



HALSTEAD
PREPARATORY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Anti Bullying Policy

AIMS

At Halstead Prep School we are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed; but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other. We believe all members of the school are entitled to a safe and happy environment.

Halstead prides itself on its respect, care for everyone and mutual tolerance. Parents/guardians have an important role supporting the School in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions.

Bullying, harassment and victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable and is very serious and can cause psychological damage.

This policy applies to all pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). It has regard to *Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools*.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying may be defined as the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person by physical (including sexual), verbal (including chat room and SMS messages), and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidating.

Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, homophobic, which focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time. We always treat it very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the school's policy on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles.

Bullying is

- deliberate and hurtful behaviour
- it is repeated, often over a period of time
- it is difficult for the victim to defend themselves

SIGNS OF BULLYING

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 bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
- Books, bags 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 office with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiences nightmares
- Talking of suicide or running away

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

We take the following preventative measures:

- We use the first assemblies of the year to explain the school policy on bullying and our Kindness Code and where necessary this is repeated during the year.
- Our PSHE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school.
- Other lessons, particularly RE, English and Drama highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing social skills.
- All our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place.
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents.
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site, particularly areas where bullying might occur.

- We operate a 'buddy' system for all new girls whereby they are supported and helped to settle smoothly into the school by a member of their form.
- We provide advice and guidance to our Head Girl and prefects which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable pupils.
- We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the school, involving our pupils
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.

The school will undertake appropriate sanctions for any cases of bullying. Initially this will be with the form teacher and will then follow through to the Head Teacher, if necessary, with the ultimate sanction being exclusion.

CYBERBULLYING – DEFINITION

Mr Bill Belsey, the creator of the web site: <http://www.cyberbullying.org/> defined this unpleasant phenomenon in the following terms:

“Cyberbullying involves 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.”

Cyberbullying can involve Social Networking Sites, like Bebo and Myspace, emails and mobile phones, used for SMS messages and as cameras.

CYBERBULLYING – PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

In addition to the preventative measures described above, Halstead :

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its charter for the safe use of the internet. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department monitors pupils' use.
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- Adheres to the BECTA guidelines regarding E-teaching and the internet.
- We do not allow pupils to bring mobile phones to school.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH REPORTED BULLYING

If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedures are adopted:

- The member of staff to whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the pupils involved.
- He/she will inform an appropriate member of the Senior Management Team as soon as possible.
- The member of staff will calmly explain the range of disciplinary measures that are potentially involved.
- The victim will be interviewed on her own and asked to write an account of events.
- The bully, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events.
- The incident will be recorded.
- All teachers will be kept informed. In all incidents, the Headmistress should be informed.
- The alleged bully will be interviewed by a member of the Senior Leadership Team, separately from the victim and it will be made clear why her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. She will be offered guidance on modifying her behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions.
- The victim will be interviewed by a member of the Senior and support given.
- The resolution should recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures.
- A meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode.
- In serious cases parents of both parties are informed.
- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place.
- In very serious cases, and only after the Headmistress has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to the Social Services. However, it is the policy of Halstead Prep School to attempt to resolve such issues internally under the school's own disciplinary procedures, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution seems likely.