



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Aims and objectives

The aim of this policy is twofold

- to **try and prevent bullying**, as far as possible and
- to help staff, pupils and parents to **deal with bullying when it occurs**

Our community at Nottingham Girls' High School is based upon respect, good manners and fair play and we pride ourselves on our respect and mutual tolerance. The School and the GDST are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can develop her full potential.

This **ethos means** that:

- Bullying of any kind, harassment, victimisation and discrimination are not acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- We seek to 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.
- 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 parents/guardians have an important role in supporting Nottingham Girls' High School in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and home have consistent expectations of behaviour and co-operate closely together.
- We have regard to relevant national guidance, especially the DfE publication 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (July 2013) and to the requirements of our regulatory bodies, such as the Independent Schools Inspectorate, with which this Policy complies.
- Our anti-bullying approach also involves other school policies, especially the Behaviour Policy and Code of Conduct and ICT Code of Conduct.
- We use PSHE lessons and activities, the Tutor Programme, assemblies, projects, stories and literature, current affairs, historical events, tutorials and other curriculum approaches to discuss and tackle bullying and to help create an atmosphere where bullying is more likely to be prevented in the first place.
- We train staff to recognise the potential signs of bullying and how to deal with it when it occurs and have systems in place for investigating bullying at a suitably senior level. These are summarised below.

What do we mean by bullying?

This policy uses the definition: **Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time. It can be physical or verbal in nature and can include the following: racial, religious, cultural, sexual/sexist, homophobic, disability and cyber bullying.**

In 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (July 2013) the DfE define bullying as: 'behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally'. This definition highlights the fact that bullying can be by an individual or a group against another individual or group. A common example of bullying by a group would be when a particular friendship group decides to isolate or exclude a former member of the group.

Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time – even in the very best schools with highly effective systems of pastoral care. Sometimes it is overt and intimidatory but it is often hidden and subtle. Whatever its nature, bullying is treated seriously at Nottingham Girls’ High School because

- it is against our ethos and values
- it is hurtful to others and to the school community
- it can cause great distress, unhappiness and psychological damage. At its worst, persistent and severe bullying can even lead to suicide, which is why it is taken so seriously
- it can also be a criminal offence, for example if the behaviour amounts to harassment or to threatening behaviour.

Types of bullying

Bullying can take a variety of forms including:

- Verbal bullying (e.g. name calling, spreading rumours, teasing, taunting, constant criticism or rude gestures or a deliberately intimidating look or stare, extortion or threats)
- Physical bullying (e.g. kicking, pushing, damaging possessions, hiding, stealing or damaging the victim’s property, gesturing,)
- Emotional bullying (e.g. isolation, being made to feel “different” and uncomfortable, generating fear in the victim in order to dominate her, extortion or threats)
- Cyber bullying (e.g. sending offensive, threatening or derogatory text messages, emails or posting comments or photographs on social websites)
- Complicity which falls short of direct participation in bullying.

Being aware – possible signs of bullying

Changes in behaviour which 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 spoiled 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 Medical Centre 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, experiencing 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.

Sadly, some individuals are more vulnerable to bullying, and less likely to speak out – including LGBTQ pupils and those with SEND. Again, staff, parents and peers should bear this in mind in cases of possible suspected bullying.

Preventative measures

We are pro-active and provide the following preventative measures:

- Use appropriate assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying.

