

# Anti-bullying policy

Action	Policy to be reviewed annually		
	Owner	Date	Completed
Review	S Paillasse	September 2019	✓
Reported	Education Committee	8 October 2019	X
Approved	Board of Governors	9 December 2019	X

*To be approved by governors on 9 December 2019*

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



**To be read in conjunction with the following school documents:**

- **Safeguarding (Child Protection) policy**
- **Behaviour policy**
- **ICT Code of Conduct for Pupils**

**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 safeguarding concern and involve the appropriate external agencies. Both the alleged bully and the alleged victim will be treated as “at risk” and, where appropriate safeguarding 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, physical assault, verbal criticism, name calling, harassment on the grounds for example that someone has different coloured skin, the way they talk, their size or their name, and cyberbullying (bullying via mobile phone or online). 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 sexual orientation, 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 them from their 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 violence and harassment include making inappropriate comments about appearance and attractiveness, uninvited propositions, uninvited touching, using innuendo or inappropriate imagery, or upskirting.
- Peer-on-peer abuse (including relationship abuse, sexting, 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 July 2017*), 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 pastoral care 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.

## **Relational aggression and peer on peer abuse**

Children can abuse other children in a number of ways. Relational aggression is defined as behaviour that harms others through damage to relationships or feelings of acceptance, friendship, or group inclusion.<sup>1</sup> It is a deliberate intention to damage a pupil's peer relationships or social standing, and ultimately cause social exclusion. It can therefore be covert or overt. Examples include:

- Teasing; embarrassing a pupil
- Imitating them behind their backs
- Breaking secrets
- Spreading rumours, gossiping
- Whispering
- Sending abusive notes
- Maliciously excluding them
- Coercive behaviour

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<sup>1</sup> Crick, N. R., and Grotpeter, J. K. (1995) Relational aggression, gender, and social-psychological adjustment. *Child Development*, 66(3), 710-722

Relational aggression and covert bullying should be taken seriously and acted upon; it cannot be passed as normative behaviour in adolescents. If staff and older students condone relational aggression, covert bullying may be allowed to flourish.

Safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This includes:

- Bullying
- Cyberbullying
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Upksirting
- Sexting
- Initiation / hazing type violence and rituals

Upskirting is a criminal offence. It is an act of taking a photograph, without consent, from underneath a person's clothing with the intent of viewing their genitals. The purpose may be sexual gratification, or to cause the victim distress and alarm.

## **Sexual violence and sexual harassment**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk (e.g. children with learning difficulties, LGBT+ children). Further information about types of sexual violence can be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2019) p. 88.

## **Criminal Law**

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, any person who sends an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender, is guilty of an offence if their purpose in sending it was to cause distress or anxiety to the recipient.

## **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 pastoral care will 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. The director of pastoral care may consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will be informed.

## 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 addresses the topic of bullying and relational aggression 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 students 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, page 7) which explains all the different ways in which students 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 students, 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 (also designated safeguarding lead) must be informed of all suspicions and incidents of bullying.**
- The head of year, the director of senior school, or the director of pastoral care 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 or coaching of both parties, which will seek to support the victim(s) and change the behaviour of the perpetrator(s).
- The school acknowledges that in some circumstances the consequences of bullying may lead to a student experiencing pronounced social, emotional or mental health difficulties. The school has a responsibility to support students who are bullied and to make appropriate provision for their needs. The nature and level of support will depend on the individual circumstances and the level of need.
- 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 heads, heads of year and tutors provide first line accountability and expertise. The School has a duty of care towards the students and should an instance of bullying raise child protection concerns, the school's Safeguarding (Child Protection) policy will be implemented. The director of pastoral care is the designated safeguarding lead responsible for dealing with matters relating to child protection and welfare.

Staff are regularly trained and know how to identify signs of bullying.

Pupil voice is an important component of the school's anti-bullying approach; the anti-bullying committee (SPARK) regularly campaigns against discrimination and bullying; Peer supporters run drop-ins weekly; a Diversity committee will be launched in 2019/2020. A pastoral survey is conducted regularly across year groups.

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 holds a central record of pastoral incidents, including bullying 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. The school nurses, Miss Stretton and Mrs Tamini, are available to see you in their office in the medical centre (off the Concourse). The school doctor, Dr Hasan, is available by appointment on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Our counsellors are available as follows:

Mrs Dawn Grantham Tuesday & Wednesday

Ms Emma Clare      Wednesday & Thursday  
(Coach)

Miss Kamini Angel    Thursday  
(Art therapist)

You can book an appointment using our self-booking system on the [Portal](#).

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 and Friday in the Oasis. Throughout the year, the peer supporters mentor younger students, organise activities and run 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: [Peersupport@spgs.org](mailto:Peersupport@spgs.org)

The Oasis is open to all students on Mondays and Fridays; it is a quiet space - please respect your peers using the counselling rooms and the Oasis.

Chaplain  
(Room 209)

Rev. Matthew Knox

Head of Lower School  
UIV head of year  
(Lower School office off the Great Hall)

Miss Kate Frank  
Miss Lauren Speight

LV head of year  
V head of year  
VI head of year  
(Middle School office by T12 in Theatre block)

Mr Tom Attenborough  
Ms Kaarin Scanlan  
Ms Isabel Foley

VII head of year  
VIII head of year  
(Senior school office, Garden Building)

Ms Emilie Eymin  
Mr Oswald O'Neil

Deputy head (Director of pastoral care)  
(Office off the Marble)

Ms Sandrine Paillasse

Deputy head (Director of senior school)  
(Senior school office, Garden Building)

Ms Josephine Lane

Deputy head (Director of studies) Mr Andrew Ellams  
*(Office to the right of room 221)*

Deputy head (Director of strategic development) Mr Ellis Whitcomb  
*(Office to the left of room 221)*

Director of co-curriculum Mr Fred Hitchcock  
*(office in the Forum)*

Deputy head (Director of People and Diversity) Ms Helen Semple  
*(Office in the Forum)*

High Mistress Mrs Sarah Fletcher  
*(High Mistress' office opposite reception)*