

FHS

Francis Holland Schools

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy applies to:

Francis Holland Regent's Park

Francis Holland Sloane Square

Francis Holland Prep

Where there are differences between the schools these have been clearly highlighted.

Related Policies:

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Behaviour and Sanctions Policy

Exclusions Policy

Online Safety Policy

Data Protection Policy

Privacy Notices

1. Introduction

Bullying is a complex issue, which Francis Holland Schools (FHS) address both proactively through teaching pupils about identifying bullying behaviour and being an upstander and reactively, by addressing any observations and reports of possible bullying. The Schools seek to foster mutual respect and create a safe, caring community, where members feel free to voice their concerns. The Schools expect all members of the school community to act in a considerate, respectful and courteous manner at all times.

2. Aims

The aim of our Anti-Bullying Policy is to clarify for pupils and staff that bullying is always unacceptable. The Schools 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, feel she belongs to our community and that she will 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.

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination of pupils or staff will not be tolerated. We treat all of our pupils and their parents fairly, and with consideration, and we expect them to respect the staff, the School, the Trust and each other, in return. All forms of bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying) are unacceptable at the School/s and any instances of bullying will be recorded and, where appropriate, will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Trust's Behaviour and Sanctions Policy.

3. Objectives

- To clarify that bullying is unacceptable;
- To ensure that pupils and staff are clear about the roles that they can take in preventing bullying;
- To develop pupils' 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 FHS'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.

4. 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 might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident. The relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

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 FHS staff can also be significant. Bullying is a form of child-on-child abuse and as such will be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

Bullying behaviour can be:

- Physical – any form of physical violence towards a person or a person's belongings;
- Verbal – name calling, insults, spreading rumours, laughing at another's expense;
- Emotional – exclusion, ignoring, manipulation;
- Cyber-bullying – any form of bullying that takes place online Types of cyber bullying include harassment, denigration (e.g. fake information), flaming (e.g. goading arguments), cyber-stalking, malicious use of social media, taking images of members of the school community without consent and exclusion;
- Sexualised – making sexist assertions, coercing another to either share indecent images or participate in sexualised behaviours;
- Discriminatory, prejudice-based bullying – making homophobic, transphobic, biphobic, racist comments or behaviours or assertions based on another's sexual identity. Bullying related to special educational needs or disabilities; to appearance or health conditions;
- Bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances.

Bullying is not:

- A one-off comment said in anger in which there is no evident power imbalance between the pupils involved.
- An argument between two pupils where both have been guilty of similarly offensive or threatening remarks.
- Isolated or one-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a one-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging.

These issues do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the Schools' Behaviour and Sanctions Policy.

Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment, sexual violence and assault, sexting, the sharing of nudes/semi-nudes (in certain circumstances), upskirting, and to violent 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 Trust recognises that children with SEND or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges and may be more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children. The Trust also recognises that certain children may face

additional barriers to reporting an incident because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation.

Pupils who are victims of bullying will always be supported and will be reassured that they will be kept safe. Pupils who have engaged in bullying behaviour will be subject to appropriate disciplinary sanction and will also, where possible, be supported in learning different ways of behaving and offered support for their own circumstances, where appropriate.

Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying can be defined as "*the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others*" (Belsey, <http://www.cyber-bullying.org/>). It is an intentional act often carried out repeatedly over time, and often against a victim who cannot easily defend himself/herself. The Trust acknowledges that cyber-bullying may take place inside School, outside of School and at any time of the day.

The Trust acknowledges that cyber-bullying may take many different forms including: cyber-stalking, exclusion or peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorised publication of private information or images, encouraging derogatory comments on online platforms, sharing nudes/semi-nudes, upskirting and sexting. The School/s have a role to play in teaching pupils about the underpinning knowledge and behaviours that can help them to navigate the online world safely and confidently regardless of the device, platform or app. In taking this forward, the School/s have regard to the DfE's non-statutory guidance on [*Teaching Online Safety in Schools*](#) (Jan 2023). For further information, please refer to the Online Safety Policy.

Cyber-bullying is addressed by The Malicious Communications Act 1988 - 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.

The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff who has been formally authorised by the Head, that staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

5. Bullying Away from Trust Premises

FHS takes seriously incidents of bullying which take place off Trust premises. Bullying which occurs on School trips or outside of the School's premises will not be tolerated any more than bullying on School premises. Teachers will, where appropriate, discipline pupils for misbehaviour outside School premises and outside School hours.

Where such incidents are not witnessed by FHS staff, but are reported to the School, they will be investigated and acted upon under provisions in the Education and Inspections Act (2006).

6. 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. The Schools look out for such changes, where appropriate, discuss with the pupil in the first instance and communicate our concerns with parents. Parents know to contact us if they have any concerns.

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to school;
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet;
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually poor work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others;
- Books, bags, money and other belongings suddenly go "missing", or are damaged;
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary);
- Diminished levels of self-confidence;
- Frequent visits to the Medical Centre with symptoms which may relate to stress or anxiety, such as stomach pains or headaches;
- Unexplained cuts and bruises;
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance or late arrival to class;
- Choosing the company of adults rather than peers;
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact;
- Difficulty in sleeping or experiencing nightmares; or
- Talking of suicide or running away from home or school.

