

## HIGHGATE

### ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

- *This should be read in conjunction with the School's Behaviour Policy, the Safeguarding & Welfare policy, and the IT Acceptable Use Policies.*
- *This policy fulfils the ISSRs 2014 Part 3, Paragraph 10.*
- *This policy has also been written with regard to the ISI Handbook Part 3 - The welfare, health and safety of pupils, paras 190 - 196 (September 2018).*
- *The non-statutory DfE advice "Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges" (May 2018), "Preventing and Tackling Bullying" (July 2017), 'Approaches to preventing and tackling bullying; Case studies' (DfE, June 2018), and "Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff" (November 2014) have informed this policy, in addition to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, September 2018) and the Equality Act (2010).*

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## 1. Statement of aims and objectives

Bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Any member of the Highgate community, pupil, employee or volunteer, has the right to learn and work without fear of being bullied. Through this policy, Highgate aims to prevent bullying from occurring. Its objectives are to ensure that all members of the school community:

- prevent bullying by creating an orderly climate of respect within an inclusive community environment
- feel safe from bullying
- recognise bullying behaviour
- understand and support the School's stance against bullying
- know how to report incidents of bullying
- contribute to informing and, where possible, evaluating the policy

## 2. Definition (ISI Handbook, Para 193, September 2018)

*Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, on the grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability or because the child is adopted or is a carer. It may occur directly or through cyber-technology (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email).*

Bullying may involve an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This imbalance may be physical, intellectual or psychological (knowing what upsets someone).

Although it may be unintentional, it is also bullying if someone feels hurt because of things said about, or actions related to, their ethnic, cultural or economic background, religious faith, gender, sexuality (homophobic/transphobic), disability, special educational need, appearance or issues in their family.

Bullying includes:

- Name-calling
- Taunting
- Mocking
- Making offensive or humiliating comments
- Gossiping
- Spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours
- Laughing or sniggering at someone in an unkind way
- Taking or deliberately damaging a person's belongings
- Threats and extortion
- Physical violence and intimidation
- Using body language inappropriately e.g. giving "dirty" looks

- Deliberately invading someone's personal space
- Producing offensive graffiti or writing unkind notes about someone
- Cyber bullying, i.e. inappropriate text messaging, emailing and use of social network sites e.g. Facebook, Whatsapp, Snapchat, Youtube, Instagram etc.
- Sending or displaying offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet or email
- Isolating or excluding people either socially or online
- Racist, religious, cultural, sexual, sexist, homophobic, family economic status, academic ability, special educational needs disability-related language and comments or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities

Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are some types of harassment and threatening behaviour – or communications – that could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, the Public Order Act 1986, the Controlling or Coercive Behaviour in an Intimate or Family Relationship Guidance 2015.

Bullying can cause serious physical and emotional harm and even lead to psychological damage and suicide. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that the culture at Highgate is one where all members of the community work to prevent bullying.

*"Preventing and Tackling Bullying"* (DfE, July 2017) states that teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises but only if it "would be reasonable for the school to regulate pupils' behaviour in those circumstances".

In accordance with the School's Behaviour Policy, section 3, the School would consider it reasonable to investigate, and consider an appropriate response to, any act or actions by a pupil outside of school which threatens, or could potentially threaten, the wellbeing of any member of the community or harm the reputation of the School.

Cyber activity is included in this scope for investigation by the School, including referral to the police if an offence may have taken place. For example, under 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 School's ICT Acceptable Use Policies for pupils, staff and parents set out the School's expectations and procedures to encourage the safe and appropriate use of technology. **(ISI Handbook, para 194 – 195, September 2018)**

### 3. Procedures (ISI Handbook, para 193, September 2018)

Everyone at Highgate has the ability to contribute towards making the School a safe and happy place where bullying will have no place and where bullying will be challenged and eliminated.

Staff can and should:

- Support the School's strategies to create an environment that prevents bullying from happening in the first place
- Be familiar with the definition of bullying and the School's Anti-Bullying policy
- Undertake regular training and scenario discussion on potential pastoral and bullying incidents, including raising awareness of pupils with particular special educational needs, medical conditions, disabilities or LGBT pupils.
- Ensure that pupils understand the definition of bullying and know the School's stance on bullying and are confident about the School's ability to deal with it
- Monitor changes in pupils' or colleagues' behaviour (e.g. becoming shy, nervous or withdrawn; pretending to be ill; taking unusual absences; in the case of children, clinging to adults)
- Ensure that pupils reporting bullying are heard
- Ensure that pupils understand that staff cannot promise confidentiality
- Pass on the information to the appropriate member of the pastoral team
- Make sure that a person being (or feeling) bullied feels safe and knows how and where to get support
- Record and report cases of bullying (see 7.1)
- Help to foster a climate of respect through their own words and actions
- Prevent the use of inappropriate language (e.g. the casual and pejorative use of the term 'gay')

Senior School pupils have formed their own Pupil Welfare Committee (PWC) to raise awareness of bullying and to contribute to the School's anti-bullying culture and strategies. Members of the PWC organise regular assemblies and activities in National Anti-bullying Week. The PWC also takes part in the regular Governors' audit of the School's Anti-Bullying Policy. Membership of the PWC is open to all pupils.

