



# Harrogate Ladies' College

## Anti-bullying Policy

### 1. Policy Statement

It is important that all members of the school community recognise that bullying behaviour is not acceptable. All pupils and staff have the right to attend a school where they feel safe, free from harassment and where they know that any worries they have will be listened to and acted upon.

### 2. Aims

The school aims:

- To foster an atmosphere of mutual respect between all members of the school community so that bullying behaviour is rare.
- To encourage a climate of openness in which pupils, staff, parents and carers are able to talk readily about any suspicion of bullying.
- To establish an atmosphere of group responsibility, so that all pupils take care of each other and are proactive in attempting to resolve conflict.
- To give pupils strategies to resist bullying by others and develop appropriate resilience.
- To provide support for those being bullied.
- To provide a framework within which those bullying others may recognise, acknowledge and reform their behaviour.

### 3. Definitions of Bullying

Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone else. It is the illegitimate use of power in order to hurt others. Bullying takes many forms - it can be short or continue over years. It can be physical or verbal or even a look. It may include continually name calling and teasing, jostling, intimidation, extortion and assault.

It may take the form of cyberbullying such as the sending of hurtful emails or text messages and the use of social networking sites to victimise others.

It may involve victimising and/or humiliating someone on account of race, religion, nationality, disability or sexual orientation. The deliberate isolation or exclusion of an individual is bullying behaviour.

Initiation ceremonies are intended to cause pain, anxiety and humiliation; such practices amount to bullying and should be treated as such.

There have been examples in extreme cases where self-harm, even suicide, has been an outcome of bullying.

#### **4. Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of all members of the community to take action if they see bullying taking place. To remain silent is to condone the action of the bully.

As part of the PSHE programme, pupils are encouraged to discuss bullying and recognise its harmful effects as well as to consider strategies that might be employed to help develop resilience and to cope with difficult times.

##### ***Pupils:***

##### **Expectations**

- We expect you not to put up with any bullying behaviour.
- We expect you will work together with the adults in school to stop bullying.
- We expect that when someone is being bullied or in distress you will tell an adult immediately.
- We expect you not to be afraid to report incidents of bullying behaviour (watching and doing nothing can suggest support for the bullying).
- We expect you not to put up with bullies in your group of friends.

##### ***The role of all staff***

##### **The Form Tutor:**

- Note changes in friendship groups.
- Observe closely the socialisation of new pupils.
- Check on patterns of attendance and lateness, and sickness in school.
- Discuss with Heads of Year and boarding House staff if a boarder is involved.

##### **The Subject Teacher:**

- Note instances of withdrawn personality.
- Be suspicious of a sudden drop in achievement.
- Be careful of unintended outcomes when choosing groups or when partner work is involved.

##### **Teachers on Duty:**

- Patrol areas that are not directly observable.
- Note the occurrence of isolated pupils.

### **Housemistresses and Assistant Housemistresses:**

- Note changes in friendship groups.
- Observe closely the socialisation of new boarders.
- Note instances of withdrawn personality.
- Note the occurrence of isolated pupils.
- Liaise closely with Heads of Year

### **Heads of Year/Pastoral Staff:**

- After investigation, report all incidents to the Headmistress.

### **Headmistress:**

- Act immediately on suspicions of pastoral staff or parents.
- Record all incidents reported by teachers, parents and pupils.
- Arrange support for both victims and bullies.
- Discuss with staff suitable sanctions where necessary.

### **Parents:**

Please report instances of bullying if you suspect:

- Your son/daughter is a victim.
- A friend of your son/daughter is a victim.
- Your son/daughter is involved in bullying.

**All information will, of course, be treated with the utmost discretion so that nobody will feel compromised by passing it on.**

## **5. Procedures for dealing with incidents involving bullying**

All reports of bullying must be taken seriously. If a pupil informs a teacher that he/she is being bullied, or if a teacher becomes aware of bullying by another means, he/she should pass on the information immediately to the form teacher in the Prep department or Head of Year in the Senior department, who should interview those pupils involved and take careful notes. Such notes should be thorough, objective and non-judgmental. The form teacher/Head of Year will circulate this information to the Headmistress, and, if appropriate, the Housemistress, so that they can deal appropriately with phone calls or visits from parents if this is deemed necessary.

If after discussion it is agreed that it is a case of bullying, the Headmistress, in liaison with the form teacher/Head of Year (and Housemistress if boarders are involved), will contact the parents of the girls involved. A decision will then be made about appropriate sanctions for the individual case.

The form teacher/Head of Year will then liaise with those connected with the pupils involved to provide support and advice for the victim, and communicate with other staff on a need to know basis.

The form teacher/Head of Year will also take steps to ensure that the perpetrator is asked to think through the consequences of his/her actions, and will offer support to enable him/her to improve behaviour.

The individuals involved will be monitored and the situation reviewed within the half term and also later to ensure there has been no return and parents will be kept informed.

## **6. Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying is the use of Information and Communications Technology, particularly mobile phones or the Internet, to upset someone deliberately.

Pupils can help to prevent cyberbullying by using the internet and other aspects of ICT in responsible ways and for educational purposes. Log-in details and passwords should be kept confidential.

If a pupil is the victim of cyberbullying, he/she should inform his/her form tutor, Head of Year or Housemistress at once. Evidence – e.g. texts, emails or images - should be preserved.

If there is proof of cyberbullying, the procedure outlined above will be followed and appropriate sanctions considered, according to the severity of the offence.