



**HORRIS HILL**  
FOUNDED 1888

# **Bullying Policy: Preventing and Tackling**

Reviewed September 2021

The aim of the school is to have in place effective policy and procedures that limit the opportunities for bullying to take place. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Online Safety Policy, IT Acceptable Use Policies.

This policy is seen as essential to the welfare of all the pupils in the school. It also serves to further safeguard and promote the health and welfare of the pupils. There is a simplified version for the pupils and this is published in all common rooms, teaching areas and boarding houses. The contents are discussed with pupils at the start of each and every term by their Form Teacher. Senior pupils with positions of responsibility are particularly required to alert staff to any suggestions of bullying, but in truth, ALL pupils are required to do this. The school promotes the idea that there are no innocent bystanders when it comes to bullying and reporting of bullying is not 'telling tales'.

When bullying is reported, appropriate action will be taken and help will be made available to both the victim and the perpetrator.

The School's approach to cyberbullying takes into account the DfE's Preventing and Tackling Bullying guidance.

## **RAISING AWARENESS OF BULLYING AND VULNERABLE PUPILS**

We are known as a happy school and one of the reasons for this is that there is very little bullying. But it still can and does happen occasionally, and can happen anywhere and at any time, so we must all watch out for it and do everything we can to stop it.

Some pupils are more likely to be the target of bullying because of the attitudes and behaviours some people have towards those who are different from themselves.

The pupil version of Horris Hill's bullying policy is discussed by staff with all pupils at the start of every term and a copy of this pupil version is displayed in all common rooms, teaching areas and boarding houses. Further awareness is given through PSHCE lessons, Form Teacher sessions, Assemblies, Chapel readings.

A policy will only be effective if everybody in school has discussed and understood the problem of bullying, and agreed on good and bad practice. Raising awareness helps people understand the problem and agree a definition of bullying. Staff and pupils receive regular training and instruction with regard to the nature, prevention and tackling of bullying.

## **DEFINITION OF BULLYING**

Bullying may be defined as **"Any form of behaviour which causes unhappiness for another member of the school"**. Bullying is repeated over time and intentionally hurts another pupil or group physically or emotionally and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, LGBT, family background, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted or is a carer - it may occur directly or through cyber-technology (social media, mobile phones, gaming, text messages, photographs and email); It generally happens when adults are absent, and can be caused by an individual or a group. It is important to note, however, that an on-line single action by an individual can have repeated impact so an offensive action

over the internet does not need to be repeated to constitute bullying. Emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical and often involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim.

## **TYPES OF BULLYING:**

**Peer on Peer Abuse:** Children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer on peer abuse) and it can take many forms. It can happen both inside and outside of school/college and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of peer-on-peer abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports. This can include (but is not limited to): bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying); abuse within intimate partner relationships; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexual violence and sexual harassment; consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos; causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party; upskirting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. Addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future. See separate Peer on Peer Abuse Policy.

**Race, Religion and Culture** may involve :

Spoken comments, written notes or web postings that highlight an individual's race, religion or culture with the purpose of mocking them for their differences.

**Sex, Gender, LGBT, Family Background, Special Educational Needs/Disability** may involve :

Spoken comments, written notes or web postings that aim to make an individual uncomfortable about their orientation, bodies, close friendships. This may appear as rumour spreading, invasion of personal space or disparaging remarks about family background.

**Cyberbullying** may involve :

Sending abusive or malicious comments or postings of photographs with the intention to cause unhappiness or embarrassment to another through social networking sites or blogs. It could also involve malicious and hurtful comments made in chat rooms. Linked to this would be hurtful and malicious messages sent via text or the making of repeated silent calls to a mobile phone.

Pupils may attempt to justify such behaviour as a 'practical joke' or banter rather than bullying. This is not an acceptable defence. Online bullying behaviour that has been conducted anonymously or where the perpetrator has assumed a different identity will be taken as a more serious offence.

Online bullying by a pupil from the school, where the offence has been committed away from the school premises, will still be taken as a school concern and subject to school discipline.

## **Upskirting**

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2020, upskirting is now treated as a criminal offence. Upskirting typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing to obtain sexual gratification or cause them humiliation, distress or alarm.

**Sexting** involves the practice of sharing sexually explicit text or images. This practice demeans the person pictured, can lead to great anxiety and is an action that threatens the recipient. It is illegal in the UK to publish or download a sexual image of someone under 18 even if it is the child him/herself who created and posted the material.

Types of bullying can also be physical, verbal, or exclusion from groups or activities. The school recognises that in extreme cases the psychological effects of bullying can lead to significant psychological harm or suicide.

Mobile phones, and/or any personal device that can access the internet, are banned for pupils at Horris Hill. If an electronic device has been seized because a member of staff has reasonable grounds to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must give the device to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable, without deleting the data. Staff should not view or forward illegal images of a child if found on a pupil's electronic device.

**If a bullying incident has led to or is likely to lead to a pupil suffering significant harm then the incident should be treated as a child protection issue.** Any bullying by a pupil from the school, where the offence has been committed away from the school premises may still be taken as a school concern and subject to school discipline.