Junior School pupil members of the School Council pass on the School's commitment to anti-bullying to their Forms and can use the opportunity to suggest ideas to staff, contributing to the anti-bullying ethos. Class Assemblies in National Anti-bullying Week help to raise general awareness.

Pupils who feel that they are being bullied by an adult will be supported, and appropriate action will be taken in accordance with the School's Safeguarding & Welfare policy and procedures.

## **4. Bullying**

### **4.1 Pupils who engage in bullying (ISI Handbook, para 193, September 2018)**

Pupils have to learn that bullying is unacceptable. Those who engage in bullying and fail to show through their actions that they have learnt that bullying is unacceptable risk forfeiting their right to be at Highgate and can face permanent exclusion.

Pupils who are guilty of bullying will be given sanctions (see Behaviour Policy for an explanation of the different kinds of sanctions, which can include warnings) according to the severity of the offence. Pupils will be given opportunities to:

- Face up to the harm they have done
- Learn to behave in ways which will not cause harm in future
- Develop their understanding of how others think and feel
- Learn how to take steps to repair the harm they have caused
- Pay a penalty for the harm they have done and thus be held accountable for their actions

### **4.2 Staff who engage in bullying**

It is expected that all staff employed by Highgate will recognise and eschew any behaviour which is bullying. Conduct that is concluded to constitute Bullying of pupils or colleagues will be treated as a disciplinary offence, in accordance with the School's policies and procedures.

### **4.3 Parents and bullying (ISI Handbook, para 193, September 2018)**

All parents of Highgate pupils will be expected to recognise and eschew any behaviour towards staff, or any other members of the Highgate community, that is bullying.

In addition, the School expects that parents will reinforce and espouse the School's aims and ethos and insist upon the value of good behaviour, and a rejection of bullying, to their children. Parents are encouraged to report instances of bullying to the School that they may witness as bystanders.

Staff will inform the Head if they are subject to bullying behaviour that they regard as unacceptable and that may constitute a form of bullying. The matter will be investigated by the Principal Deputy Head, or another senior member of staff nominated by the Head. The Principal Deputy Head will meet with the parent / parents, member of staff and, if appropriate, the pupil to decide if:

- parents have engaged in bullying behaviour
- parents have acted unreasonably
- the behaviour of parents has adversely affected, or is likely to affect, their son or daughter's progress at School

- the behaviour of parents has impacted on the well-being of a member of staff
- the behaviour of parents has, or may have, brought the School into disrepute

At the conclusion of the investigation the Principal Deputy Head will communicate the findings to parents and may propose a formal meeting with the Head to decide on an appropriate way forward. In more serious and intractable cases, where the relationship between School and home has irretrievably broken down, the Head may include consideration of the permanent exclusion (or voluntary withdrawal) of the pupil from Highgate. Further details can be found in the School's Terms and Conditions, Clause 8b.

In common with the procedure for the permanent exclusion of a pupil for disciplinary matters, such a decision would be subject to an appeal if requested by parents. Details of the appeals process can be found in the School's Behaviour Policy. The pupil would be temporarily excluded from School pending the outcome of the appeal.

## **5. The role of the School (ISI Handbook, para 193, September 2018)**

The responsibilities of staff, including teachers, are set out in section 4, and in section 7 below. In addition, the School will:

- Collate data about incidents of bullying and monitor trends, reporting termly to Governors and reviewing the anti-bullying procedures; this includes consulting children on their experience;
- Provide effective training to new staff at induction and to all staff regularly, through in-service training and briefings;
- Promote awareness of where and when bullying is most likely to take place and ensure actions are taken to reduce the risk;
- Promote the anti-bullying policy and the School community's stance on bullying in assemblies and other activities at least once per year;
- Raise awareness of the damage done by bullying and the School's anti-bullying measures in PSHE lessons, pastoral forums, such as Form time, and in assemblies (see PSHE syllabus);
- Make it easy for pupils to report bullying (even if the bullying has occurred outside school e.g. cyber-bullying);
- Use assemblies, presentations, drama workshops and news items in the context of PSHE or more broadly to raise the awareness of bullying, the School's stance on it and develop pupils' understanding of the potential impact on people's lives of being bullied;
- Ensure that pupils know about the roles they can take in preventing bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders;
- Involve parents to ensure that they are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied;
- Communicate to parents, via regular postings on the Parent Portal, details of anti-bullying measures in the school and make available this policy on request;

- Ensure that parents are confident that the school will take any complaint about bullying seriously;
- Inform parents if their child is being bullied or is bullying someone else;
- Review its policy and procedures in the light of data, incidents and any complaints
- Work with the wider community such as the Police and Children's Social Services (when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm') (Children Act, 1989);
- All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse – this may include bullying and cyber-bullying (KCSIE, September 2016, para 42);
- Demonstrate and celebrate the success of anti-bullying measures and create a positive culture where everyone feels safe to be themselves and where no one fears to learn or work.