7. 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 reporting 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. Where pupils are concerned about bullying but do not wish to be identified, they may report anonymously using 'Whisper' to make it easy for pupils to report bullying occurring inside and/or outside school.

Fostering an environment in which bullying is reported is important:

- To make clear to the pupil 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. FHS will look into each single incident and make an appropriate record as this will assist the school to spot patterns and to ensure the single incident does not become the first of a series.

8. Sanctions

FHS will always support victims of any form of bullying. Individuals may see their hurtful behaviour as 'a joke' or 'banter'. Regardless of intention, these kinds of behaviour are unacceptable and have a negative impact on the victim. It is important that behaviour of this type is taken seriously and discussed with all the pupils involved. However, sometimes these behaviours can be corrected quickly with advice and without disciplinary sanctions. A pupil who does not respond appropriately to the advice of a teacher about their behaviour can expect a sanction. The sanction may involve an after-school detention but any sanction available to FHS 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.

9. Complaints Procedure

Parents and pupils are encouraged to use the Trust's Complaints from Parents of Pupils Policy and related procedures (published on the Schools' websites) if they feel that any concerns about bullying (or anything else) are not being addressed properly.

Parents of EYFS children should be aware that they have the right to refer a complaint directly to the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), if they are unhappy with the way in which their complaint has been handled.

10. Review

Policy author/s	RP: Deputy Head Pastoral SSq: Senior Deputy Head Pastoral Prep: Senior Deputy Head
This review	Summer 2025
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The Francis Holland Schools Trust is an educational charity which manages three leading independent girls' schools in central London, across three sites.

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Appendix 1: Anti-Bullying Procedures at Francis Holland Regent's Park and Sloane Square

If bullying is suspected or reported, the Head of Year – or Deputy Head Pastoral 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 to the bully(ies) that her behaviour is not acceptable and has caused distress. Parents of both parties may be informed, unless there are exceptional circumstances not to. Clear factual written records will be made of everything that has occurred to enable possible patterns to be identified in future. The situation will continue to be monitored with support as necessary given to the pupil who has been bullied.

Procedures

When a bullying incident occurs, the School will investigate the issue and support the child(ren) involved. The following core principles will apply:

- Any child who is being bullied is encouraged to tell someone, write it down or report it on Whisper so that steps can be taken to stop the bullying;
- If a parent or friend is informed, the School ask that it is reported to a member of staff at the earliest opportunity;
- Cases of suspected bullying will be investigated thoroughly and carefully as soon as possible. Investigations will usually be led by relevant Heads of Year, although the wider pastoral team will be involved in more serious cases;
- All those involved will be given the opportunity to talk about the matter with an appropriate person and make a written account;
- A record of the investigation and its outcome will be kept on CPOMS;
- Regular communication takes place with parents/carers;
- Prejudice motivated bullying is treated extremely seriously.

Interventions should include the opportunity for follow up to evaluate support and if necessary, provide a further course of action and/or sanction, which may include:

- Attendance at an appropriate workshop, e.g. 'Girl's on Board';
- Restorative session with a member of staff present;
- A verbal reprimand and/or warning;
- Detention;
- Individual supervision at breaks and/or lunchtimes;
- Suspension;
- Exclusion from school.

Parents will be routinely informed of any incidents of bullying and records kept. A bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

Cyber-Bullying Procedures

If cyber-bullying is suspected, the same procedures are adhered to; however, it is important that the following factors are recognised and considered when implementing the part of or the whole anti-bullying procedure:

- Evidence – it is helpful if evidence of the cyber-bullying is preserved and shared with the school;
- Impact – the scale, scope, and timing (24/7 access) can be greater than in other forms of bullying;
- Motivation – sometimes, perpetrators (if peers) may not know or recognise that they are in fact causing distress.

- If the perpetrator is not connected with the school, they can still access the victim in school hours. In the event of the latter scenario, in consultation with the victim and parents, the police/school of perpetrator (if known) may be called to log the bullying.

Staff Responsibilities and Preventative Strategies

The School recognises 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. Pupils can report concerns anonymously on 'Whisper' to raise awareness of bullying behaviour.

Girls on Board is an educational programme that is delivered to all pupils in Years 7-11 and also discussed in the Sixth Form in order to prevent friendships issues turning into bullying incidents. Heads of Year deliver the introductory session at the beginning of the year, and restorative sessions are utilised as and when pastoral staff believe it to be necessary. The focus is on raising empathy within the pupil body, so that girls are able to understand how their peers may be feeling. There is also an emphasis for girls to restore their own friendships, without interference from staff or parents.

