



FRANCIS HOLLAND SCHOOL

SLOANE SQUARE

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Availability of this document:

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Anti-Bullying

Definition of Bullying

The Government defines bullying as behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can make the lives of its victims a misery: it can cause serious psychological damage, undermining the victim's confidence and self-esteem and destroying their sense of security. At worst, bullying can be a factor in suicide. Additionally, those who conduct bullying or who witness it can also experience emotional harm; the impact on parents and school staff can also be significant.

Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour, including the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Communications Act 2003, the Malicious Communications Act 1988 and the Public Order Act 1986

The Malicious Communications Act 1988 addresses cyber-bullying: it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send 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. Please also refer to the School's Information Systems Policy.

Other specific types of bullying include:

- Bullying related to race, religion, or culture;
- Bullying related to special educational needs or disabilities;
- Bullying related to appearance or health conditions;
- Bullying related to sexual orientation (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender);
- Bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances;
- Sexist or sexual bullying.

Aims

The aim of our anti-bullying policy is to clarify for pupils and staff that bullying is always unacceptable. We aim to foster an environment where independence is celebrated and individuals can flourish without fear; where every pupil has the right to be safe and happy in school, and to be protected when she is feeling vulnerable; where each individual member of the community is entitled to respect and courtesy and where victims and witnesses of bullying know that if they report a concern, they will be taken seriously and that action will be taken.

Objectives

- To clarify that bullying is unacceptable;
- To ensure that students and staff are clear about the roles that they can take in preventing bullying;
- To develop girls' self-esteem and suggest strategies for assertiveness and dealing with difficult, upsetting or threatening situations;
- To ensure that pupils who experience bullying know how to report it and are confident of the school's ability and preparedness to help;
- To ensure that pupils who experience bullying are safeguarded and supported;
- To hold pupils who engage in bullying behaviour to account for their behaviour through appropriate sanctions and by taking steps to repair the harm that they have caused;

- To ensure that both victims and bullies are advised and supported, and to prevent recurrence.

All forms of bullying should be taken equally seriously and all are dealt with according to this policy.

The principal ways in which bullying takes place are physical, verbal, emotional or in the form of cyber-bullying.

Bullying away from school premises

The school takes seriously incidents of bullying which take place off school premises. Where such incidents are reported to school staff, they will be investigated and acted upon under provisions in the Education and Inspections Act (2006).

Possible Signs of Bullying

Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness or clinging to adults. They may show changes in their work pattern, lack concentration, try to take more time off school or even truant from school. We look out for such changes and parents know to contact us if they have any concerns.

Encouraging Disclosure

It is important to create an atmosphere in the school where pupils who are being bullied, or others who know about it, feel that they will be listened to and believed, and that action will be swift but sensitive to their concerns. It should be clear that not telling about bullying actually protects the bully or bullies and sends the message that they can continue to bully the original victim and perhaps bully others too.

Fostering an environment in which bullying is reported is important:

- To make clear to the girl responsible for bullying behaviour what the results of her actions are, in order to help her stop behaving in this way, and to improve and develop as a person;
- To make the whole community aware of the need to tackle bullying swiftly and efficiently.
- To keep comprehensive records and continue monitoring, thus to enabling patterns to be identified and thereby aiding the prevention of bullying. Centralised records are kept for the duration of the pupil's time in school, and for up to 2 years following the pupil's departure from the school.

Procedures for Junior (including EYFS) and Senior School

If bullying is suspected or reported, the /Deputy Head Pastoral or Head of Juniors will discuss the matter with all parties, individually or together as considered appropriate. Every effort will be made to resolve the issue through discussion while making it clear that behaviour which causes others distress is not acceptable. Records will be made of all steps taken. Such records also enable possible patterns to be identified in future and allow a clear picture of reported bullying situations throughout the school. The case will continue to be monitored, with support as necessary given to the student who has been bullied.

Detailed procedure for Senior School

If bullying is suspected the following procedure should be implemented; speed is important. Steps 1 and 2 should happen within one day – two days at the most.

1. The Head of Section/Deputy Head Pastoral interviews the victim of bullying to ascertain facts of situation. As soon as possible and within at the most twelve hours of this conversation, the girl writes a concise account of what she has experienced.

This is given directly to the Head of Section/Deputy Head Pastoral. It is emphasised to the girl that no-one else should be shown this account. Relevant form tutors are kept informed throughout the process. Depending on the circumstance of the case, the Deputy Head Pastoral/Head of Section will determine whether to inform parents at this stage.