## 6. Responsibilities and legal requirements

### 6.1 Responsibilities (ISI Handbook, para 193, September 2018)

Whenever bullying is suspected, the incident should be recorded and investigated (even if the alleged bullying took place outside the school premises)

In the **Pre-Preparatory School**, the policy and procedures for dealing with incidents of unkind behaviour are covered separately in the Staff Handbook and Information for Parents and relate to this younger age setting.

In the **Junior School**, incidents not witnessed by form teachers should be reported to a Form Teacher, recorded to SIMS and the Deputy Principal who will decide who will investigate. A Form Teacher receiving a report directly from a child or witnessing bullying will investigate, record to SIMS and report to the Deputy Principal.

In the **Senior School, in Years 7 and 8**, incidents not witnessed by form teachers should be reported to a Form Teacher and the Head of Year who will decide who will investigate. A Form Teacher receiving a report directly from a child or witnessing bullying will investigate and report to the Head of Year. The Head of Lower School should be informed by the Heads of Year of all incidents of bullying.

In **Years 9 and above**, incidents not witnessed by Heads of House should be reported to the Head of House who will decide whether s/he or the Tutor will investigate. A Head of House receiving a report directly from a child or witnessing bullying will investigate. A Tutor receiving a report directly from a tutee will always consult with his/her Head of House.

Where the bullying appears to involve pupils in different houses, the Head of House will liaise with the relevant Assistant Head to determine lead responsibility.

All incidents of bullying must be recorded and forwarded (in the Senior School via the Head of Lower School, and the weekly e-mail reports of Heads of House) to the

Principal Deputy Head who keeps a central log; in the Junior School, the Principal; in the Pre-Preparatory School, the Deputy Principal.

For incidents of bullying which are about cyber-bullying, ethnic or religious background or sexuality, the Senior Deputy in each school must be informed.

## 6.2 Legal requirements (ISI Handbook, para 190 – 196, September 2018)

The law requires that the School must:

- *Ensure that, in so far that is reasonably practicable, bullying at the school is prevented by drawing up and implementing an effective anti-bullying strategy (ISSRs 2014 Part 3, Paragraph 10)*

In accordance with the advice in *Preventing and Tackling Bullying* (DfE, July 2017), Highgate will:

- Have regard to the Equality Act (2010) and seek to eliminate any unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between all members of the school community;
- Recognise that, under the Children Act 1989, bullying incidents 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;
- KCSIE, September 2018, reinforces that peer on peer abuse can include bullying (including cyber-bullying), gender-based violence, sexual violence and harassment and sexting;
- Such incidents, where there is evidence of significant harm, would be referred to the appropriate LA's Social Services team, in accordance with the School's Safeguarding policy;
- While bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment, threatening behaviour and communications: for example, under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997; the Malicious Communications Act 1988; the Communications Act 2003, the Public Order Act 1986. If the Head (or Principal Deputy Head) feel that an offence may have been committed, they will seek assistance from the Police.

## 6.3 Implementation (ISI Handbook, para 196, September 2018)

The School will:

- Determine the more detailed measures (rules, rewards, sanctions and behaviour management strategies) on behaviour and discipline that form the School's Behaviour Policy, acting in accordance with the Governing Body's statement of



principles in so doing. The policy determined by the Head must include measures to be taken with a view to “encouraging good behaviour and respect for others on the part of pupils and, in particular, preventing all forms of bullying among pupils”;

- Publicise the measures in the behaviour policy and draw them to the attention of pupils, parents and staff at least once a year;
- Determine and ensure the implementation of strategies for the pastoral care of the pupils;
- Ensure the maintenance of good order and discipline at all times during the school day when pupils are present on the school premises and whenever the pupils are engaged in authorised school activities, whether on the school premises or elsewhere.

Teachers and staff will:

- Promote the general progress and well-being of individual pupils and of any class or group of pupils assigned to them, which includes ensuring as far as possible that pupils are free from bullying and harassment; and
- Staff must apply the school’s systems of rewards and sanctions lawfully;
- In accordance with the School’s Safeguarding and Welfare Policy, where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, serious harm because of a bullying incident then the appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should be informed and concerns should be reported to the Local Authority (LA) Social Services Team.

## **7. Guidance for staff**

### **7.1 When and where bullying is most likely to happen:**

Bullying can take place anywhere at any time. The rapid development of ‘virtual’ (cyber) bullying means that it can occur in or outside school, at all times of the day, with a large potential audience and more pupils involved or aware as comments or content is forwarded on and shared at a click from a computer or mobile device.

The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific powers to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) from electronic devices, including mobile phones.

The UK Council for Child Internet Safety has produced guidance for Schools on dealing with ‘Sexting’ or Youth Produced Sexual Imagery incidents (August 2016); details can be found in the School’s Safeguarding Policy, Appendix 6.

In school, bullying is most likely to happen outside normal lesson time in communal areas.

