HARROW INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL BENGALURU

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

CONTENTS

OVERVIEW

AIMS

WHAT IS BULLYING?

CYBER-BULLYING

BULLYING THRESHOLD

IMPLEMENTATION OF DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS

PREVENTION

PROVISION OF EFFECTIVE STAFF TRAINING

CLEAR AND EASY LINES OF COMMUNICATION FOR STUDENTS

CREATION OF AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

WHERE BULLYING HAS SEVERE IMPACT

APPLICATION OF THE BEHAVIOUR POLICY

OVERVIEW

Harrow International School Bengaluru recognises that it has a duty of care to maintain a working environment for its staff and a learning environment for its pupils in which honesty, integrity and respect are reflected in personal behaviour and standards of conduct, where the welfare of pupils is paramount and where the working environment is safe.

In turn, members of staff must recognise that that they are each accountable for their actions. They have a duty not only to keep young people safe but also to protect them from physical and emotional harm. Harrow Bengaluru prepares students with diverse backgrounds and interests for a life of public service, learning, leadership and personal fulfilment. Our purpose is underpinned by our values of Courage, Honour, Humility and Fellowship.

Our school rules, which outline behaviour expectations across the School, support our purpose as does our Staff Code of Conduct, with its specific regard to safeguarding. Members of staff should read this document alongside the School's Equality Statement and the School's Safeguarding policy.

AIMS

- To safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by educating students and staff about the nature of bullying-type behaviour. In particular, this involves challenging the view that 'nothing can be done' by showing that the School does not tolerate bullying and that there are solutions which can work.
- To ensure that all information about bullying incidents is acted upon, followed up, recorded and shared among the adults who are in a position to do something about it in order to:
    - prevent, de-escalate and stop any continuation of harmful behaviour
    - react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way
    - safeguard victims of bullying
    - apply appropriate disciplinary sanctions to those who engage in bullying-type behaviour and help them modify their behaviour
- To enable the tracking of incidents of bullying-type behaviour across the School and take pre-emptive measures to prevent harm that could reasonably be foreseen.
- To inform members of staff so that they understand that bullying can have a devastating effect on individuals. It can be a barrier to their learning and have serious consequences for their mental health. Bullying that takes place at school not only affects an individual during childhood but can also have a lasting effect on their life well into adulthood.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually but not always repeated over time, that hurts another individual (or group) either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children or by perceived differences.

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously the School's first priority, but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical.

The School and members of staff have to make their own judgements about each specific case. Many deem bullying to involve an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship, which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways. It may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate.

It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online. Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language in itself can have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay, it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. Early intervention can help to set clear expectations of behaviour that is and is not acceptable and help stop negative behaviours from escalating.

CYBER-BULLYING

The development of and widespread access to technology has provided a medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially wider audience and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

BULLYING THRESHOLD

Staff should distinguish between an isolated incident of unkind behaviour, a disagreement or conflict between students, and behaviour that constitutes bullying.

The bullying threshold is reached when behaviour demonstrates the characteristics set out in this Policy. In particular, staff should consider whether the behaviour is repeated, intentional, harmful and involves an imbalance of power. Bullying may include:

- repeated name-calling, insults or humiliating comments;
- repeated physical aggression such as pushing, hitting or tripping;
- deliberately and repeatedly excluding a student from a friendship group;
- encouraging other students to isolate or reject a particular student;
- repeatedly spreading rumours or damaging a student's reputation;
- repeated threats or intimidation;
- repeated online abuse, including abusive messages or social-media posts;
- deliberately targeting a student because of a characteristic or aspect of their identity;
- a group of students repeatedly targeting an individual, creating a significant imbalance of power.

Not every disagreement, argument, unkind comment or isolated behavioural incident constitutes bullying. However, all reports of unkind, harmful or inappropriate behaviour should be taken seriously and investigated appropriately. A behaviour that does not meet the bullying threshold may still require a pastoral or behavioural response.

The school takes bullying seriously and will respond firmly where the bullying threshold has been reached.

