



Independent School for Girls Aged 2 to 18
and Boys Aged 2 to 11

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Harrogate Ladies' College family of Schools:

Highfield Pre School, Highfield and College

SLT Responsibility: Joanna Fox

Governor Committee Review: Pupil Welfare

Reviewed: June 2023

Review Cycle: Biennial

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Since 1893

This policy applies to the Harrogate Ladies' College Family of Schools – Pre-School, Highfield and College - hereafter referred to as "the School".

1. Policy Statement

It is important that all members of the School community recognise that bullying behaviour is not acceptable in any circumstances. 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.

This policy applies to all pupils at the School irrespective of their age and whether or not a pupil is in the care of the School when or if bullying behaviour occurs. This policy provides guidance for all pupils, staff and parents about recognising bullying and what to do if a bullying incident occurs.

This policy has been drawn up with assistance from the guidance issued by the DfE Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017) and will be reviewed against subsequent government guidance issued from time to time. Pupils, staff and parents should also see the supplementary advice documents and other helpful resources listed throughout this policy.

2. Statement of Philosophy

- Our School community is based on an ethos of mutual respect and consideration: the School is committed to providing a safe and happy learning environment for all
- We do not tolerate bullying, harassment, victimisation or discrimination of any kind and work hard to tackle them if they occur
- Bullying is a whole school issue and we take a whole school approach in response. Any member of the community may bully or be a target of bullying: we regard all incidences of bullying equally seriously and in turn expect all staff, pupils and parents to play their part in preventing and tackling bullying.

3. Policy Aims

Through the operation of this policy, the School aims to:

- try and prevent bullying, as far as possible;
- help staff, pupils and parents deal with bullying when it occurs;
- maintain and drive a positive and supportive culture among all pupils and staff throughout the School;
- ensure that all pupils are free to enjoy a stimulating education and exciting extra-curricular opportunities that are free from the fear of being bullied and from opportunities to act with bullying behaviours;
- deter bullying behaviour, detect it when it occurs, and deal with it on a case by case basis by counselling and / or disciplinary sanctions and, if necessary, by expulsion;
- comply with the School's duties under the Equality Act 2010; and

- promote equality and the creation of a learning community free from intolerance, discrimination and bullying. We are clear that ethnicity is a protected characteristic and have zero tolerance of any form of bullying relating to racism.

4. Definition of Bullying

The Department for Education defines 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 group against another individual or group. It is commonly accepted that bullying is deliberately hurtful (including aggression); causes feelings of distress, fear or loneliness in the victim; is difficult for victims to defend themselves against (as there is an imbalance of power). Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against certain groups, for example on the grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, sexuality, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted or is a carer.

Some of the different types of bullying include:

- Emotional manipulation such as spreading malicious rumours about someone, building negative alliances based on gossip, being unfriendly, threatening looks/gestures, tormenting such as hiding belongings, deliberately betraying former confidences to humiliate or isolate another pupil;
- Physical (pushing, hitting, shoving, any form of physical violence);
- Verbal (name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours);
- Cyberbullying includes all forms of bullying involving the internet, social websites, chat rooms, mobile phones, email, text messages, photographs, etc. (see the School's *Online Safety Policy*);
- Sexual and sexist (unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments or those which are sexist (related to a person's gender or gender reassignment));
- Exclusion (deliberately ignoring and refusing to allow someone to join in);
- Bullying on the basis of perceived racial, religious or cultural differences;
- Bullying on the basis of a person's special educational needs, learning difficulty, disability, health or appearance;
- Homophobic bullying, i.e. related to a person's sexuality;
- Bullying on the basis of a person's gender identity;
- Bullying on the basis of a person's intellectual or other ability; and
- Bullying on the basis of being adopted or being a carer.

Any behaviour that a reasonable bystander would say was intended to hurt or upset the victim is wrong and could constitute bullying, including complicity that may fall short of participating directly in the bullying. It is no justification that the perpetrator says or believes the victim is not hurt by his or her actions and/or words.