- Our PSHCE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. The programme is structured to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other.
- Use other lessons, such as RS, History and English to 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.
- Circle time (in the Junior school)
- Special achievers (in the Junior school)
- Staff are alert to inappropriate language or behaviour as they move around the school site, to reduce risk at times/places where bullying is most likely.
- A strong and experienced pastoral leadership team support the senior leadership team in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and are alert to possible signs of bullying.
- The pastoral leadership team give support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on follow-up work with both victims and bullies.
- The nurse is an important part of our pastoral support service. She is available to give advice and support to pupils.
- Advice is displayed in our Medical Centre on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential help lines and web sites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline, Kidscape, Get Connected, Samaritans.
- The Bullying Section on FireFly provides links and useful information on bullying as well as a place to report bullying incidents.
- Anti-Bullying Week – Tutor Programme Resources and assemblies are focused on anti-bullying.
- Digital Citizenship Week - Tutor Programme Resources and assemblies are focused on anti-bullying, with a particular focus on cyber-bullying.
- The school reserves the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips or which occur in the vicinity of the school, involving our pupils.

The school's Behaviour Policy alongside the Exclusions Policy, provide support for the victim and the bully and support this policy.

Dealing with Bullying

If you are being bullied:

- Stay calm and try to appear confident. Tell the bully to stop and get away from the situation as quickly as you can.
- Do not suffer in silence: talk to a member of staff. This could be your class teacher, tutor or year group head, the school nurse or counsellor, or any other member of staff you trust. If you are unhappy about talking to a member of staff directly, you could talk to someone in your family, a friend, a buddy or peer mentor or one of the pastoral prefects. Telling does not make you a 'grass' or 'snitch': not telling means that the bullying is likely to continue. Remember you may not be the only victim.
- Be assured that we take every report of bullying seriously and will act upon it, even if it occurred outside the school. We will keep records of what has happened, and consult you and support you in whatever action we take.
- Remember being bullied is not your fault – nobody ever deserves to be bullied.
- If you feel you are being bullied by a member of staff you should take the same action as if it were another pupil, that is, report the matter to someone you trust. All forms of bullying are unacceptable and all reports of bullying are investigated and dealt with irrespective of who the person responsible for the bullying incident might be.

If you know that someone else being bullied:

- Talk to a member of staff, so that the school can take steps to help the victim.

- Stand up for them – studies show that one of the most effective ways of stopping bullying is for fellow pupils to show their support for the victim.
- Be sceptical about rumours concerning other pupils. Don't add to them. Put yourself in the position of the person targeted.
- Don't be drawn into simply standing by. Many perpetrators will not persist in bullying unless they have an audience to play to, and by not taking action it could be argued you are condoning what is happening.

School Procedures

We:

- Encourage all our pupils to tell a member of staff at once if they know or suspect that bullying is taking place.
- Investigate and record all reported incidents immediately. We always follow up reported incidents. Monitor bullying records so that any emerging patterns may be identified.
- Expect all pupils to adhere to Nottingham Girls' High School's ICT code of conduct for the safe use of the internet. Our filtering system blocks pupil access to social networking sites. If concerns about a pupil's use of the internet are raised, checks are made on their account.
- Offer guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in PSHE lessons, which covers blocking and removing contacts from "buddy lists".
- Offer guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.

If an incident of bullying is reported:

- It will always be investigated.
- The School recognises that each situation is different and the procedures adopted will depend upon the circumstances.
- Initially the discussions which take place are likely to involve the pupil(s) concerned and the relevant form tutor or Pastoral Head. These will be recorded by the form teacher and relevant staff made aware of the situation. In all serious incidents, the Head will be informed immediately and may deal with the matter directly or delegate this to an appropriate senior member of staff.
- The Head of Juniors or relevant Pastoral Head will be informed.
- Strategies will be agreed with the girls involved and will be monitored by the member of staff (and other adults if appropriate). In particular, the views of those being bullied will be respected and they will be consulted over any action to be taken.
- Strategies adopted will depend on the circumstances and may include:
 - Discussion with the pupils involved to consider ways of dealing with the situation
 - Negotiation / mediation between the girls involved
- The victim will be interviewed by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the alleged perpetrator and will be offered support to develop a strategy to help herself.
- If the incident is considered by the Head or Pastoral Head to be sufficiently serious, or if the action taken does not appear to resolve the situation, parents of all those concerned will be contacted and the situation discussed.
- The alleged bully will be offered guidance on modifying her behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions. It will be made clear why her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress.
- Where bullying has taken place, depending on the severity of the bullying, disciplinary sanctions will be given appropriate to the incident. This may not necessarily involve direct punishment of the girls accused, but if the bullying continues, the full range of sanctions may be used, including fixed term exclusion or even, in the most serious cases, permanent exclusion. The aim is always to stop the bullying happening.

