

Anti-bullying policy

| Action | Policy to be reviewed annually | | |
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| | Owner | Date | Completed |
| Review | P Vanni | April 2017 | ✓ |
| Reported | Education Committee | 9 May 2017 | ✓ |
| Approved | Board of Governors | 13 June 2017 | ✓ |

| To be published on the following: | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Staff Portal | ✓ |
| School website | ✓ |



To be read in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy.

Aims and Objectives

At St Paul's Girls' School we are committed to providing a friendly and safe environment for all our pupils. This enables them to learn and develop in a supportive and secure atmosphere and so to realise their full potential. Every pupil has the right to be safe and happy here and to be protected when feeling vulnerable. We value thoughtfulness towards and respect for others, and all members of the school community - pupils, teachers and non-teaching staff, and parents - have a responsibility to help promote this. It follows that we will not tolerate bullying of any kind. If bullying does occur, the victim should feel confident about asking for help. Pupils should understand that withholding information protects the bully and allows them to continue the practice. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported. Bullying in schools is a form of peer-on-peer abuse and should never be passed off as "banter" or "part of growing up".

Importance of addressing bullying

Protecting children and young people from harm is a responsibility we all share. Bullying is not a specific criminal offence in the UK but there are criminal laws which apply to some types of harassing and threatening behaviour. If it is suspected that a victim of bullying is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, the school will consider the incident as a child protection concern and involve the appropriate external agencies. Both the alleged bully and the alleged victim will be treated as "at risk" and, where appropriate child protection procedures will be followed in relation to each child. Bullying can cause serious and long term psychological damage to victims - even, in extreme cases, leading to suicide.

What is bullying?

Bullying is hurtful behaviour that usually occurs over a period of time. It is behaviour that a reasonable bystander would say was calculated or intended to hurt or upset the victim. It is behaviour that harasses, humiliates or intimidates others. It may take the form of teasing, verbal criticism and harassment on the grounds for example that someone has different coloured skin, the way they talk, their size or their name. The following could all constitute claims of bullying or harassment: racism, sexual bullying, negative remarks about appearance, health conditions or home circumstances, nationality, religion or culture, disability, gender or sexuality or SEN.

Sometimes the perpetrator is just being thoughtless. Sometimes it can be difficult to be different from peers in some way or to be made to feel different.

Bullying causes fear and distress for the victim and may distract her from her school work. It may also affect other pupils who witness it and it can damage the atmosphere in a class or even in the entire school.

Examples of bullying behaviour

- Physical bullying may include: fighting; damaging or hiding someone else's belongings or clothes; setting up someone else to get the blame for a breach of school rules; initiation ceremonies.
- Emotional or psychological bullying may include: excluding someone from a group, activity or place; spreading rumours, being deliberately unfriendly; unpleasant emails or telephone calls or unpleasant material placed on social networking sites.
- Verbal bullying may include aggressive name calling, teasing, mockery, insults, and "banter".
- Sexual harassment includes making inappropriate comments about appearance and attractiveness, uninvited propositions, uninvited touching and using innuendo or inappropriate imagery.
- Peer-on-peer abuse (including relationship abuse, sexual exploitation and youth violence).

- Cyberbullying is the use of information and communications technology particularly mobile phones, email, social networking sites, text messages, cameras and the internet, deliberately to upset or harass someone else (see *Preventing and tackling bullying*, guidance issued by the Department for Education). Examples of such behaviour include:
 - Sending threatening or abusive text messages
 - Creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
 - “trolling” – the sending of menacing or upsetting images on social networks, chat rooms or online games
 - Excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups
 - Setting up hate sites or groups
 - Encouraging young people to self-harm
 - Creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name
 - Sending explicit messages, also known as sexting
 - Pressuring children into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual conversations

We may monitor and filter any device connected to the school network or to the wireless network. We cannot monitor personal devices connected to other networks, but through the ICT Code of Conduct pupils are educated as to good and safe use of digital technologies (see the School’s ICT Code of Conduct for Pupils). In accordance with our Behaviour policy, the director of school may also ask to look at materials on a personal device and delete files if there is good reason to believe that such materials are being used to harass or upset another pupil.

What are the signs of bullying?

It is not always easy or even possible to tell whether someone is upset as a result of being bullied. Young people who feel under emotional pressure may find it hard to talk.

There may be changes in behaviour, such as shyness and nervousness, demands for attention, feigned or real illness. Work and sleep patterns may change. There may be lack of concentration or withdrawal, and a pupil who is being bullied or feels vulnerable may be unwilling to attend school.

Bullying outside school premises

Bullying that takes place outside of school and which is reported to school staff, will be investigated and acted on. The director of school will, in consultation with the director of pastoral care, consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or children’s social services in the event of the matter being deemed a safeguarding concern.

Implementation of this policy

In promoting a culture which rejects bullying, we take the following steps:

- Bullying is defined as “strictly forbidden” behaviour in our guidelines on Being a Member of the St Paul’s Community (see our Behaviour Policy).
- Positive values of mutual respect and consideration will be promoted within the school in a wide range of contexts from assembly and tutorial periods to informal discussion.
- The PSHE course will address the topic of bullying regularly. Tutors will also remind pupils at the start of each academic year of their responsibility to ensure that bullying does not occur and to talk to a member of staff if they witness or suspect bullying.

