



# Countering Bullying Policy

|                       |                               |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Policy date:          | September 2023                |
| Reviewed and Updated: | September 2024                |
| Date of next review:  | September 2025                |
| Owner:                | Deputy Head                   |
| Intended audience:    | All staff, parents and pupils |
| Location:             | School portal and website     |

## **1. Aims and objectives**

- 1.1. Haileybury Malta is committed to being a welcoming and friendly community where unkindness, bullying, or child-on-child abuse have no place. We encourage pupils to respect one another and to be helpful and tolerant. We expect all members of our community to adhere to this policy to ensure that bullying does not take place at our school.
- 1.2. The purpose of this policy is to explain the School's approach to countering bullying and child-on-child abuse. Unkindness or disrespect may not always amount to bullying or abuse, but they will nevertheless be addressed by the School as appropriate to the behaviour in question.

## **2. Definitions**

- 2.1. Child-on-child abuse: this is the term used to describe a situation where one pupil abuses another. It is defined in "Keeping Children Safe in Education" as including the following:
  - 2.1.1. bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
  - 2.1.2. abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse');
  - 2.1.3. physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair-pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
  - 2.1.4. sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
  - 2.1.5. sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse; causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
  - 2.1.6. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
  - 2.1.7. upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm; and
  - 2.1.8. initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).
- 2.2. Bullying is characteristically repeated behaviour by any pupil where the intention is to cause hurt, harm or distress to another. A single incident with these intentions can also be considered as bullying and as such child-on-child abuse.
- 2.3. Bullying can involve an imbalance of power between the bully (or bullies) and the person being bullied. This is particularly so when the behaviour is directed towards someone who is younger, weaker or more vulnerable (mentally or physically), who has a protected characteristic, or who is socially less confident.

- 2.4. Bullying can take many forms including physical assault, emotional or verbal abuse, and cyber-bullying such as the sending of hurtful or abusive emails or text messages, the sharing of pictures, and the use of social websites to victimise others.
- 2.5. The abuse of property, or the deliberate isolation or exclusion of an individual is also bullying and therefore child-on-child abuse.
- 2.6. Any behaviour which is frightening and intended to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation is bullying. This includes initiation ceremonies or hazing.
- 2.7. Bullying may involve victimising and/or humiliating someone, which could be on account of their age, race, nationality, religion, beliefs, culture, gender, sexuality, special educational needs, disability, or because a child is adopted or is a carer. This is discrimination and bullying. It can also amount to harassment.

### **3. Seriousness and impact**

- 3.1. The School takes all forms of bullying extremely seriously. Any bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the Rewards, Behaviour and Sanctions Policy. This policy should also be read in conjunction with Haileybury Malta's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, particularly the sections relating to child-on-child abuse, as well as the School's ICT Acceptable Use Policy.
- 3.2. As well as the risk of physical injury, bullying may cause serious and lasting psychological damage to a person. As well as addressing the act of bullying itself, the School is committed to supporting and caring for pupils affected by bullying.

### **4. Scope of this policy**

- 4.1. This policy is applicable to all current Haileybury Malta pupils and their interactions with others in any form, e.g. whether direct, indirect or online.
- 4.2. It should also be used by staff in dealing with matters of bullying by pupils (or child-on-child abuse) including those where victims of bullying outside Haileybury Malta are brought to the attention of the Haileybury Malta Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) by other schools or through other agencies.

### **5. Responsibilities and roles**

- 5.1. All members of the school community have a responsibility to take action if they see, hear or suspect that bullying is taking place or if they become aware that any member of the school community has been involved in bullying.
- 5.2. The Deputy Head has responsibility for pupil pastoral care and discipline at Haileybury Malta. The Deputy Head works closely with the DSL who oversees safeguarding and pastoral matters. Any incident where bullying is suspected (or if there is reasonable cause to suspect a pupil is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm), will be considered as a potential safeguarding concern (further details can be found in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy), and as such be referred to the Child Protection Team. The School reserves the right to report certain incidents of bullying to outside agencies.
- 5.3. The DSL is responsible for online safety in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and also has the role of Online Safety Coordinator. The DSL works closely with the Computing Lead and the Deputy Head regarding the filtering and monitoring of inappropriate content and to identify potential safeguarding issues.

- 5.4. Some bullying behaviour may amount to a legal offence. The School reserves the right to report incidents of bullying to the police where appropriate, or to consult with the police as required.
- 5.5. Parents are encouraged to work with the School in supporting their children to bring incidents or allegations of bullying to the School's attention irrespective of whether those incidents have happened within the school grounds or not. So as not to jeopardise or influence any investigations undertaken by the School, parents are asked to refrain from discussing such allegations with other pupils directly, or with those pupils' parents.
- 5.6. Older pupils are encouraged to be alert to any bullying amongst younger pupils, to offer support to them and inform staff of any concerns. Should any pupil become aware that another pupil is being bullied, that pupil must seek advice and help.
- 5.7. Should a pupil be bullied, they are strongly encouraged to report this and to seek advice and help. There are various ways in which pupils affected by bullying can seek this support. These are made known to pupils widely and are set out below in this policy.
- 5.8. Pupils can help to prevent cyber-bullying by keeping their log-in details and passwords confidential and regularly changing their passwords. They should also report any concerns regarding postings, about themselves or others, to their pastoral tutor.