2. The Head of Section/Deputy Head Pastoral interviews the alleged bully and then asks her to write her version of events, following the procedure as above. If several girls are implicated, each girl is interviewed separately and asked to write her own version of events. Again, these accounts should be given to the Head of Section/Deputy Head Pastoral without delay.
3. Within 48 hours of step 1, the Head of Section/Deputy Head Pastoral sees both the victim and the alleged bully together. Both girls' accounts will by this point have been read and considered by Head of Section/Deputy Head Pastoral and form teacher. This very important meeting normally requires at least 40 uninterrupted minutes. A judicious selection of phrases from each pupil's account is used to make both girls aware of how their actions have affected the other girl. The aim of this meeting is to effect lasting reconciliation. Again, a decision will be taken as to whether to inform parents. Parents will always be informed when a serious case of bullying has come to light.
5. The parents of the alleged bully and the parents of the victim should be kept informed (preferably by phone) of our response and the outcome.
6. Girls' accounts and the outcome of the situation are kept on file for subsequent weeks and months with the situation being closely monitored by the Head of Section and form tutor. All staff should be alerted to look out for any recurrence of bullying behaviour.

Staff responsibilities and preventative strategies

We recognise that pupils may be reluctant to report bullying for fear of repeat harm. It is therefore important that staff show that they can support pupils to prevent harm, that bullying is not tolerated and that there are solutions which work. Pupils need to receive a clear message that nobody ever deserves to be bullied.

Staff receive regular INSET to increase their awareness of bullying issues and preventative strategies. The Anti-Bullying Policy forms part of new Staff Induction and there are regular reminders of it in Staff Meetings. Form tutors also deliver elements of the PSHE programme which addresses bullying, assertiveness and related matters.

Additionally, staff seek to acknowledge and praise the successes and skills of individuals, in order to help them to develop their self-esteem and become less vulnerable to bullying.

Staff need to be sensitive to the possible effects of their communications with pupils, and aim at consistent fairness, in accordance with the Child Protection policy. No member of staff should ever deliberately humiliate a girl. (Please see the Code of Conduct).

How the question of bullying is addressed within the curriculum: By dealing with the topic of bullying within the Life Skills programme in a way which explores why it happens and gives alternative ways of behaving and dealing with difficulties; the Life Skills programme also deals with issues which may give rise to prejudice;

- By using creative learning through Art, Music and Drama to develop empathy and social skills;

- By raising awareness of the negative consequences of bullying in literature, historical events etc;
- By using teaching methods that encourage co-operative work in a variety of groupings so that students extend their relationships beyond a small group of friends;
- By holding assemblies that address issues which may give rise to prejudice, raise awareness of the school's anti-bullying policy and help to develop emotional literacy and to reinforce the school's values;
- By setting an example of harmonious community life, where appropriate care and concern are shown between members of staff and between students and staff;
- By every member of staff showing clear disapproval of any exclusive or unfriendly behaviour;
- When group work is undertaken in lessons, by organising groups to avoid exclusion of the vulnerable in the class.

Vigilance outside the classroom

Any instances of deliberate unkindness, exclusion, or overt bullying witnessed by a member of staff should be reported straight away to the form tutor or Head of Section. Teachers need to be particularly vigilant at times and in places where victims are more vulnerable and bullying is less easily seen, including:

- At breaks;
- When pupils move from one lesson to the next;
- In classrooms between lessons;
- In the playground;
- In locker rooms and toilets;
- In corridors and stairwells;
- In the dining room;
- Before the member of staff arrives for the start of the lesson and at the end.

To reduce the likelihood of bullying taking place in these areas, the following preventative measures have been put in place:

The Staff Duty Rota ensures effective supervision at break time and lunchtime; reminders are given to staff at briefings about the importance of carrying out duties and members of the SLT checking from time to time to ensure that duty rota is effectively enforced;

- Guidance to staff about the necessity for punctuality to lessons and registration;
- The changing rooms are supervised before and after PE lessons;
- CCTV cameras in certain parts of the school;
- Restricted use of mobile phones in school.

Steps taken to combat cyber-bullying

To combat cyber-bullying, the school actively manages hardware, software and connectivity as part of our safeguarding procedures. Both staff and parent are reminded of the importance of vigilance in this respect. Access to social networking sites in school is restricted.

Sanctions

The school will always support victims of any form of bullying. If the bullying behaviour continues and discussion has not worked, then sanctions for the bully will follow. The sanction may involve an after school detention but any sanction available to the school may be used to correct, punish or remove a pupil who bullies, in or out of school. Suspension or even

exclusion may be necessary in the case of severe and persistent bullying. For more information please see the Behaviour and Sanctions Policy.

Safeguarding

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, the school staff should report their concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (**Senior Deputy Head until 19 April 2020; Deputy Head Pastoral from 20th April 2020**)), the Senior Deputy Head, or the Headmistress, who will act according to the Child Protection Policy.