The table below provides further guidance for when an incident has met the bullying threshold:

Example of behaviour	Does it meet the bullying threshold?	Why?
A student makes an unkind comment to another student once, then apologises and does not repeat it.	**No – not bullying**	A single unkind incident does not normally demonstrate an ongoing pattern of bullying. It should still be addressed.
Two students have an argument and exchange insults, with neither student holding a position of power over the other.	**No – conflict**	This is more appropriately treated as a disagreement or conflict rather than bullying.
A group of students repeatedly excludes one student from social activities and deliberately encourages others not to associate with them.	**Yes – bullying threshold reached**	Repeated, deliberate social exclusion can constitute relational/emotional bullying, particularly where there is a power imbalance.
A student repeatedly gives another student humiliating nicknames despite being told to stop.	**Yes – bullying threshold reached**	Repeated and deliberate verbal behaviour causing harm.
A stronger/popular student repeatedly threatens a younger or less socially powerful student.	**Yes – bullying threshold reached**	The repeated threats and clear power imbalance meet the key characteristics of bullying.
A student repeatedly pushes, trips or hits another student, particularly where the targeted student is unable to defend themselves effectively.	**Yes – bullying threshold reached**	Repeated physical aggression combined with a power imbalance.
Several students repeatedly target one student with insults, jokes or humiliating comments.	**Yes – bullying threshold reached**	The number of perpetrators can create a significant power imbalance even where individual acts might appear relatively minor.
A student repeatedly spreads	**Yes – bullying**	Repeated intentional behaviour

Example of behaviour	Does it meet the bullying threshold?	Why?
rumours about another student in person and/or online.	**threshold reached**	designed to damage another student's relationships or reputation.
A student repeatedly sends abusive or humiliating messages about another student through social media or messaging platforms.	**Yes – cyberbullying**	The behaviour is repeated, targeted and harmful; the online nature does not remove it from the school's bullying definition.
A student shares an embarrassing image of another student and encourages others to share it repeatedly.	**Potentially yes – bullying threshold reached**	The original act and subsequent sharing can create continuing harm and a significant power imbalance.
A student repeatedly targets another student because of their race, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation or another protected/personal characteristic.	**Yes – bullying threshold reached and potentially discriminatory abuse**	The repeated targeted behaviour causes additional concern because it relates to an individual's identity or characteristic.
A student threatens another student with violence if they tell a member of staff.	**Yes – serious bullying**	The threat is intended to prevent disclosure and creates a significant imbalance of power and fear.
A student makes a single serious threat of violence.	**Not necessarily bullying, but serious behaviour requiring immediate action**	Even if the bullying threshold is not met, serious threats must not be dismissed simply because they are isolated.

IMPLEMENTATION OF DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS

The School ensures that disciplinary sanctions are applied in such a way that the consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL DO?

Bullying incidents meeting the threshold will be subject to the following sanctions:

Step 1 – Internal Suspension

- The student will receive an internal suspension for a period determined by the school according to the severity and level of bullying.

- The student will be formally warned that any continuation or repetition of bullying behaviour will result in further escalation.

Step 2 – External Suspension

- If the bullying persists following Step 1, the student will receive an external suspension and will be required to leave the school premises for the period determined by the school.
- The student and their parents will be informed that any further bullying behaviour will result in the most serious disciplinary consequence.

Step 3 – Permanent Exclusion

- If the bullying continues following the external suspension, the perpetrator will be permanently excluded from the school.

The school will consider the full circumstances, evidence and seriousness of the behaviour when determining the appropriate response at each stage.

The purpose of this graduated approach is to ensure that students understand the seriousness of bullying, that appropriate opportunities are provided for behaviour to change, and that persistent bullying is not tolerated.

PREVENTION

INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS

The School ensures that parents are clear that bullying-type behavior is not tolerated and ensures parents are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL DO?

- The student and parent handbooks contain information about the School's approach to bullying matters.
- Heads of Year, Tutors and House Masters and Mistresses maintain an ongoing and developing relationship with parents, which facilitates early intervention whenever issues around bullying-type behaviour arise.
- The School encourages parents to contact the School to discuss any concerns about their child. Formal parents' meetings also take place for each year group during the academic year.
- The School invites parents to attend presentations, which might include talks about cyber safety, illegal drugs, misuse of social media, etc.
- The School encourages parents to reinforce the School's message on bullying by informing the Head of Year whenever concerns arise and to counter all suggestions that students should suffer in silence.
- The School Emotional Counsellor is available to talk with parents about bullying-type behaviour from the perspective of victim or perpetrator.

INVOLVEMENT OF PUPILS

The School ensures that students understand the School's approach and that they are clear about the part they can play in preventing bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL DO?