## 7.2 In the Senior School: guidance to staff

- Designated social areas e.g. Parade Ground, Garner Quad, Dyne House foyer and terrace, the Dining Hall;
- Corridors and stairwells;
- Changing rooms and toilets;
- Computer rooms;
- The Sir Martin Gilbert Library (SMGL);
- On the journey to and from school ;
- On school visits and trips, especially residential visits;
- Social networking sites.

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

- Staff duty rota - to ensure effective supervision in the main communal areas at break time, lunchtime and after School in the village until 4.30pm;
- Senior Team Patrol Rota – to ensure that the duty rota is effectively enforced;
- Reminders to staff (at briefings and via email) about the importance of carrying out duties, along with regular updates and training to improve the effectiveness of each duty;
- Guidance to staff about the necessity for punctuality to lessons, and for pro-active monitoring of pupils' behaviour whilst moving between lessons;
- Supervision of the changing rooms by members of the Sport and Exercise (SpEx) department;
- Supervision and remote monitoring of computer facilities;
- Encourage the restricted and responsible use of social technologies whilst at school; pupils are encouraged to interact positively with each other through the co-curricular programme;
- Guidance on the responsible use of mobile phones in the School rules;
- Password protected pupil accounts;
- Restricted access at School to certain internet sites: Facebook, Twitter, MySpace; Youtube, Ask.fm etc. through web filtering and monitoring software;
- Librarians always present and on duty in the SMGL during school day;
- Some CCTV camera coverage in DH Foyer, Parade Ground, Sixth Form Common Rooms, IT classrooms and some other communal areas (including St Michael's path);
- Information and training for pupils about safety issues when travelling to and from school.

## 7.3 In the Junior School: guidance to staff

- Designated social areas e.g. Playground and, in good weather, on Senior Field;
- Corridors and stairwells;
- Changing rooms and toilets;

- Cloakrooms;
- In the Dining Hall;
- In the Library;
- On the journey to and from school;
- Social networking sites.

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

- Staff duty rota - to ensure permanent supervision in the main communal areas at break time, lunchtime and after School;
- Staff in Form Rooms from 8:15am each morning;
- Two members of ST in playground from 8:00 am until 8:25am every morning before school;
- Reminders to staff (at briefings and via email) about the importance of carrying out duties;
- Guidance to staff about the necessity for punctuality to lessons and form time at the beginning and end of each day, pro-active monitoring of pupils' behaviour whilst moving between lessons, pro-active monitoring of pupil movement to, during and from lunch;
- Teaching staff eating their lunch with children;
- Duty/Support staff check toilets during the school day;
- Supervision of the cloakrooms by a member of teaching or support staff during the beginning and the end of the day, and two members of the SpEx Department when pupils are changing for lessons;
- No access, at School, to certain internet sites: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat etc.;
- Education of pupils and parents on safe and responsible internet use via computing lessons, Form Tutors, assemblies and guest speakers (eg Childnet). All pupil toilets display the contact details of childline;
- No pupils are allowed mobile phones whilst at school, other than in Year 6 when they must be left in the School Office during the day;
- Pupils are advised about safety issues when travelling to and from school.

#### 7.4 Reference

This document has been prepared with reference to the DfE guidance *Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017)* and *Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff (October – November 2014)* and *Guidance on preventing and responding to sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying (DfE, Dec 2009)*, in addition to KCSIE (Sep 2018).

#### 7.5 Review and audit

This policy is the object of on-going review and is audited regularly by a Governor. He / she reviews and audits the policy's compliance and its effectiveness on the basis of an evaluative report from the Principal Deputy Head, supporting

documentation (including this policy and the ISSRs 2014) and meetings with other pastoral staff and pupils on the Pupil Welfare Committee.

## **Appendix 1: Peer on Peer Abuse, including Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment**

### **1. Introduction**

- This annex to the anti-Bullying policy draws upon the guidance in *KCSIE* (September 2018) Part 5 and *Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools and Colleges* (DfE, May 2018).
- It should be read in conjunction with the School's Safeguarding and Welfare policy, Anti-Bullying policy, Behaviour policy and the IT Acceptable Use policy and any additional relevant guidance issued by local Safeguarding Partners (Local Authority, Clinical Practitioners or Police).

### **2. The School's responsibilities**

The School is committed to the prevention, early identification and appropriate management of peer-on-peer abuse (as defined below) both within and beyond the School.

In particular, we will:

- Take a contextual whole-school approach to preventing and responding to peer-on-peer abuse;
- Adopt an educational, preventative, pro-active approach in creating a culture that does not tolerate peer on peer abuse, rather than a solely reactive response to (alleged) incidents of peer-on-peer abuse;
- Recognise national DfE guidance signifies increasing concern about this issue and to promote this policy to pupils, staff and parents to ensure that our community is safe and that appropriate and prompt action is taken in response to any concerns or incidents;
- Make it clear to the whole community that sexual violence and sexual harassment (including online actions) are not an inevitable part of growing up and will never be dismissed as 'banter' or 'just having a laugh';
- Review the policy, at least annually and with any updates in the interim as may be required, to ensure that it continually addresses the risks to which pupils are, or may be, exposed to.