The School's approach to cyberbullying takes into account the DfE's Cyberbullying: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff.

### **Sexual violence and Sexual Harassment**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment as well as their emotional well-being. Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities are more likely to be at risk than their peers. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and offline (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support.

### **PROCEDURE FOR ENABLING PUPILS TO TAKE PROBLEMS OR CONCERNS TO ANY MEMBER OF STAFF**

*At the start of each term pupils are made aware of the following by their Form Teacher:*

'If you experience bullying behaviour yourself, or see it being inflicted on another boy, you must **TELL** someone as soon as possible. To begin with, that someone could be another boy, but either you or he must come and talk to an adult about it. This might be your Tutor, another Teacher, a Housemother, Gap student or your parents - some adult you find it easy to talk to.'

*Pupils are also made aware that the adult :*

'may be able to deal with the situation there and then. However, he or she may feel that it would be better to bring it to the attention of the Head of Pastoral or the Headmaster.'

*Pupils are reminded that **there are no innocent bystanders when it comes to bullying. If a pupil witnesses a bullying incident and does nothing about it then that pupil becomes part of the bullying group.***

*Finally, pupils are made aware that :*

‘the same procedure applies if a boy is being bullied by an adult - you must tell someone and make sure another adult knows about it.’

This procedure is published as part of the Pupil Version of the Bullying policy in all teaching areas, common rooms and boarding houses.

### *Staff*

A member of staff who witnesses an incident that involves bullying must deal with the incident immediately. This will involve diffusing the situation and recording the incident. The Form Tutors of those concerned and the Head of Pastoral (DSL) should be informed.

### **REPORTING BULLYING IS NOT TELLING TALES**

There is no set solution. One case of bullying can be very different from another and will be dealt with accordingly by the staff involved, the Head of Pastoral (DSL) or the Headmaster.

### **MONITORING**

#### **Suspicion and Signs of Bullying**

Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour. This might involve becoming aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable. It might also involve diminishing levels of self-confidence, becoming withdrawn, choosing the company of adults in preference to peers or running away or being at risk of psychological damage. All staff should be aware of the possible implication of such behaviour change and report promptly any suspicions of bullying to the pupil’s Form Tutor.

Once an incident of bullying has been identified staff should be informed and the incident will be recorded on the electronic school database, so that patterns are more easily apparent. Bullying on the basis of protected characteristics is taken particularly seriously and any instances of this type of bullying is distinguished in the School’s records. The Form Tutors of those concerned will then monitor the situation on a daily basis. This may resolve the situation. Should the bullying persist then both the Head of Pastoral (DSL) and Headmaster should be informed. It is at this stage that parents will be formally informed by the school. The Head of Pastoral or Headmaster will then liaise with the Form Tutors and put in place an appropriate course of action to help all parties reach a successful outcome.

### **WHERE BULLYING HAS A SEVERE IMPACT**

In some circumstances the consequences of bullying may lead to a child or young person experiencing pronounced social, emotional or mental health difficulties. Horris Hill will put in place appropriate

provision for a child's short term needs, including setting out what actions they are taking when bullying has had a serious impact on a child's ability to learn.

### **INITIAL RESPONSE**

If there is any suggestion that an incident of bullying has taken place the initial step is for the Form Tutor of any pupil(s) identified to be informed as well as the Head of Pastoral. The Form Tutors then aim to deal with it at this level until the matter is resolved, through regular contact and monitoring. A record of the incident should be recorded on the electronic system Engage.

Staff need to be made aware at this stage either verbally or by a notice in the staff common room. The victim and perpetrator will both need and should expect considerable support from staff.

### **SECONDARY RESPONSE**

Should this not resolve the situation then the Head of Pastoral (DSL) will oversee the issue. The policy here will be one of 'shared concern' which may not initially seek to punish but to seek a resolution. Those identified (perpetrator and victim) will be seen up to three times or four times each day by the Head of Pastoral for a period of up to two weeks. This approach allows for the perpetrator to become an active participant in the quest for a resolution. Regular communication between the Head of Pastoral and the Form Tutors will also take place. The Head of Pastoral will record the situation on the school database as well as with the tutor conduct files of the pupils concerned. This is considered vital so that patterns of behaviour can be readily identified. The Headmaster will be informed that the matter has reached this stage.

### **NEXT STAGE**

Should this not resolve the situation then the matter is referred to the Headmaster who will decide upon an appropriate response having discussed the matter with the pupils concerned, the Head of Pastoral and the Form Tutors involved. The matter may be referred back to the Head of Pastoral or further disciplinary measures may be taken.

In cases of severe and persistent bullying the Headmaster reserves the right to suspend or exclude those responsible although the aim of the system at Horris Hill is to resolve situations well before they reach this stage. As such, communication and transparency are considered vital linked components.

Where other strategies do not resolve the problem, permanent exclusion may be justified in the most serious and persistent cases, particularly where violence is involved.

### **REVIEW**

The school's Bullying Policy: Preventing and Tackling will be reviewed each academic year to ensure that it remains as effective as possible.