Bullying is often carried out in subtle ways which are not always easy to detect: a perpetrator can use a look, word or gesture to a victim to signal an intended threat or insult. Some pupils are adept at changing a bullying situation into an apparently harmless one if an adult approaches. This reinforces the need for the victim or bystanders to come forward to report bullying, and for staff and parents to be alert to the symptoms of bullying.

Although the definition of bullying includes a repetitive element, the School will be vigilant about seemingly isolated incidents which can form a pattern or the development of an asymmetrical power relationship.

No form of bullying will be tolerated by the School. Bullying is always hurtful to the person who is bullied, to those who engage in bullying behaviour and those who support them; it can damage the whole School community. It can cause great distress and unhappiness and, in some cases, lead to lasting psychological damage and even self-harm.

Bullying related to protected characteristics is regarded as extremely serious and is recorded in the bullying log as such.

Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal and civil laws that apply to threatening behaviour and harassment for which there can be consequences outside the School. Misuse of electronic communications could also be a criminal offence, for example it is an offence to send an electronic communication (such as a text message or e-mail) to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety.

How does bullying differ from teasing or friendship difficulties?

Sometimes pupils feel hurt or upset because they have fallen out with a friend or have been teased. This is not the same as bullying. Bullying:

- Is deliberately intended to hurt or humiliate
- Involved a power imbalance which makes it hard for the victim to defend his or herself
- Is usually, but not always, persistent
- Often involves no remorse or acknowledgement of the victim's feelings.

School staff are ready to help and support pupils who have fallen out with friends, but such situations will not be treated in the same way as a case of bullying. However, the strategies we use may be similar because we acknowledge that, over a period of time, the impact on the pupil may be the same and the situation could become bullying if it escalates.

5. Preventing Bullying

The school aims to prevent bullying from becoming established. This is achieved by establishing a whole school ethos of good behaviour, mutual respect and consideration, as well as a culture in which bullying is not tolerated and where it is seen as the responsibility of all members of the school community to report any instances of bullying.

We aim to prevent bullying by the following methods:

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- Fostering a whole school ethos of good behaviour, mutual respect, and consideration. We aim to create a safe, happy, and inclusive environment for learning.
- Developing a culture in which diversity is championed and celebrated and in which the school takes a proactive role in educating pupils and other members of the school community in issues around equality.
- Encouraging all members of the school community to have high expectations and model how to behave towards each other.
- Developing pupils' social skills, confidence, resilience and self-esteem; and defining the value of assertiveness in relationships as opposed to aggression, whether direct or indirect.
- HLC Voice and Highfield School Council provides a forum where girls and boys are encouraged to raise general issues of concern.
- The HLC Inclusion Committee and the EDI Committee in Highfield discuss and put in place measures to enable all pupils to feel accepted. Diversity is championed and celebrated and the School takes a proactive role in educating pupils and other members of the school community in issues around equality.
- The curriculum is used as a vital means of raising awareness in our pupils and educating them about how to manage feelings associated with bullying. Specific anti-bullying issues are addressed in PSHE, Assemblies, Chapel services and taken up by Form Teachers, Class Teachers, Tutors and House Staff.
- All members of the School community are encouraged to have high expectations and model how to behave towards each other.
- The School has developed a culture in which the vulnerable are protected and incidents which might demonstrate prejudice or intolerance are tackled and addressed, for example, challenging inappropriate or prejudicial language.
- The School educates pupils and all members of the School community about how to keep themselves safe when online or when using any form of social media so they understand about how to prevent themselves becoming victims of cyberbullying.
- All pupils must sign up to the School's *Acceptable Use Agreement*, which makes it clear that cyberbullying is unacceptable. This message is regularly reinforced in lessons and pastoral sessions. We also both filter and regularly monitor pupils' online activity using Smoothwall.
- The School makes it clear that all incidents of cyberbullying or bullying of any kind that occur off the school premises but have an impact on the classroom environment or relationships between pupils will be pursued with the same seriousness as bullying occurring within school.

