line with the procedures outlined in the table below with sanctions applied as required in line with the school's Behaviour for Learning policy.
- Staff will support any student who is the target of unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour to help them feel safe in addition to working with perpetrators in order to help them reflect on and change their behaviour.
- Staff will work in partnership with the parents/carers of all students involved and where needed seek to involve the support of external agencies.

Stage	Action/Staff Responsible
1	<p>Incident witnessed or reported in one of the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Witnessed by a member of staff</li> <li>• Disclosure by the student directly to a member of staff</li> <li>• Disclosure reported to staff by the parent/carer of the student</li> <li>• Disclosure reported to staff by another adult or student</li> </ul> <p>In the event of a disclosure, this may be via a conversation, in writing or via the Google Form link which can be found <a href="#">here</a> and is posted in each tutor group Google Classroom.</p> <p>Refer to <b>1a</b> if the incident has been witnessed or <b>1b</b> if the incident has been disclosed.</p>
1a	<p>When an incident is <b>witnessed</b> by a member of staff, the staff member uses the '<b>Unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour</b>' checklist (see <i>Appendix A</i>) in order to determine if the behaviour that has been observed is unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour.</p> <p>If the behaviour is unkind/hurtful, the member of staff will then issue an appropriate sanction based on the nature of the incident (verbal warning, C1 or C2) in line with the consequence ladder which will then be recorded on Go4Schools and CPOMS.</p> <p>If it is deemed to be a bullying behaviour incident, the member of staff must refer the incident to the relevant Head of Year as soon as possible (stage 2) and make a record of the incident on CPOMS.</p>
1b	<p>For an incident that has been <b>disclosed</b> from any of the sources identified in stage 1, it must be referred to the relevant Head of Year as soon as possible (stage 2) with the person who took the initial disclosure making a record of the incident on CPOMS.</p>
2	<p>The Head of Year will complete an investigation and use the '<b>Unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour</b>' checklist (see <i>Appendix A</i>) in order to determine if the behaviour that has been disclosed is unkind, hurtful or bullying behaviour.</p> <p>Following the outcome of the investigation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If it is deemed unkind or hurtful behaviour, <b>route A</b> at stage 3 will be followed.</li> <li>• If it is deemed to be bullying behaviour, <b>route B</b> at stage 3 will be actioned.</li> <li>• If there is no evidence of either unkind, hurtful or bullying behaviour following a disclosure, the alleged incident must be recorded on CPOMS and then stage 4 onwards will be followed.</li> </ul>

Stage	Action/Staff Responsible	
3	<p><b><u>Route A: Unkind behaviour has occurred</u></b></p> <p>The Head of Year informs relevant staff and the student(s) involved that this is an incident of unkind/hurtful behaviour.</p> <p>An appropriate sanction based on the severity of the incident (verbal warning, C1 or C2) in line with the consequence ladder which will then be recorded on Go4Schools.</p> <p>Parents/carers will be informed via Go4Schools for a C1 or C2 incident. For a C2 incident a 60 minute detention will be issued and parent/carers will be contacted either by the Form Tutor or the Head of Year.</p> <p>The Head of Year will write up the incident on CPOMS confirming which type(s) of unkind/hurtful behaviour has occurred and the actions taken.</p>	<p><b><u>Route B: Bullying has occurred</u></b></p> <p>The Head of Year will discuss the outcome of their investigation with one of the Assistant Headteachers with responsibility for behaviour. For serious incidents of bullying behaviour, the Headteacher will be consulted.</p> <p>An appropriate sanction based on the severity of the incident (a minimum of a C3) will be determined in line with the consequence ladder which will then be recorded on Go4Schools.</p> <p>External agencies such as the police will be engaged if necessary.</p> <p>Parents/carers will be contacted by either the Head of Year or one of the Assistant Headteachers with responsibility for behaviour.</p> <p>The Head of Year will write up the incident on CPOMS confirming which type(s) of bullying behaviour has occurred and the actions taken.</p>
4	Support will be provided for both parties (targets and perpetrators) as needed (see section 6 for more details).	
5	Sanctions will be put in place as required in line with the Behaviour for Learning policy.	
6	Monitor any future behaviour.	

Staff must ensure that when adding an incident to CPOMS that the correct type(s) of unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour are recorded e.g. verbal or physical or cyber/online.