### **3. Peer on Peer abuse – a Safeguarding Approach**

This policy avoids the normative use of terms 'victim' and/or 'perpetrator' in relation to peer on peer abuse since the School takes a safeguarding approach to all individuals involved in allegations of or concerns about peer-on-peer abuse, including those who are alleged to have been abused and those who are alleged to have abused their peers.

Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are complex to manage and it is essential that those children (allegedly) subject to abuse are supported and protected as a priority.

The School's initial response to an allegation of abuse will reassure the child that they are being taken seriously, they will be supported and they will be kept safe. Staff will listen, respond and record such a disclosure in accordance with the School's Safeguarding policy best practice.

Many children who present with harmful behaviour towards others, in the context of peer-on-peer abuse are themselves vulnerable and any sanctions that may be applicable via the School's Behaviour policy will always be accompanied by consideration of appropriate pastoral support.

In accordance with the School's Safeguarding policy, the terms 'child' and 'children' in this annex are defined as a person aged under 18 but the School's starting point is that the response to peer-on-peer abuse should be the same for all pupils, regardless of age. There is, however, likely to be a more significant Local Authority and / or criminal justice response in relation to any pupil responsible for abuse who is aged 18 or over.

#### **4. Understanding Peer on Peer Abuse**

Peer on peer abuse, where a pupil's behaviour is likely to cause significant harm to other pupils, can take many forms: bullying, cyberbullying, physical abuse, sexting (youth produced sexual imagery, initiation / hazing type violence and rituals, sexual violence and sexual harassment).

All behaviour takes place on a spectrum and understanding where a child's behaviour falls on a spectrum is essential to being able to respond appropriately to it.

##### **4.1 Sexual behaviours**

The School will regard *any* report of sexual violence or sexual harassment very seriously and staff should be aware of, and alert to, the statistically gendered nature of sexual abuse in that it is more likely that girls will be subject to sexual abuse and that boys are more likely to be responsible for that abuse.

The NSPCC states that, "children's sexual behaviours exist on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected to highly abnormal and abusive". Staff should recognise the importance of distinguishing between problematic and abusive sexual behaviour.

As both problematic and abusive sexual behaviours are developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage, a useful umbrella term is “*harmful sexual behaviours*” or HSB.

For the purposes of this policy, harmful sexual behaviours can be defined as "Sexual behaviours expressed by children...that are developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful towards self or others, or be abusive towards another child...or adult."

A continuum model to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours presented by children may be helpful when seeking to understand a pupil's sexual behaviour and deciding how to respond to it. See table below:

<b>Normal</b>	<b>Inappropriate</b>	<b>Problematic</b>	<b>Abusive</b>	<b>Violent</b>
Developmentally expected	Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour	Problematic and concerning behaviour	Victimising intent or outcome	Physically violent sexual abuse
Socially acceptable	Socially acceptable behaviour within peer group	Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected	Includes misuse of power	Highly intrusive
Consensual, mutual, reciprocal	Context for behaviour may be inappropriate	No overt elements of victimisation	Coercion and force to ensure compliance	Instrumental violence which is psychologically and/or sexually arousing to the child
Shared decision making	Generally consensual and reciprocal	Consent issues may be unclear	Intrusive	responsible for the behaviour
		May lack reciprocity or equal power	Informed consent lacking or not able to be freely given	Sadism
		May include levels of compulsivity	May include elements of expressive violence	

Staff should *always* discuss any concerns regarding sexual violence or sexual harassment between children with a DSL.

## 4.2 Other Harmful Peer on Peer Behaviours

When dealing with other alleged behaviour which involves reports of, for example, emotional and/or physical abuse, staff can draw on aspects of the behaviour continuum to assess where the alleged behaviour falls on a spectrum and to decide how to respond. This could include, for example, whether the behaviour:

- is socially acceptable
- involves a single incident or has occurred over a period of time
- is socially acceptable within the peer group
- is problematic and concerning
- involves any overt elements of victimisation or discrimination e.g. related to race, gender, sexual orientation, physical, emotional, or intellectual vulnerability
- involves an element of coercion or pre-planning
- involves a power imbalance between the child/children allegedly responsible for the behaviour and the child/children allegedly the subject of that power
- involves a misuse of power

A behaviour continuum can be a useful tool but it is not definitive or exhaustive. Staff should bear in mind that there are some aspects which may not be relevant or appropriate to consider in response to other alleged behaviour involving reports of other types of abuse.

In addition, the School could be required to deal with cases involving a range of alleged behaviours including sexual behaviour, emotional, physical behaviour and digital behaviour. It should also be recognised that the same behaviour presented by different children may be understood at different points on a spectrum, depending on the particular context.

In all cases a contextual safeguarding approach should be adopted and staff should always discuss any concerns regarding other, or multiple, forms of peer on peer abuse with a DSL.