- Ensuring that IT filtering and monitoring systems are effective in protecting members of the School community.
- The School also makes it clear to all that there are effective procedures for reporting, investigating and tackling bullying, and encouraging pupils to report instances of anything they perceive to be bullying.
- The School makes it as easy as possible for pupils who are victims of bullying are able to talk to someone they trust and obtain help and support:
 - There is a strong pastoral team (part of the Flourish programme) which is dedicated to pupil welfare and wellbeing and who are experienced in dealing with bullying issues.
 - The Wellness Centre provides specific help for girls and boys in the School.
 - Appropriate staff training in all aspects of care is arranged across the School to ensure that all those with responsibility have the necessary skills to deal with cases of bullying.
 - The Counsellor supports individuals in need, as does the Designated Mental Health Lead. The School also has an independent listener to support pupils should they wish to speak to someone outside of the School (see Appendix 1 for contact details).
- Pupils are encouraged to develop a strong sense of self-belief. We emphasise with older pupils the role which is expected of them in setting a good example and being helpful to younger pupils and each other.
- The School is committed to raising the awareness of its staff through training, so that the principles of the school policy are understood, legal responsibilities are known, action is defined to resolve and prevent problems, and sources of support are available. All our staff are trained in recognising and responding to bullying and staff awareness is raised through regular discussion of pupil issues in pastoral meetings. Action is taken to reduce the risk of bullying where and when it is known to be most likely to occur, and, where necessary, the School will invest in specialised skills to understand the needs of our pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities. The member of staff with overall responsibility for anti-bullying work is the Senior Deputy in College and the Head in Highfield.
- Bullying is regularly discussed in staff meetings across the School and in the weekly Flourish meetings. The result of these meetings is to feedback information to senior leaders about friendship patterns, particular incidents, any pupil who seems to be isolated, any growing "power base" and any known conflict between a member of staff and a pupil, or between pupils so that strategies can be developed to prevent bullying incidents.
- Working in line with national guidance, and the requirements of regulatory bodies.

6. Being aware – possible signs of bullying

This policy applies to all members of our school community, including boarders and those in our EYFS setting.

Changes in behaviour that may indicate a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to go to school or to return after a break
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to school
- Reluctance to leave the classroom at the end of lessons or school day
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually poor work; work that appears to have been interfered with or spoilt by others
- Belongings suddenly going missing or being damaged
- Change to established habits, such as sitting in the library instead of spending time with friends at break time
- Diminished levels of self-confidence
- Inability to concentrate
- Anxiety, depression, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Choosing the company of adults
- Frequent visits to the Health Centre with symptoms such as stomach pain or headaches, especially at particular times or during particular lessons
- Difficulty in sleeping, nightmares
- Talking of suicide and running away
- Unexplained cuts and bruises

Although there may be other causes for these symptoms, teachers, parents and peers should be alert for these possible signs of bullying and contact a member of the pastoral team if they have concerns.

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

7. Dealing with Bullying

For pupil guidance on what to do if you are being bullied, or if you think/know someone else is being bullied, please see *Appendix 1*

Bullying events may be identified in several ways:

- disclosure to a member of staff by the individual being bullied
- disclosure to another pupil by the individual being bullied
- witnesses to specific bullying events
- suspicion of bullying based upon the indicating factors.

What the School will do

The exact course of action will vary with each situation. The immediate objective should be that bullying incidents are brought into the open and strategies agreed to help resolve the problem, encouraging all involved to return to responsible, caring behaviour as soon as possible.

This policy applies to all members of our school community, including boarders and those in our EYFS setting.

