



# 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.

It is important to recognize that incidents of bullying occurring outside of school hours or off school premises fall outside the direct responsibility of the school. However, as pupils and students are often together both in and out of school, the school encourages open communication with parents to address any concerns. We ask that parents work with the school and other relevant support networks to resolve these issues, ensuring the well-being of all pupils and students.

### Definitions of Bullying

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour by an individual or group, 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, spitting, 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 direct

messages sent via social media, apps (direct messaging etc, eg Snapchat) 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 *Online Safety 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/students 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. For example, a particular focus may be given during 'Anti-Bullying Week' with visiting speakers being asked to address pupils/students.
- PSHE sessions – in form and in wider presentations.
- The School's pastoral structures, including the work of prefects, mentors, the nurse and the School counsellors.
- Taking opportunities to reinforce the School's anti-bullying message that arises 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), Designated 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/student welfare is a concern (thus notifying the Designated Safeguarding Leads).

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/student 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 by 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/students are encouraged to speak out courageously to staff when they see behaviour they know to be wrong.

## **Support for those involved**

The person(s) being bullied:

- The School will inform any bullied pupil/student 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 counsellors, 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/student feels there is an adult on site that they are able to talk to if struggling for any reason (whether the form tutor, Head of Year, another suitable teacher or Medical and Welfare Officer) 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 counsellors, as they are not always on-site.
- Wider Harrodian staff will be made aware where necessary of any bullying situation (via the regular year group pupil/student updates in the weekly Staff Meeting) and will be asked to be watchful and vigilant regarding the pupil's/student's well-being 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 pupil/students 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/student that we will not tolerate.
- Again, if deemed suitable, the services of the School counsellors and a peer mentor will be advised and facilitated. All staff will be advised to be aware and vigilant of their conduct and well-being 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/student 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

## Addressing Independent Parental Action

We understand that parents may feel compelled to act independently if they believe their child is being bullied in school. However, we strongly advise against this, as it may inadvertently escalate the situation or lead to inconsistent handling of incidents. Instead, we encourage parents to:

- **Communicate with the School:** Contact the school immediately if you suspect your child is being bullied. Our staff is committed to addressing your concerns promptly and effectively.
- **Collaborate on Solutions:** Work with us to develop a plan that addresses the bullying and supports your child's well-being.
- **Trust the Process:** Allow the school to investigate and resolve the matter in accordance with our established policies, ensuring a fair and comprehensive approach.

Together, we can create a positive and inclusive environment for all our students. By working collaboratively with parents and the wider community, we can effectively tackle bullying and foster a culture of respect and kindness.

### Passing on concerns:

Any grounds for concern regarding pupil/student wellbeing (including concern of bullying) should be passed on to Heads of Year and to the Designated Safeguarding Leads 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 Briefings, held each term.

It is noted that in a number of instances where parents bring allegations of possible bullying to the attention of the School, they do so with a request for us not to act upon the information, nor to not let key actors know that the information has been disclosed. This is usually due to concerns that disclosing this information will have negative social implications for their child. While we appreciate this concern, Harrodian reserves the right to nonetheless act upon any information it receives which brings to light potential concerns about pupil/student wellbeing, safety or behaviour. Parents should appreciate in advance of approaching the School that, once in possession of such alleged information, the School may be obliged to act upon it. This may involve Harrodian teachers, DSLs or Section Heads speaking with the pupils/students and families involved.

Approved by:	Senior Leadership Team
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