- In the Senior School sanctions will vary from lunchtime detentions to after school detentions and in severe cases exclusion may be necessary. Detentions will involve advice from Pastoral Heads on what is deemed to be appropriate behaviour and some form of written work will be set.
- Reports of bullying and action taken will be carefully documented and the Head notified. Notes will be placed on pupil files.
- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place.
- In very serious cases, and only after the Head 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 Nottingham Girls' High 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 is likely.

Sanctions in cases of bullying

Although each case may vary, where a pupil or pupils have been found to have bullied, then appropriate and proportionate sanctions will be applied, in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy and taking account of any cumulative effect of a pupil's behaviour.

Depending upon the particular situation, sanctions, either individually or in combination, may involve such steps as

- loss of privileges
- being 'on report' to monitor behaviour
- making restitution to the victim (for example, for items damaged or destroyed)
- detention(s), either at lunchtime or after school
- fixed-term exclusion **
- permanent exclusion **

NB ** These sanctions will be imposed in severe or persistent cases of bullying, in accordance with the GDST Exclusions Policy.

Partnership with Parents

We believe that working with parents/guardians is essential to establishing the school's anti-bullying ethos and resolving any issues that arise.

- Parents are encouraged to reinforce the principles of the Anti-Bullying Policy at home.
- Parents are asked to let (Deputy Head Katrina Handford-Smith, Senior School or Peter Elkington, Deputy Head Junior School) know directly if they have cause for concern, either on behalf of their own children or because of rumours about others.
- In any serious case of bullying parents will be informed by the school and may be invited in to discuss the matter. We will keep in regular contact with parents until the issue is resolved.

Inset and training

The attention of new staff is drawn to the Anti-Bullying Policy at the earliest opportunity as part of their induction. Further training is carried out on a regular basis through the Pastoral Consultative Committee, Pastoral Head's Tutor Meetings, GDST INSET and whole school INSET. Updates are provided to staff at staff briefing.

Training provided to staff covers:

- helping staff to understand what bullying is and the different types of bullying
- e-safety and cyber bullying
- raising awareness of the different signs of bullying

- The needs of particular pupils, e.g. those with SEND and LGBT pupils
- what staff should do in the event of bullying, including what to do if they find themselves the victim of bullying
- familiarising staff with the school procedures for dealing with bullying, including when bullying should be considered a safeguarding issue
- how to talk to the girls about bullying.

Overall, anti-bullying training is delivered in the wider context of the Pastoral Care training at NGHS. We pride ourselves on knowing the girls and establishing effective relationships with the girls whereby they feel safe to talk to staff in the event of bullying or any other issue of concern. Staff receive training to be effective tutors, with particular focus on girls' friendships and building positive relationships. Staff are also trained in the delivery of the Tutor Programme, which deals with friendships and bullying on a regular basis.

Related policies are:

- Behaviour Policy
- Educational Support Policy
- Exclusions Policy
- Equal Opportunities
- ICT Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- PSHCE Policy

Key Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Head: Katrina Handford-Smith
 Deputy Head Junior School: Peter Elkington
 Head of EYFS: Nicola Brown
 Head of Key Stage 1: Debbie Baker
 Head of Key Stage 2: Sally Braud
 Head of Section (senior school)
 Key Stage 3: Anna Shipman
 Key Stage 4: Jo Cann
 Key Stage 5: Pip Flewitt
 School nurse: Brenda Williams

Outside organisations

Childline: 0800 1111

Last review: February 2017 Next review: February 2018