1. In all cases an allegation of bullying will be treated in a serious, open-minded and fair way, and will be investigated immediately and thoroughly.
2. Bullying on protected characteristics is taken extremely seriously.
3. On hearing or suspecting bullying behaviour, a member of staff should first respond quickly and sensitively by offering advice, support and reassurance to the alleged victim, then make a written record of what has happened and pass on the information immediately to the child's key person in Highfield Pre School, the class teacher in Highfield or the form tutor or Head of School in College. It is not possible for a bullying incident to be kept confidential, however, the action to be taken will be discussed with the victim at every stage.
4. An appropriate member of staff will be appointed to speak the alleged victim(s), perpetrator(s) and witness(es). All pupils will be permitted to tell their version of events without comment upon the nature of the behaviour described. Written records will be kept of all discussions.
5. The most important thing is to stop the bullying and ensure the person being bullied is safe.
6. We aim for a peaceful resolution: revenge is not helpful or appropriate.
7. The person being bullied will be supported throughout the process.
8. If it is clear that there has been a misunderstanding that does not require further investigation or disciplinary action to be taken, this will be explained sympathetically to the alleged victim(s) and the alleged perpetrator(s) will be guided on how to modify his / her behaviour so that the misunderstanding does not occur again. Staff will monitor the situation to ensure the bullying does not continue. If bullying recurs, further action will be taken.
9. If it is believed that bullying has taken place, the Deputy Head EYFS and KS1, Deputy Head KS2, Head of Highfield or Senior Deputy should be informed, and they will decide on the appropriate course of action and sanctions may be imposed (see below). This may include additional investigation taking place and pupils may be interviewed. Again, all pupils will be permitted to tell their version of events without comment upon the nature of the behaviour described. Written records of interviews will be made and agreed by the individuals involved.
10. The parents of the pupils involved will be informed by the Deputy Head EYFS and KS1, Deputy Head KS2, Head of Highfield or Senior Deputy if it is established that bullying has taken place and further action is required. In serious cases, the action required may include further investigation in accordance with the School's *Behaviour Policy* and *Expulsion, Removal and Review Policy*.
11. If there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm the incident will be treated as a child protection concern and advice will be sought from relevant external agencies.
12. If at any stage there is a concern that a pupil has suffered or is at risk of suffering significant harm, including the risk of self-harm, a report must be made to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and the procedures in that policy will be followed.

Action by the School after Bullying Incidents

Where bullying behaviour has taken place, the range of actions to be taken by the School will vary but the main objectives will be to bring bullying incidents into the open and to agree strategies to help resolve the problem. Actions will include one or more of the following:

- Providing support and advice for the victim, including support from the School Counsellor and external services where appropriate. The victim will be closely monitored by a nominated adult who will work in partnership with the victim's parents.
- Providing support to the perpetrator(s) to help him/her/them understand the effect of his/her/their action upon the victim and to modify his/her/their behaviour, including support from the School Counsellor where appropriate. This may also include clear instructions on expectation of behaviour going forward and a warning or final warning.
- Consideration given to the motivation behind the bullying behaviour and whether external services should be used to tackle any underlying issues of the perpetrator which contributed to the bullying behaviour. Any concerns about risk of harm will be dealt with in accordance with the School's *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*.
- Disciplinary action against the perpetrator will be in accordance with the School's *Behaviour Policy*. In cases of very serious bullying or persistent bullying, a pupil may be required to leave the School permanently in accordance with the School's *Expulsion, Removal and Review Policy*.
- Restorative justice sessions will be given, to enable those involved to return to, at the very least, their original state but, in most cases, to an even better place. Restorative justice will be carried out using the six steps of: engagement, reflection, understanding the harm/impact, acknowledgement, agreement and follow up. It is essential that those involved feel safe during the process and that they are treated with respect, are listened to and that they feel understood.
- Informing other staff of the matter on a need to know basis and monitoring the position for as long as necessary, working with parents as necessary.
- Moving the perpetrator or victim to another class or House after consultation with the pupil, his/her parents and the relevant staff.
- Reviewing vulnerable individuals and areas of the School.
- Such other action as may appear to the Deputy Head EYFS, Head of Highfield, Senior Deputy or Principal, as applicable, to be appropriate.
- The School will record all bullying incidents, so that we can monitor the effectiveness of our anti-bullying measures and identify any patterns, in order to inform preventative work and the future development of policies and procedures.