- We have a well-established system of peer support that is promoted through tutor groups and assemblies. Pupils are trained in year 10 to run weekly sessions that girls who have concerns or feel lonely can attend. Where serious problems or worries emerge, teachers are alerted immediately.
- We display in all tutor bases a notice headed “Who can I talk to?” (see Appendix A) which explains all the different ways in which girls can raise concerns.
- Elements of the academic curriculum are used to foster a supportive and inclusive ethos within the school. Some of the themes in literature, drama, history and current affairs provide opportunities for raising awareness of bullying. Assemblies promote mutual respect, thereby fostering a community in which each individual is valued.
- Talks to girls, staff and parents alike by outside speakers help to raise awareness of the issues surrounding bullying, including cyberbullying.
- In the event of an observed or reported instance of bullying, the facts will be ascertained from the victim(s), alleged perpetrator(s) and witness(es). The member of staff contacted/witness will record who was involved, what happened, when and where. This will be passed to the relevant tutor(s), who will liaise with the appropriate head of year, the director of pastoral care or the director of school.
- The head of year, the director of pastoral care or the director of school will identify patterns and decide what action needs to be taken to prevent similar occurrences.
- The school will keep parents informed if it is dealing with a bullying situation. Parents are asked to let the school (usually the tutor) know directly if they have cause for concern. The school always tries to handle information discreetly, but staff are not able to promise confidentiality particularly if there are child protection concerns or if the matter becomes part of an investigation into serious misconduct. If matters need to be followed up the staff will do so with sensitivity. It is much easier to counter problems at an early stage.
- Once investigated, every effort will be made to resolve the problem through counselling of both parties, which will seek to support the victim(s) and change the behaviour of the perpetrator(s).
- For all incidents of bullying (whether isolated or occurring over a period of time), disciplinary sanctions will normally be applied, and this may extend to suspension, a requirement to leave or in the gravest cases of severe or persistent bullying – expulsion. Counselling may, however, be maintained for both parties even after certain sanctions have been applied.

Responsibility

Responsibility for excluding bullying rests with all staff but the deputy head, assistant heads, heads of year and tutors provide first line accountability and expertise. The School has a duty of care towards the girls and should an instance of bullying raise child protection concerns, the school’s Child Protection policy will be implemented. The assistant head, director of pastoral care is the designated person responsible for dealing with matters relating to child protection and welfare.

It is clearly understood that early intervention and parental involvement are key in successfully dealing with allegations of bullying.

Dissemination

St Paul’s will ensure that students are aware of this policy through PSHE and tutor time. Parents/guardians can access this policy via the school website.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The director of pastoral care and the director of school hold a central record of bullying incidents to identify any patterns or specific areas of concern. Incidents of bullying are reported to Governors termly as part of our regular review of safeguarding.

The policy will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed annually. We will include students in the review and ensure that questions about how safe they feel are included in surveys we undertake. The policy is applied in conjunction with the School's Behaviour Policy.

Availability of this policy

A copy of this policy may be downloaded from our website <http://www.spgs.org/school-policies> or is available on request from the school office, St Paul's Girls' School, Brook Green, London, W6 7BS (tel: 0207 603 2288). This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

Appendix A: Who can I talk to?

If you have any comments, questions or worries, the first person you'd naturally discuss them with might often be your tutor or head of year. Alternatively, of course, you can talk to any teacher.

Our chaplain, Mrs Baron, is also available to talk to students. You can usually find her in her office next to the main RS class-room (202) between 12.30 and 1pm every day except Wednesday.

The school nurse is available to see you in her office in the medical centre (off the concourse).

Our school counsellor, Mrs Diana Sharp, is available every Tuesday between 12 noon and 5pm, in the meeting room near the main student entrance. To book an appointment, please email Diana at dianasharp66@hotmail.com or ring her mobile number 07958 533 694. Our counsellor and art therapist, Ms Kamini Angel, is available on Thursdays and Fridays via a referral system between 10am and 5pm or by drop in sessions at lunchtime. Kamini can be contacted by email at arttherapist@spgs.org. Mrs Helen Knight, our CAMHS worker is available in the meeting room every Wednesday via a referral system operated by the school nurse. She can be contacted by email at helen.knight@spgs.org.

Members of the Peer Support team are also available to talk to you. Peer supporters are here to listen to any student with a problem or anyone who just fancies a chat. Peer Support runs a weekly, lunchtime club 'Chatterbox' every Monday, as well as 'Homework Club' Monday and Wednesday after school in the library. Throughout the year, the team peer-mentors younger students, organises activities and runs initiatives to bring students together whilst promoting a positive ethos across the school. Detailed information about the team can be found on the portal who can also be contacted via email: peers@spgs.org.

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| Head of Lower School | Miss Kate Frank |
| UIV Head of Year (Lower School office off Great Hall) | Miss Sophie Corthine |
| LV Head of Year | Mr Tom Peck |
| V Head of Year | Mrs Gilly Abbott |
| VI Head of Year (Middle School office by T12 in Theatre Block) | Mrs Victoria Watkins |
| Deputy Head, Director of Pastoral Care (office off the Marble) | Mrs Su Wijeratna |
| Deputy Head, Director of Senior School (Senior School office in the Forum) | Mr Will le Fleming |
| Deputy Head of Senior School (office in Forum) | Miss Mekhla Barua |
| Deputy Head, Director of Studies (office to the right of room 221) | Mr Andrew Ellams |
| Deputy Head, Director of School (office to the left of room 221) | Mr Paul Vanni |
| High Mistress (High Mistress' office opposite reception) | Ms Clarissa Farr |