Staff receive CPD to increase their awareness of bullying issues and preventative strategies. The Anti-Bullying Policy forms part of new Staff Induction and there are reminders of it in Staff Meetings. Form tutors (Sloane Square) and specialist PSHE teachers (Regent's Park) also deliver elements of the PSHE programme which addresses bullying, cyberbullying, assertiveness and related matters. All pupils and staff, upon arrival at the school sign a Digital Code of Conduct relating to IT usage which explicitly explains appropriate usage. Staff record all reports of alleged bullying on CPOMS.

At certain times of the year, Form Tutors and Heads of Years host assemblies regarding bullying or raise awareness in form times. This includes celebrating the school values, being kind and being an upstander. Staff lead and facilitate *Girls on Board* sessions (see below).

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 Safeguarding and Child Protection policy. No member of staff should ever deliberately humiliate a pupil. (Please see the Staff Code of Conduct).

How the Question of Bullying is Addressed within the Curriculum

- By dealing with the topic of bullying within the PSHE programme in a way which explores why it happens and gives alternative ways of behaving and dealing with difficulties;
- The PSHE programme also deals with issues which may give rise to prejudice;
- By using creative learning through Art, Music and Drama to develop understanding of feelings and develop pupils' social and emotional skills;
- By raising awareness of the negative consequences of bullying in literature, historical events etc;
- By using teaching methods that encourage co-operative work and a variety of groupings so that pupils extend their relationships beyond a small group of friends;
- By holding assemblies that raise awareness of the school's anti-bullying policy and help to develop emotional literacy;
- By the adults of the community striving to set an example of sympathetic community life, where appropriate care and concern is shown between each other and between pupils 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.
- By celebrating good practice/pupil altruism in whole school/year group assemblies.
- By reinforcing kindness, empathy and being an Upstander in weekly 'Pulse' thank you emails.

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 Year. 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, cloakrooms 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;
- CCTV cameras in certain parts of the school;
- Restricted access to social networking websites e.g. Tik Tok, Instagram, SnapChat, by filtering and monitoring internet access at school;
- Parents are regularly reminded of the importance of vigilance in monitoring their daughter's use of social media and smartphone;
- Restricted use of mobile phones in school When pupils are using devices in lessons, staff move around the classroom to monitor appropriate usage.

The 'Daffodils' programme links lower school pupils with Sixth Formers to provide peer advice and support. The Director of Pupil Integration supports pupils at times of transition who may be more vulnerable to bullying.

Appendix 2: Anti-Bullying Procedures at Francis Holland Prep

If bullying is suspected or reported, the Senior Deputy Head or Head 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 pupil who has been bullied.

Procedures

When a bullying incident occurs, the School will investigate the issue and support the child(ren) involved. The following core principles will apply:

- Any child who is being bullied is encouraged to tell a trusted adult so that steps can be taken to stop the bullying
- If a parent or friend is informed, the School will ask that it is reported to a member of staff at the earliest opportunity
- Cases of suspected bullying will be investigated thoroughly and carefully as soon as possible. Investigations will usually be led by the SLT, although the wider pastoral team will be involved in more serious cases.
- All those involved will be given the opportunity to talk about the matter with an appropriate person and (where age appropriate) make a written account. For younger pupils, a member of staff will create an accurate transcript.
- A record of the investigation and its outcome will be kept on CPOMS
- Regular communication takes place with parents/carers
- Prejudice motivated bullying is treated extremely seriously

Interventions should include the opportunity for follow up to evaluate support and if necessary, provide a further course of action and/or sanction, which may include:

- Attendance at a workshop;
- Restorative session with a member of staff present
- A verbal reprimand and/or warning;
- Reflection Room;
- Individual supervision at breaks and/or lunchtimes;
- Suspension;
- Exclusion from school.

Parents will be informed of any incidents of bullying and records kept. A bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

Staff Responsibilities and Preventative Strategies

The School 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 CPD to increase their awareness of bullying issues and preventative strategies. The Anti-Bullying Policy forms part of new Staff Induction and there are reminders of it in Staff Meetings. Class Teachers and the Head of Wellbeing 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 Safeguarding and Child Protection policy. No member of staff should ever deliberately humiliate a pupil. (Please see the Code of Conduct).

How the Question of Bullying is Addressed within the Curriculum

The School deals with the topic of bullying within the PSHE and Friendology programme in a way which explores why it happens and gives alternative ways of behaving and dealing with difficulties. The PSHE Curriculum 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;
- raising awareness of the negative consequences of bullying in literature, historical events etc;
- using teaching methods that encourage co-operative work in a variety of groupings so that pupils extend their relationships beyond a small group of friends;
- 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;
- setting an example of harmonious community life, where appropriate care and concern are shown between members of staff and between pupils and staff;
- every member of staff showing clear disapproval of any exclusive or unfriendly behaviour;
- organising groups to avoid exclusion of the vulnerable in the class, when group work is undertaken in lessons.
- Through the Friendology curriculum, arming pupils with a language to discuss and manage friendship issues and develop their social skills. through the

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 Class Teacher. All 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;
- No personal electronic devices are permitted 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 parents are frequently reminded of the importance of vigilance in this respect. There is a strict no personal electronic device policy in the Prep School.