- As well as the student handbook noted above, the School highlights its Behaviour Policy, outlining clear behaviour expectations of students, and draws attention to the relevant policies and guidance documents which are available to students.
- Staff have access to procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying-type behaviour.
- The School highlights its anti-bullying guidance for students, which outlines steps students can take in the event of bullying-type behaviour arising.
- The School provides year-group seminars that tackle the issue of bullying.
- The School operates a mentoring and buddy system called 'Flocks' which aims to ensure each student has a channel through which to share concerns.
- The School circulates an ICT Acceptable Use Code of Conduct which students are expected to read and follow. This document outlines how students should use computer equipment responsibly and includes a clear outline of forbidden behaviours that could constitute bullying-type behaviour.
- Periodically, Heads of Year and Tutors receive notices to remind students about responsible use of the School's IT network, including social networking sites.
- The School conducts an annual survey, which all students complete anonymously. Key staff discuss and act upon the findings.

PROVISION OF EFFECTIVE STAFF TRAINING

The School provides effective training so that members of staff understand the principles and purpose of the School's policy, their responsibilities regarding bullying, how to resolve problems and where to seek support.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL DO?

- There is a clear Staff Code of Conduct with specific regard to Safeguarding.
- The School provides regular internal training to all teachers which includes guidance on how to deal with behaviour and bullying issues if they should arise.
- Teachers receive INSET led by speakers about bullying and the safeguarding of students.
- Information is cascaded through staff meetings, as appropriate, to ensure staff are aware of key issues relating to bullying behaviour.

CLEAR AND EASY LINES OF COMMUNICATION FOR STUDENTS

The School ensures clear and easy lines of communication for students to report bullying-type behaviour so that they are assured they will be listened to and incidents acted upon.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL DO?

- The School reminds students regularly of the many people in school that they can approach with any issues they may have (heads of year, tutors, house masters, house mistresses, teachers, the counsellor, flocks, trusted senior students, trusted peers etc.).
- A school mentoring and buddy system called 'Flocks' provides a further avenue for communication of concerns. Flocks meet on average every two weeks.

CREATION OF AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

The School creates an inclusive environment where students can openly discuss the cause of their bullying without fear of further bullying or discrimination.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL DO?

- Heads of Year employ the PSHE programme to encourage an inclusive environment within each year group.
- The Head of Secondary makes use of school assemblies and other events to reinforce the School's values and promote an inclusive environment.
- The School's PSHE Education programme provides a framework for educating students about the challenges life can present and how to deal with those and to be accepting and supportive of others.
- The School provides a pastoral framework for students with older students being appointed as mentors or buddies to younger students.
- The School has a wide variety of clubs and societies that run through the academic year which meet regularly, catering for wide academic, super-curricular and co-curricular interests.

WHERE BULLYING HAS A SEVERE IMPACT

The School recognises that in some circumstances the consequences of bullying may lead to a pupil feeling pronounced social, emotional and mental health difficulties. The School also understands that bullying may have a serious impact upon a pupil's ability to learn. The School therefore co-ordinates the pastoral response to more serious cases, which may involve one or more of the following strategies:

- Referral to the School Doctor
- Referral to the School Counsellor
- Collaboration with the Learning Skills Department
- The instigation of a specialist support plan with the Head of Year, the Tutor and other relevant members of staff.

APPLICATION OF THE BEHAVIOUR POLICY

The School's Behaviour Policy outlines clearly expectations of behaviour, outlines what constitutes a serious breach of School rules and explains the rewards and sanctions that underpin the policy. The policy recognises the importance of students being encouraged to reflect on their behaviour through conversations with their Head of Year, Tutor, House Master or House Mistress or other members of the boarding team. Reflective work is also set for students, to encourage further self-refection.

The School's Behaviour Policy offers guidance to teachers in the setting of appropriate sanctions for breaches of the policy. The policy outlines clearly that all instances of bullying-type behaviour will be referred to the Head of Year. The relevant members of the Senior Management Team will discuss appropriate sanctions which could potentially extend to the permanent exclusion of a student.

The School seeks to consider not only the motivation behind bullying-type behaviour but also whether it reveals any concerns for the safety or wellbeing of the perpetrator. Through the process of addressing bullying-type behaviour, the School's aim is that a perpetrator understands the harm his/her behaviour has caused, appreciates the potential and further harm it could have caused, and that he/she has an opportunity to put that right. The aim is also that any sanctions imposed will deter perpetrators from similar bullying-type behaviour in the future.

Policy Created: May 2023

Policy Reviewed: September 2026

Next Review: September 2027