## 5. Preventing Peer on Peer abuse: a whole School approach

The School actively seeks to prevent all forms of peer-on-peer abuse by raising awareness among Governors, Staff, Pupils, and parents about this issue.

This will include:

Regular updates and information to the whole School community about the prevalence and effect of peer-on-peer abuse, and how to prevent, identify and respond to it promptly and appropriately;

Appropriate training for staff, eg scenario discussions, contextual Safeguarding, the identification and classification of potentially harmful or risky behaviours and the importance of taking seriously all forms of peer-on-peer abuse;

Educating children about the nature and prevalence of peer-on-peer abuse via PSHE, tutorials, assemblies, the wider curriculum and other appropriate forums. Pupils will be aware of what they can do to seek support if they witness or experience such abuse and the harmful effect that it can have on those who experience it;

Pupils will be regularly informed of the School's approach to such issues, including its zero tolerance policy towards all forms of peer-on-peer abuse. Pupils will be encouraged to contribute to the School's understanding of such issues and to contribute to policy development via direct feedback to pastoral staff and such forums as School Councils and Form / House Captains' meetings;

Parents will be encouraged to talk to the School's pastoral staff on this issue, particularly on what they perceive the risks facing their children to be and how they would like to work with the School to address those risks, e.g. via questionnaires, discussion groups / workshops and policy reviews;

All peer-on-peer abuse issues / incidents will be fed back to the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead team so that they can spot and address any concerning trends and identify pupils / groups of pupils who may be in need of additional support;

In accordance with the School's Behaviour policy and Code of Conduct, all members of the community will be expected to challenge the attitudes that underlie such abuse (both inside and outside the classroom) and to actively address equality issues, promote the School's ethos and values and to encourage a culture of tolerance and respect amongst all members of the School community;

The School will actively engage with its local partners in relation to peer-on-peer abuse, and will work closely with, for example, the local Safeguarding Partners where the children on our School roll live;

The School will discuss concerns/allegations of peer-on-peer abuse with local Safeguarding Partners where necessary, and particularly where wider safeguarding concerns exist and the management of an incident may require additional expertise and effective partnership working.

## **6. Responding to concerns or allegations of peer-on-peer abuse**

**6.1** All concerns/allegations of peer-on-peer abuse will be handled sensitively, appropriately and promptly.

Any response will:

- include a thorough investigation of the concerns/allegations and the wider context in which they may have occurred (as appropriate);
- treat all children involved as being at potential risk - while the child allegedly responsible for the abuse may pose a significant risk of harm to other children, s/he may also have considerable unmet needs and be at risk of harm themselves. We will ensure a safeguarding response is in place for both the child who has allegedly



experienced the abuse, and the child who has allegedly been responsible for it, recognising that additional sanctioning work may be required for the latter at the appropriate point;

- take into account that the abuse may indicate wider safeguarding concerns for any of the children involved and consider and address the effect of wider socio-cultural contexts - such as the child's/children's peer group (both within and outside the School); family; the School environment; and the child/children's online presence.
- consider what changes may need to be made to these contexts to address the child's/children's needs and to mitigate risk; and the potential complexity of peer-on-peer abuse and of children's experiences and consider the interplay between power, choice and consent. While children may appear to be making choices, if those choices are limited they are not consenting;
- the views of the child/children affected. Unless it is considered unsafe to do so (for example, where a referral needs to be made immediately), the DSL should discuss the proposed action with the child/children and their parents and obtain consent to any referral before it is made. The School should manage the child/children's expectations about information sharing, and keep them and their parents informed of developments, where appropriate and safe to do so.
- If a pupil is in immediate danger, or at risk of significant harm, a referral to children's social care and/or the Police will be made immediately. Staff are aware that anyone can make a referral. Where referrals are not made by the DSL, the DSL should be informed as soon as possible that a referral has been made;
- If a member of staff thinks for whatever reason that a child may be at risk of or experiencing abuse by their peer(s), or that a child may be at risk of abusing or may be abusing their peer(s), they should discuss their concern with the DSL without delay so that a course of action can be agreed;
- If a child speaks to a member of staff about peer-on-peer abuse that they have witnessed or are a part of, the member of staff should listen carefully to the child and use open language that demonstrates understanding rather than judgement;
- Further details on best practice for managing and recording disclosures is contained in the School's Safeguarding and Welfare policy.

## **6.2 How will the School respond to concerns or allegations of peer-on-peer abuse?**

The DSL will discuss the concerns or allegations with the member of staff who has reported them and will, where necessary, take any immediate steps to ensure the safety of the child/all children affected.

DSLs and other senior Pastoral staff will always use their professional judgement to determine whether it is appropriate for the alleged behaviour to be to be dealt with in

accordance with the anti-bullying policy (therefore usually an internal School matter) or if the allegation or incident should be considered as peer on peer abuse, requiring an external safeguarding referral. In borderline cases the DSL may wish to consult with children's social care and/or any other external agencies on a no-names basis to determine the most appropriate response. DSLs will record the advice and the rationale for such decisions.