13. Partnership with Parents

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

This policy applies to all members of our school community, including boarders and those in our EYFS setting.

- Parents are encouraged to reinforce the principles of the Anti-bullying Policy at home
- Parents are asked to let Tutors, Class Teachers, Heads of School, Deputy Head (Highfield) or the Senior Deputy 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 invited to a meeting to discuss the matter. We will keep in regular contact with parents until the issue is resolved.

NB See Appendix 2 Guidance for Parents for further information

14. Records

School staff maintain records of the welfare and development of individual pupils. In addition, every complaint or report of bullying must be recorded. The Deputy Head EYFS and KS1, Deputy Head KS2, Head of Highfield or Senior Deputy monitors these records in order to enable patterns to be identified, both in relation to individual pupils and across the school as a whole, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the School's approach.

15. Monitoring the implementation and review of the policy

Incidences of bullying will be recorded on the anti-bullying log in order to monitor for patterns or trends. They will also be recorded on the relevant pupils' files on CPOMS.

All aspects of the policy are reviewed on a regular basis. This is done by:

- Consultation with pupils ie HLC Voice and/or internal survey
- Internally through pastoral team meetings
- Governors' Pupil Welfare Committee

This policy is updated at least annually by the Senior Deputy. The Governors will also take an annual review of this policy. Government guidance is updated from time to time. Reviews and updates will take into account updated government guidance.

Version control

Date of last review of this policy	September 2023
Date for next review of this policy	September 2025
Policy owner (SLT)	Senior Deputy
Policy owner (Proprietor)	Dame Francine Holroyd

Key Contacts

This policy applies to all members of our school community, including boarders and those in our EYFS setting.

CSLT member with lead responsibility for anti-bullying:

- Joanna Fox, Senior Deputy mrs.fox@hlc.org.uk

HLT member with lead responsibility for anti-bullying:

- James Savile, Highfield Head mr.savile@hlc.org.uk

College Pastoral Team:

- Jo Griffin – Head of Lower School mrs.griffin@hlc.org.uk
- Fran Irvine – Head of Middle School mrs_irvine@hlc.org.uk
- Bonnie Christie – Head of Sixth Form mrs.christie@hlc.org.uk

School Nurse:

- Louise Squires mrs.squires@hlc.org.uk

Designated Mental Health Lead:

- Clare MacPherson mrs.macpherson@hlc.org.uk

Appendix 1 Guidance for pupils

If you think that you are being bullied - never be afraid to ask for help from any member of staff, a prefect or a friend.

Pupils' guide to how to respond if you are being bullied

If you are being bullied the following responses should help:

1. Stay calm and try to appear confident. Explain to the perpetrator that his/her words/actions are upsetting; he/she may not be aware of this. However, if the bullying continues try not to show your feelings.
2. Walk away quickly and confidently, even if you don't feel that way inside.
3. If you are different in any way, be proud of it – it's good to be an individual.
4. The perpetrator will not stop if he or she thinks she can get away with such behaviour. Discuss the problem with your friends, tell a member of staff or ask your friends to tell a member of staff on your behalf. Telling does not make you a 'grass' or a 'snitch'; not telling means that the bullying is likely to continue.
5. If you do not want to talk to an adult in school or a member of your family, you can talk to the School's **independent listener**: Father Gary Waddington (07920 464818).
6. Be assured that we take every report of bullying seriously and will act upon it, even if it has happened outside of school. We will keep records of what has happened and consult you and support you in whatever action we take.
7. Remember – being bullied is not your fault. Nobody ever deserves to be bullied. 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.

Pupil's guide to how to respond if you think someone is being bullied and how to prevent bullying

You can help to stop bullying:

1. If the pupil being bullied is in any danger, fetch help. If she or he is not being bullied, your presence may ease the situation so remain together.
2. Show that you and your friends disapprove – stand up for them. Studies show that one of the most effective ways of stopping bullying is for fellow pupils to show support for the victim. Do not, however, put yourself in any danger.
3. Talk to a member of staff so the School can take steps to help the victim and stop any bullying. The victim may be too scared to tell anyone.
4. Give sympathy and support to others who may be bullied.
5. Be careful about teasing or making personal remarks. What you intend to be a joke may not be received that way.