## **6. Training and education for pupils, staff and parents**

- 6.1. PSHE lessons and tutorial sessions deal with the topic of bullying and its impact. 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 bullying if they experience or witness it.
- 6.2. PSHE lessons and tutorials are used to discuss the differences between people and develop an inclusive culture; they are also used to encourage tolerance, to understand the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language, and to explain how any bullying (including cyber-bullying) concerns can be reported.
- 6.3. PSHE lessons and assemblies cover issues relating to mental health, bullying, particularly cyber-bullying and staying safe online. These are normally conducted by outside experts who bring an up-to-date perspective for staff and pupils.
- 6.4. Parents are informed about matters relating to online safety through a variety of means, including parental talks. The School regularly shares information about online safety, including what systems are in place to filter and monitor online use; what the School is asking pupils to do online (including sites they will be asked to visit); and who from the School their child will be interacting with online. Ways of obtaining pastoral support (e.g. with bullying concerns) are also explained to parents during the admissions process and regularly thereafter (e.g. in the Pupil and Parent Handbook and during parent talks).

## **7. Procedures for reporting bullying**

- 7.1. Incidents of or concerns about bullying should be raised either with the pupil's pastoral tutor or with the Deputy Head or Principal. If the pupil is at risk, the DSL/DDSL should be contacted immediately. Additionally, in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, anyone can make a referral to Children's Services if they have an immediate concern about a child's safety and wellbeing.

## **8. Support for those affected by bullying**

- 8.1. Support, counselling and additional guidance will be offered to all parties involved. This may include parents. Those listed below are people to whom pupils and parents may turn for support and guidance on any bullying issues:
- Principal and DSL;
  - Deputy Head and DDSL;
  - Pastoral tutors;
  - Parents, siblings and friends;
  - [Childline](#).
- 8.2. The pastoral tutor, Deputy Head or Principal will review the situation and check on the progress of all pupils involved. Notes should be made at all stages and kept securely.

## **9. Responses to bullying incidents**

- 9.1. If there is a physical injury, please ensure the pupil has been given medical attention then inform the Child Protection Team.
- 9.2. If the pupil is 'in need' or 'at risk' please inform the Child Protection Team immediately.
- 9.3. The Deputy Head will consult with the pastoral tutor to jointly agree on a suggested course of action to establish the facts associated with the incident. The Child Protection Team may choose to escalate any concerns to child protection status.
- 9.4. In consultation with the Principal, the Deputy Head will (via telephone or email communication) keep the parents of those involved informed about bullying incidents.
- 9.5. The Child Protection Team will liaise with the Learning Support Department and ensure that where necessary any SEND issues are considered.
- 9.6. The Principal reserves the right to temporarily exclude a pupil (or pupils) for a period while facts are being established.
- 9.7. Sanctions applied and management approaches adopted will depend on the seriousness of an incident. Haileybury Malta has a clear policy on Rewards, Behaviour and Sanctions. Any sanctions will be decided in line with this policy.
- 9.8. Given that bullying can have a serious detrimental effect on the pupil being bullied and on the community more widely, it should be recognised that a pupil may face expulsion for bullying and that this serious punishment can be applied even to a first occurrence and irrespective of the pupil's school record. Serious cases will be dealt with under the School's Serious Disciplinary Cases Procedure.
- 9.9. The Deputy Head will consult with the Principal in any case where a serious disciplinary sanction is considered appropriate, such as a temporary exclusion (a suspension) or permanent exclusion from school.
- 9.10. Support, counselling and additional education will be offered to all parties involved, and, if necessary, to their parents.

- 9.11. In some situations, a response might include the drawing up of a pupil contract between those involved which parties must agree and adhere to, or the appointment of a staff mentor to whom a pupil can turn for additional support and guidance.
- 9.12. Cyber-bullying can lead to additional sanctions involving the removal of IT privileges and the confiscation of devices.

## **10. Record keeping and data protection**

- 10.1. Electronic records of minor bullying incidents and any disciplinary sanctions imposed are kept by the relevant pastoral tutors to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted, to enable the identification of any patterns in bullying activity and enable remedial actions to be taken where necessary. These records will be checked by the Deputy Head annually. Any patterns should be flagged. In addition, the Deputy Head will monitor the proportion of sanctions issued to pupils on the SEND register and follow up accordingly with the Principal and Head of Learning Support.
- 10.2. Electronic records of more serious incidents and the disciplinary sanctions imposed are kept by the Deputy Head to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted, to enable the identification of any patterns in bullying activity and enable remedial actions to be taken where necessary. The Deputy Head will report any findings to the Principal who will in turn report to the Board of Governors as appropriate. Statistics relating to levels of disciplinary sanctions are also reported termly to the Governors' Safeguarding and Wellbeing Committee, with analysis according to gender, other protected characteristics, and SEND.
- 10.3. Bullying is a child protection issue. Information related to a child protection or safeguarding concern will be disseminated to the appropriate staff and local agencies on a 'need-to-know' basis, keeping the welfare and safety of the pupil in question at the centre of any decision made. All staff are made aware of their duty to process personal information fairly and lawfully, in line with data protection legislation, but that this must not be a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child being placed at risk of harm.

| <b>Version history</b> |                    |   |
|------------------------|--------------------|---|
| <b>Date</b>            | <b>Reviewed by</b> | <b>Notes</b>  |
| September 2023         | Deputy Head        | Policy prepared for use in the 1 <sup>st</sup> year (Years 3-8) |
| September 2024         | Deputy Head        | Reviewed and updated; no material changes made                  |
|                        |                    |   |
|                        |                    |   |
|                        |                    |   |