

## **CITY OF LONDON SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

### **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

#### **1. Context**

All schools have a duty to draw up procedures to prevent bullying and to bring these procedures to the attention of staff, parents and pupils under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The school's policy and procedures also take into account the guidance given in the DFE's Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2014 and Behaviour and Discipline in Schools 2014 and the guidance given in the ISSR handbook September 2015.

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

The school will not tolerate bullying. We believe that all students have the right to be educated in an environment where there is mutual respect and co-operation. Bullying is contrary to this approach and we do everything possible to discourage it.

We aim to create an environment in which bullying is minimised. If bullying does occur, we aim to ensure that the person being bullied is safe, we work to stop the bullying happening again and we provide support to the person being bullied. Parents, pupils teaching and support staff must be alert to signs of bullying and all members of the school community must report any bullying they experience or witness to the victim's Form Tutor or Head of Section.

Senior members of staff will always take reports of bullying seriously and will always ensure they are thoroughly investigated. Serious instances of bullying may be regarded as safeguarding issues and as such may be reported to the designated staff safeguarding leads and dealt with under the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. In some instances and where a criminal offence may have been committed it will be appropriate to liaise with the City of London Police.

#### **3. Definitions of Bullying**

Bullying is aggressive or insulting behaviour by an individual or group, often repeated over time, which hurts or harms another pupil or group physically or emotionally. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability or because the child is adopted, is looked after by the Local Authority or is a carer. It may occur directly or through cyber-technology (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email).. Research confirms that bullying can have a lasting destructive effect on people's lives. Bullying can produce long lasting feelings of powerlessness, loss of self-esteem and isolation. Victims can sometimes become convinced that they are somehow at fault, can suffer serious long-term distress. Their school work and social and emotional development can be seriously adversely affected. Bullying has the potential to cause serious psychological and physical damage and, in the most extreme cases, suicide.

#### 4. **Aims and Objectives**

The aim of the school Anti-Bullying Policy is to ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment. The school's objectives are:

- 4.1. To prevent bullying from happening by proactively teaching pupils about the harm it can do
- 4.2. To promote appreciation of diversity
- 4.3. To respond appropriately and effectively to instances of bullying
- 4.4. To ensure that parents, pupils and members of staff understand what bullying is and understand the school's policy on bullying and follow it, including by reporting any instances of bullying they come across
- 4.5. To keep governors updated about serious instances of bullying and for governors to review the policy annually and to check on its effective implementation

#### 5. **Examples of Bullying**

*NB this is not an exhaustive list but a summary of some common types of bullying behaviour:*

- Calling someone names
- Threatening them
- Mocking their contributions in class
- Deliberately excluding someone
- Spreading rumours
- Sending unpleasant texts or making threats or mocking someone on line (see section on cyberbullying at the end of this document)
- Saying or doing hurtful things to or about someone on the basis of their or their family member's actual or perceived sexual orientation (see section on homophobic bullying at the end of this document)
- Saying or doing hurtful things to or about someone on the basis of their, ethnic, social, cultural or religious background, a disability or special educational need, because they are in the care of the Local Authority or are acting as a carer, or because of an issue in their family
- Hitting, kicking, otherwise inflicting physical pain

#### 6. **Signs that someone might be a victim of bullying**

*NB this is not an exhaustive list but a summary of some common indications that someone is being bullied. They could also be signs of other difficulties, but should give rise to investigating the possibility of bullying.*

Parents and teachers should look out for a pupil:

- Seeming afraid of the journey to or from school, asking to be taken to school when they have previously been happy to walk or take public transport unaccompanied
- Making unexplained changes to their routine

- Trying to get out of going to school e.g. by claiming to be ill when nothing really seems wrong with them, playing truant
- Becoming anxious and withdrawn, appearing to have lost confidence
- Changes to behaviour such as stammering, easily becoming tearful, having a disturbed sleep pattern
- Possessions or clothes being frequently lost or damaged, asking for money without explaining why they need it
- Doing badly in school work
- Becoming aggressive towards siblings
- Unwilling to use mobile phone or computer or using them obsessively
- Unexplained cuts or bruises, self-harming, preoccupied by suicide

## **7. Forms of bullying**

- Emotional – excluding, tormenting, threatening, hiding possessions
- Physical – pushing, punching, hair pulling, other violence
- Racist – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact, sexually abusive comments
- Verbal – name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber – misuse of the internet, social media, mobile phone and associated equipment

## **8. Preventing bullying**

The school takes proactive measures to foster positive relationships and mutual respect through PHSCE, peer support systems such as mentoring and form prefects, the school council and the system for recognising and awarding achievement. The school's programme of extracurricular activities enables pupils to achieve and to develop self-esteem and good relationships beyond the classroom. Opportunities to discuss and challenge bullying are provided in many subjects such as English and RPE, whilst assemblies, including special assemblies during National Anti-Bullying Week are also used to highlight the issues involved.