Where the DSL and other senior Pastoral staff confirm, consider or suspect that the behaviour in question might be abusive or violent on a spectrum (as described above) or an offence may have been committed, the DSL will immediately contact the local Safeguarding Partner, and in any event within 24 hours of the DSL becoming aware of it.

After consultation with the local Safeguarding Partner, the School will generally inform parents / carers of the referral, unless there are compelling safeguarding reasons not to (eg if informing a parent or carer may put the child at additional risk).

The DSL will discuss the allegations/concerns with the local Safeguarding Partner and agree on a course of action, which may include:

**A - Manage internally with help from external specialists where appropriate and possible**

Where behaviour between peers is abusive or violent (as opposed to inappropriate or problematic), scenarios B, C or D should ordinarily apply. However, where support from local agencies is not available, the School may need to handle allegations/concerns internally. In these cases, the School may still engage and seek advice from external specialists.

**B – Undertake/contribute to an inter-agency early help assessment, with targeted early help services provided to address the assessed needs of a child/children and their family**

These services may, for example, include CAMHS, a specialist harmful sexual behaviour team, and/or youth offending services.

**C – Refer child/children to children's social care for a section 17 and/or 47 statutory assessment**

As a matter of best practice, if an incident of peer-on-peer abuse requires referral to, and action by, children's social care then a strategy meeting is usually convened by the local Safeguarding Partner (s). The School will actively co-operate with this safeguarding response, fulfilling our professional obligation to safeguard and support both the child who has experienced the abuse, and the child who was responsible for it, and to help establish the contexts to which the abuse was associated.

**D – Report alleged criminal behaviour to the Police**

Alleged criminal behaviour will ordinarily be reported to the Police in addition to children's social care services. However, there are some circumstances where it may not be appropriate to report such behaviour to the Police. For example, where the exchange of youth produced sexual imagery does not involve any aggravating factors. All concerns/allegations will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, and in light of advice from local Safeguarding Partners and the wider context.

Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point is that this information should be passed to the Police. The age of criminal responsibility is ten but if the alleged child is under ten then the same reporting principle applies, though the Police will adapt a welfare, rather than criminal justice approach.

Where a report has been made to the Police, the School will consult with Police and other Safeguarding Partners to agree what information can be disclosed to appropriate staff, parents / carers. The priority will be to proceed in a manner which will best protect and support the child who has been subject to the abuse, including protecting their anonymity.

In some cases, it may become clear very quickly, that the Police (for whatever reason) will not take further action. The School acknowledges that a Police decision not to progress the case does not necessarily mean that the allegation was unfounded and will therefore continue to engage with children's social care and other external agencies to offer appropriate support for the children involved, while continuing to proceed with an internal investigative process, in accordance with the School's Behaviour policy.

If the allegation is progressed through the criminal justice system, the School will not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of the Police investigation to offer appropriate support to the children involved. Whilst protecting the children and / or taking any steps in accordance with the School's Behaviour policy, the DSLs will continue to work closely with the local Safeguarding partners to ensure that any actions taken by the School do not jeopardise the Police investigation.

If a child is convicted or receives a caution for a sexual offence, the School will review its assessment of risk to the children involved and the wider School community and will, in accordance with the Behaviour policy, hold a formal disciplinary Hearing where permanent exclusion from School is the likely outcome.

### **6.3 Individual needs and Risk Assessment**

Where there is an incident of peer-on-peer abuse, the School will immediately carry out a robust risk and needs assessment in respect of each child affected by the abuse, consulting with local Safeguarding Partners as appropriate.

These risk assessments will:

- assess and address the nature and level of risks that are posed and/or faced by the child acknowledging that the needs and wishes of the child should be paramount in any decisions so that they can feel as much control over the process as is reasonably possible;

- engage with the child's parents and draw upon local services and agencies to ensure that the child's needs are met in the short and long-term.
- Consider whether any targeted interventions are needed to address the underlying attitudes or behaviour of any child;
- Reviewed the agreed intervention and support at regular intervals in light of the child's on-going needs to ensure that real progress is being made which benefits the child and allows them to continue to safely access their education.
- A key consideration for DSLs, alongside progressing the safeguarding report and process, will be the important question of the abused child and alleged abuser sharing classes and space at School, taking into account the School's duties to both safeguard children and to educate them. These decisions are likely to be complex and difficult and will be considered on a case-by-case basis;
- Where there is an allegation of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault between peers at Highgate the alleged abuser will normally be temporarily excluded from School, pending further investigation by the Police and School. This is in the best interests of both children and should not be perceived to be a judgement on the guilt of the alleged offender. Appropriate academic and pastoral support will be provided by the School during this period of temporary exclusion;
- The School will continue to liaise with the Police and Children's Social Care and adjust the risk assessment as necessary; it may be possible for the School to fulfil its duty to educate by removing the alleged abuser to alternative classes and activities from those that they share with the abused child. Consideration would also be given to the circulation and routines of the children involved in order to keep them apart, as far as possible, on the School site and on the journey to / from School;
- All of the discussions above will take place bearing in mind the needs and wishes of the abused child at the heart of the process (supported by parents and carers as required).

