



HARRODIAN

Anti-Bullying Policy

Aims

Harrodian believes that every member of its community has the right to be safe and happy, and to feel that they will be protected if they feel vulnerable. All members of the School community must be aware that bullying is always unacceptable. We wish instead to foster an environment where caring and supportive relationships allow individuals to flourish without fear, and where every community member feels able to report bullying if it occurs, knowing their concerns will be acted upon effectively.

Definitions of Bullying

Bullying is the deliberately hurtful behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, which causes other individuals to feel unhappy, insecure, threatened or excluded.

It is important to note that not every instance of unkind or harmful behaviour is bullying. Such instances can occur without the repeated, targeted or deliberate aspects that constitute a bullying incident (as described above).

There are many different types of bullying. The main types are listed below. In practice, they often overlap. Some examples of the types of behaviour, which fit into each group, are given below. (The list is not exhaustive.)

- **Physical:** Pushing, kicking, hitting, taking or hiding belongings (including money), inappropriate body language and invasion of space to intimidate, any use of violence.
- **Verbal:** Name-calling, teasing, sarcasm, insulting, chanting and joke-telling at another's expense. We also consider that unwanted phone messages or answer-machine messages from mobile phones or landline phones constitute bullying behaviour.
- **Written:** Graffiti, writing on people's belongings and schoolwork, signs and symbols left on desks or lockers and unwanted online messages.
- **Emotional:** Being deliberately unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, spreading rumours, intimidating looks.
- **Gestures:** Unkind signs and looks, pointing and sniggering, laughing behind someone's back, turning one's back on someone with the intention of making someone feel left out or excluded.

- **Sexual:** Unwanted physical contact or invasion of personal space, uninvited propositions, sexually abusive or intimidating comments, including making inappropriate comments about appearances.
- **Racist:** Inappropriate or insulting comments, actions - written or verbal, gestures or deliberate exclusion, on the basis of a person's race, ethnicity, nationality or religion.
- **Homophobic/transphobic:** Inappropriate or insulting comments or gestures, whether written or verbal, regarding a person's sexuality, actual or perceived.
- **Sexist:** Discrimination based on a person's gender.
- **Online Bullying:** This is dealt with in the ICT policy. However, it is noted that it has become perhaps the most commonplace form of school bullying. It is particularly unpleasant due to the capacity for a '24/7' ordeal, in and out of School, in addition to the capacity for anonymous bullying and the fact that the technology utilised (i.e. Snapchat, TikTok and other apps) is often better understood by children than by the adults responsible for their care.

What the School is doing about Bullying

Preventative Measures

Harrodian is committed to delivering regular anti-bullying training for staff (with additional training in the area of Online Safety).

The issue is addressed to pupils in many areas of the curriculum and general life of the School, including:

- The ethos of the School as embodied in the Behaviour Policy.
- Messages in assemblies and form periods – with a particular focus given during 'Anti-Bullying Week'.
- PSHRE sessions – in form and in wider presentations.
- The School's pastoral structures, including the work of prefects, mentors, the nurse and the School counsellor.
- Taking opportunities to reinforce the School's anti-bullying message that arise within lessons – for example, in English, Religious Studies or History.

Measures to be taken when cases of bullying come to light

Dealing with bullying will usually be a joint effort between Heads of Year, Section Heads (particularly those with a designated pastoral responsibility), Safeguarding Leads and Form Tutors. Notification may come via a number of avenues and via any member of the School community (whether by disclosure or observation). Heads of Year should then be informed and a 'My Concern' incident logged if pupil welfare is a concern (thus notifying DSLs).

Where possible and suitable, Harrodian pursues a 'no blame' approach to bullying.

- This does not mean that both sides are deemed equally culpable. Indeed, it is expected that the perpetrator will be told seriously and clearly that their behaviour is entirely unacceptable and must not continue.

- However, studies have shown that a 'no blame' approach giving those involved the chance to respond and modify their behaviour is generally more successful in stopping the behaviour than a quick recourse to severe sanctions, with the wider scrutiny and emotion that tends to invite.
- Within this approach, both sides are encouraged to speak frankly and honestly to staff. It is important that involved staff make clear to all involved the impact and consequences of bullying behaviour. They must make clear that no repetition of such behaviour will be tolerated within School and that, if a repeat does indeed occur, serious sanctions will then be enacted.
- Clear records of any incident must be kept in School for future reference and follow-up meetings must be scheduled with the pupil experiencing the bullying in order to ensure that the situation has been satisfactorily resolved. Parents on each side should be kept informed throughout and, if the matter is deemed to have had a serious impact on any of those involved, a Safeguarding case may be opened around the incident.
- If, following the initial 'no blame' approach, it becomes clear that bullying is indeed continuing to occur, serious sanctions, in most cases a form of suspension from School, will next be considered.

In all cases, victims of bullying must feel empowered over the situation. They must be able to choose to speak with those they trust, and, as far as possible, they should have a say in the steps taken by the School and the dispersal of information.

A message will always be given via assemblies that onlookers have a key role in ending bullying; that laughter or silence is a tacit form of enabling or endorsement and that the disapproval of a peer group, expressed aloud, is a key weapon in preventing behaviour those present know to be wrong. All pupils are encouraged to speak out courageously to staff where they see behaviour they know to be wrong.

Support for those involved

The person(s) being bullied:

- The School will inform any bullied pupil and their parents about any actions taken and will give advice as to strategies to help avoid being bullied in the future.
- Support will be offered via the School counsellor, a peer mentor, form prefect or 'buddy' and advice will be dispensed regarding professional services and relevant organisations available outside of School. Above all, it is important that any vulnerable pupil feels there is an adult on site that they are able to talk to if struggling for any reason (whether the form tutor, HOY, Nurse or another suitable teacher) and that the means of access to this adult during the school day is agreed. This person should be someone in addition to the School counsellor, as she is only on site one day a week.
- Wider Harrodian staff will be made aware where necessary of any bullying situation (via the regular year group pupil updates in the weekly Staff Meeting) and will be asked to be watchful and vigilant regarding the pupil's wellbeing and interaction with others.

The person(s) carrying out the bullying behaviour:

- The School will inform the bully's parents about the incident and the action taken.
- We recognise that pupils who bully do so for different reasons. Bullies often have low self-esteem and are often being, or have often been, bullied themselves. We make clear that it is the bullying behaviour and not the pupil that we will not tolerate.
- Again, if deemed suitable, the services of the School counsellor and a peer mentor will be advised and facilitated. All staff will be advised to be aware and vigilant of their conduct and wellbeing around School.

Observing instances of bullying

All Harrodian staff, in particular Form Tutors and Heads of Year (via INSET training and professional development sessions), are urged to note any changes in pupil behaviour or any grounds for concern as part of a wider shift to raise awareness and sensitivity towards mental health in School.

Behavioural signs pertinent to bullying concerns may include:

- Sudden changes in behaviour
- Extreme mood swings
- Depression, tearfulness and withdrawal
- Lethargy, unwillingness to be involved
- Unwillingness to communicate
- Physical signs, such as an injury which arouses cause for concern
- A child is suddenly or frequently absent for no specific reason

Passing on concerns:

Any grounds for concern regarding pupil wellbeing (including concern of bullying) should be passed on to Heads of Year and to Safeguarding officers by submitting a concern on the 'My Concern' website.

Parents are also encouraged to communicate any concerns with tutors and Heads of Year at events such as Parent Coffee Mornings, held each term.

Person Responsible: Deputy Head of Seniors

Last updated: September 2022

Next update: September 2023