The school has a clearly defined pastoral system based around Form Tutors, Deputy Tutors, Assistant Heads of Section and Heads of Section. Pupils may seek support from the School Nurse and the School Counsellors. The House System fosters vertical integration allowing younger pupils to be supported by older students, and a Stonewall group provides support for those experiencing homophobic bullying.

Teachers receive training in dealing with bullying as part of the recurring cycle of CPD, parents are able to discuss bullying at Parents' Forum Events, at Parents' Breakfasts and at Parents' Evenings, whilst Governors annually review the school's anti bullying policy and scrutinise the schools records of serious bullying incidents. Resources relating to anti bullying are available in the school library. There is regular staff training to ensure that everyone is aware of the principles of the school policy, of action needed to resolve and prevent problems, of their legal responsibilities and of the support available to staff. Specialist training will be provided as needed to provide understanding of pupils with particular issues such as special educational needs or disabilities and LGBT pupils.

## **9. Dealing with bullying**

All members of the school community are encouraged to report any instances of bullying. "Third Party" reporting of bullying is positively encouraged so that those who are aware of bullying but are not victims of it come forward. Pupils will regularly be reminded about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders.

Allegations of bullying must always be reported to the Head of Section or the Assistant Head of Section of the alleged victims and perpetrators, who will investigate the allegations, involving the Deputy Head (Pastoral) if necessary. Confidential notes of all allegations of bullying will be kept by Heads of Sections. Notes about serious cases of bullying will be kept on the files of victims and perpetrators and a central record of serious incidents is kept by the Headmistress and reported to Governors.

If the investigation confirms that bullying has taken place, it will be made clear to the perpetrator that bullying will not be tolerated. The perpetrator's parents will be informed and a suitable disciplinary sanction may be given. In serious cases, the Headmistress may temporarily or permanently exclude the perpetrator from school.

In less serious cases, mediation may take place which may include giving the victim the opportunity to tell the perpetrator about the effects of their bullying and which will give the perpetrator the opportunity to apologise for their behaviour, in accordance with the principles of restorative justice.

## **10. Referral to External Agencies**

When a child has experienced bullying which gives rise to reasonable concern that she is suffering, or it likely to suffer, significant harm this will be treated as child protection issue.. Advice will be sought from the LADO (Pat Dixon 020 7332 1215) and if deemed appropriate a referral will be made to Children's Social Care with the consent of the child or her parents.

## **11. Bullying experienced by members of staff**

The school recognises that adults can be the victims of bullying. Staff who experience bullying have recourse to the City of London's employee procedures including the Policy on Harassment and Bullying at Work and the staff Grievance Procedure.

## **12. Homophobic bullying**

The school recognises that pupils who identify as being LGBT or who are perceived as such may be subject to homophobic bullying. The school seeks to foster a culture of tolerance and acceptance of diversity and addresses issues of homophobia in PHSCE, in other subjects where appropriate and through assemblies.

The school has a long established Stonewall Youth Volunteering Group. Staff leaders of the group and some senior student members of it have received training by Stonewall. All teachers receive training on avoiding heteronormative lesson content where possible.

### **13. Cyberbullying**

The school is committed to teaching pupils and parents about e-safety and the dangers of cyberbullying and online exploitation. These topics are covered for pupils in PHSCE and ICT lessons and for parents in talks at pastoral evenings. Children are given age appropriate advice about the pitfalls of the internet, including the risk of online grooming.

The school has clear rules about the use of mobile phones and cameras in the pupil code of conduct. There is clarity about the school's use of photographs of pupils in promotional materials in the parental terms and conditions. Staff personal use of IT is covered in the staff code of conduct and is part of the regular cycle of safeguarding training. The school's computer system is filtered to prevent access to unsuitable sites, including social media sites. The school will act swiftly to block inappropriate sites if these are drawn to our attention. In a fast changing world continued vigilance by staff, parents and pupils is encouraged. The school's IT code of conduct is explicit about the unacceptability of teasing, mocking or threatening others online.

As with other forms of bullying, all members of the school community are encouraged to report any instances of cyberbullying.

### **14. Bullying which takes place off site and outside school time**

Any reports of bullying of one member of the school community by another member will be treated in accordance with this policy, regardless of when and where the incident takes place.

### **15. Review and Evaluation**

The Deputy Head (Pastoral) and the pastoral team keep the effectiveness of this policy and the prevalence of bullying in the school under ongoing review as part of their cycle of regular meetings. This process of review includes discussion of whether any patterns of bullying behaviour have emerged.

The policy and its effectiveness are reviewed annually by Governors.

The School Council regularly discusses anti bullying.

### **16. References**

- Senior School Parents Handbook
- Prep Parents Handbook
- Pupil Code of Conduct
- ICT Code of Conduct
- School Policy on Pastoral Care, Discipline and Exclusions

**Approved by Board of Governors:**

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