This policy applies to all members of our school community, including boarders and those in our EYFS setting.

6. Be sceptical about rumours concerning other pupils. Don't add to them. Put yourself in the position of the person being targeted.
7. Don't be drawn into simply being a bystander. Many perpetrators will not persist in bullying unless they have an audience to play to and, by not taking action, it could be argued that you are condoning what is happening.

Other sources of help and support

School Counsellor: 01423 503080

HLC.help@oakdalecentre.org

Children's Commissioner: 0800 528 0731

www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/

Childline: 0800 1111

www.childline.org

Appendix 2 Guidance for parents

Parental involvement

Whenever a serious case of bullying is uncovered the parents or guardian of both the victim and the perpetrator would normally be informed either in writing or by personal contact.

If your son or daughter is being bullied

Parents along with peers will probably be the first to hear of a bullying incident. Parents should contact their son or daughter's Key Worker, Form Teacher, Housemistress, Tutor, Head of School, Assistant/Deputy Heads or Head of School, Senior Deputy or Principal if they are worried.

It is essential to stay calm, supportive and find out the facts of the situation; a situation of alleged bullying can be complex to understand as it is possible that the parties involved with have varying perceptions of the events under investigation. Reassurance will be needed in order to persuade your son or daughter that s/he has done the right thing by telling you. You may find it helpful to have the following checklist at your side to ensure that correct information is passed to the school:

- Who was involved?
- Where did it take place, when and how often?
- Why did it take place?
- What form did the bullying take?

When you inform the School of these details, you will be told how the School will proceed. The procedures set out in this policy will be followed and we will work with you as required, keeping you informed of action taken. Be reassured that this will be managed sensitively with the needs of all the pupils involved carefully considered.

If your son or daughter is involved in the bullying

It is important to work with the school to modify the patterns of behaviour which are causing your son or daughter to bully. Do not panic and blame yourself. Acknowledge that these things do happen and the school has mechanisms in place to deal with this issue. It is helpful to recognise some of the reasons why pupils behave in this way from time to time.

Children sometimes bully others because:

- They are not aware of how hurtful it is
- They are copying the behaviour of older siblings or people they admire
- They have a temporary difficulty integrating in their peer group
- They are bullying others because of encouragement from friends
- They are going through a difficult time personally and need help

This policy applies to all members of our school community, including boarders and those in our EYFS setting.

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- They have not yet learnt satisfactory ways for making firm relationships

To stop your son or daughter from bullying others:

- Talk with your son or daughter and help her or him to understand that what she or he is doing is unacceptable as it makes other pupils unhappy
- Discourage other members of the family from using aggressive behaviour in order to get what they want
- Suggest ways of joining in activities with other pupils without bullying
- Liaise with the school: Key Worker, Form Teacher, Housemistress, Tutor, Head of School, Assistant/Deputy Heads, Heads of School, Deputy head (Pastoral) or Principal
- Make time to have regular chats about how things are going at school
- Check that your son or daughter has identified an adult at school to whom she or he can go if she or he has a problem or a worry of any kind

Please note that the School will want and need to take action if bullying occurs. The matter will be sensitively handled but it needs to be effective. Action will be taken in accordance with this policy, together with the procedures in the School's Behaviour Policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, as necessary.

Guidance

The DfE has published the following guidance document for parents: [Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying](#).

Other useful organisations providing support for parents dealing with specific bullying issues include:

www.kidscape.org.uk

www.nspcc.org.uk

www.youngminds.org.uk

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

www.familylives.org.uk

www.childline.org.uk

Version Control

	Version 1	Version 2	Version 3	Version 4	Version 5	Version 6	Version 7	Version 8	Version 9
Reviewed by	JFO	JFO							
Date	22/06/23	Sep 2023							

This policy applies to all members of our school community, including boarders and those in our EYFS setting.