## 6.4 Ongoing response

### **Safeguarding and supporting the abused child / children**

- Any response by the School will consider the age and the developmental stage of the child, the nature of the allegations and the potential risk of further abuse. The School is aware that the nature of sexual violence and sexual harassment is likely to have created a power imbalance between the children involved;
- The School will regard the needs and wishes of the abused child as a paramount factor in its risk assessment and decisions on next steps. Wherever possible, the abused child will be supported in maintaining their normal routine, to give them feeling of as much control and safety at School as possible;

- The abused child will never be made to feel that they are a problem or that they should be ashamed for making a report;
- The School's next steps and responses will be carefully considered and proportionate, in accordance with our Safeguarding approach. Effective communication with, and appropriate support for, the child (and their parents / carers) will be a priority;
- Abused children may not disclose all information immediately and ongoing dialogue will be kept open and encouraged. The School will offer the child the opportunity to nominate a 'designated trusted adult' on the staff to communicate with if that would be helpful;
- A victim of sexual violence or harassment may be traumatised and may struggle in a normal classroom environment. The School will avoid any actions that may serve to isolate the child, especially from supportive peer groups, but if the child wishes to withdraw from some activities or work in a separate space then the School will make every reasonable effort to meet these wishes, in both the short and, if necessary, longer-term;
- The School will do everything it can to protect the child from any bullying or harassment that occurs as a result of the report they have made;
- The abused child will be given all necessary support to allow them to remain in School but, if the trauma does not allow them to do this, then School will do all that it reasonably can to support a requested move to an alternative School or education provider.

### **Safeguarding and supporting the alleged peer abuser**

- The School will do all that it reasonably can to balance its statutory priority to safeguard and support the abused child (and / or the wider pupil body), alongside its obligation to educate and safeguard the alleged abuser;
- The School will be mindful of the age and developmental stage of the alleged abuser and the resultant stress of being the subject of an allegation, in addition to potential negative reactions from other peers and members of the School community to the allegations;
- The School will respond proportionately, on a case-by-case basis. The alleged abuser may have unmet needs and may pose a risk of harm to other children. HSB in young children may be (and often are) a symptom of their own abuse or exposure to abusive practices or harmful materials. The School will seek the support and advice of children's social care, specialist sexual violence services and the Police in assessing how best to support the child concerned.

- If the alleged abuser moves to another educational institution then the DSLs will ensure that the child's educational progress and support, ongoing needs, potential risk of harm to others are communicated effectively to the new School or education provider.

## Appendix 2: Useful Sources of Information

### Department for Education: Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017)

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/623895/Preventing\\_and\\_tackling\\_bullying\\_advice.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf)

Note 'Further Sources of Information' section, page 16.

### General

- **Anti-bullying Alliance**  
Web: [www.Anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.Anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)  
Email: [aba@ncb.org.uk](mailto:aba@ncb.org.uk)  
Post: ABA, National Children's Bureau, 8 Wakley Street, London EC1V 7QE
- **Kidscape**  
Web: [www.Kidscape.org.uk](http://www.Kidscape.org.uk)  
Email: [info@kidscape.org.uk](mailto:info@kidscape.org.uk)  
Tel: 020 7730 3300  
Post: 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1 0DH
- **Childline**  
Tel: 0800 1111

### Specific Issues

- **Cyber-bullying**

**Childnet International:** *advice for parents and children on internet safety*

Web: [www.Childnet.com](http://www.Childnet.com)

Email: [info@childnet.com](mailto:info@childnet.com)

Tel: 020 7369 6967

Post: Studio 14, Brockley Cross Business Centre, 96 Endwell Road, London SE4 2PD

The UK Council for Child and Internet Safety (UKCCIS):  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis>

Think U Know (CEOP: [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk))

Digizen (Digital citizenship: [www.digizen.org](http://www.digizen.org))

- **LGBT**

Barnardos: ([www.barnardos.org.uk/what we do/our work/lgbtq.htm](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_work/lgbtq.htm))

EACH (Educational Action Challenging Homophobia): [www.each.education](http://www.each.education)

Schools Out (LGBT in Education: [www.schools-out.org.uk](http://www.schools-out.org.uk))

Stonewall Youth (UK LGBT Equality: [www.youngstonewall.org.uk](http://www.youngstonewall.org.uk))

- **SEND**

Mencap (Learning Disability: [www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk))

- **Mental Health**

MindEd (Mental Health: [www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk))

Young Minds (Mental health and well-being: [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk))

- **Racism and Extremism**

Show Racism the Red Card ([www.srtrc.org](http://www.srtrc.org))

Educate Against Hate ([www.educateagainsthate.com](http://www.educateagainsthate.com))

The Anne Frank Trust ([www.annefrank.org.uk](http://www.annefrank.org.uk))

- **Sexual Harassment and Sexual Bullying**

Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Coalition (EVAW):  
[www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk](http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk)

Disrespect Nobody: ([www.disrespectnobody.co.uk](http://www.disrespectnobody.co.uk))