## 6. Student support and early intervention

- Staff will support any student who has been the target of unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour to help them feel safe in addition to supporting the perpetrators in order to help them reflect on and change their behaviour.
- This may just require a targeted conversation with the student and/or communication with parents/carers. However, there are a whole range of intervention strategies and avenues of support used by the school with both the targets and perpetrators of bullying behaviour, depending on the needs of the student. These interventions are often part of a wider approach that involves the wellbeing and mental health of these students.
- Sources of support that may be offered to students (both targets and perpetrators) or that students and parents/carers are signposted to (where appropriate) may include (this is *not an exhaustive list*):

Alumina	ELSA Mentoring	Protective behaviour support (in-house)
Alternative start/end times to the day	ESMA	Reduced timetable (time-limited)
Art Therapist	GRIT	Progress card/PSP
Assisted Learning (Sixth Form)	Health and Wellbeing Coach	Respite programme through the ESC
Attendance Officer	Health and Wellbeing Coach (SEND focus)	Sandbox
BfL/Student Support contracts	Hitchin Educational Foundation	School Nursing Team
Behaviour Support Hub	In school counselling	SENDSAS/ASKSALI
Bereavement Counselling	Key worker/Meet and greet	Services for Young People
Break and/or lunchtime supervision	Mediation	Social Services
CAMHS referral	Mental Health Team Practitioner	Step 2
Child Protection referral	NESSiE counselling and services	Targeted Youth Service
Careers support	NHESC Outreach Targeted Support Worker	Tilehouse Street Counselling
Drugs and alcohol counselling	Pastoral team support/mentoring	Wednesday Programme (ESC)
Day release for work placement (KS4)	PCSO support	Virtual School advisor
Educational Psychologist	Peer mentor	Young Minds
EHCP	PHASE mentoring	121 staff mentoring

- Hitchin Girls' School website also contains an [A-Z of information for parents/carers](#).

## 7. Review and monitoring

- The Anti-Bullying Policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees. The outcome of the review and changes to policy, resolutions and solutions will be communicated to all those involved and incorporated into an amended Anti-Bullying policy.
- The processes and procedures will be monitored by the Headteacher and the Assistant Headteachers with responsibility for behaviour to ensure they are consistently and fairly applied by staff.
- Staff will record incidents of unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour via the Go4Schools platform and CPOMS.
- Form Tutors, Heads of Department, Heads of Year and the Assistant Headteachers with responsibility for behaviour will use this data to monitor the progress of students and intervene to support if there are trends and patterns in individual or collective behaviour over time. This includes looking for repeated behaviour instances at a certain time of day or with certain teachers.
- Half-termly analysis of unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour incidents will be carried out in order to assess the implementation and effectiveness of the policy and reported to the Senior Leadership Group.
- Analysing the data by type, protected characteristics and other vulnerable groups will not only inform policy and practice but also ensure the school is meeting its duties under the Equality Act 2010.
- The school's self-evaluation programme, particularly student voice panels and both parent/carer and staff surveys will contribute to the successful monitoring of the Anti-Bullying policy and help to inform both policy and practice.
- Key findings and actions will be reported termly to the Board of Trustees.

## 8. Useful websites

- The following websites provide useful information around anti-bullying.

<https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk>

<https://www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying>

<https://diana-award.org.uk/our-programmes-and-initiatives/anti-bullying>



## **APPENDIX A: Unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour checklist**

The incident witnessed or reported is not bullying behaviour on this occasion because it was:

- ❖ The first unkind/hurtful behaviour incident between these students
- ❖ Falling out between friends after a quarrel, disagreement or misunderstanding
- ❖ Conflict that got out of hand (should not happen again)
- ❖ Activities that all parties have consented to and enjoyed (check for subtle coercion) but got out of hand

The incident witnessed or reported was bullying behaviour because:

- ❖ Hurt (physical/verbal/indirect/cyber) has been intentionally/knowingly caused and it is a repeated incident or experience (the behaviour has been repeated over time). There may also have been an imbalance of power involved and either the target feels they cannot defend themselves or the perpetrator is exploiting their power (size/age/popularity)



### APPENDIX B: Charter of Kindness and Respect

## Hitchin Girls' School Charter of Kindness and Respect

Everybody at Hitchin Girls' School should be free from all forms of unkind/hurtful/bullying behaviour, discrimination and harassment. It is of paramount importance that all members of our community recognise and value that every individual is unique and treat people fairly and equally.

All members of Hitchin Girls' School should therefore be kind and accept and respect individual differences. They must not discriminate against, harass or engage in bullying behaviour towards any other person based on the following (or any other) characteristics:

Age	Pronunciation of name	Marriage and civil partnership	Gender identity	Religion or belief	Learning preferences
Disability	Family, Friends and Caregivers	Pregnancy and maternity	Wealth	Sex	Attainment/Grades
Gender reassignment	Past and background	Race	Body shape, size and appearance	Sexual orientation	Hobbies and interests

Remember:

- ❖ To respect yourself and be proud of who you are
- ❖ To celebrate each other's successes
- ❖ That it is ok not to be ok
- ❖ Treat everyone as you would wish to be treated
- ❖ Kindness is key
- ❖ To return a favour and pay it forward
- ❖ To **THINK** before you speak  
(Is it True, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary or Kind)

If you see or hear somebody breaking Hitchin Girls' School Charter of Kindness and Respect then it is your responsibility to take action by reporting it to a trusted adult in school (or at home) or via the Google Form link that can be found in your tutor group Google Classroom.

***Always be an upstander, not a bystander - report it***