



The Falcons School for Girls

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Policy reviewed by: Sara Williams-Ryan

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Next review date: June 2019

Reviewer's Signature:

Head Teacher's Signature:

Please note: 'School' refers to Falcons School for Girls; 'parents' refers to parents, guardians and carers.

1. Policy Statement

Falcons School for Girls is committed to providing an environment free from bullying in so far as reasonably practicable, and to creating a culture of tolerance and understanding where all pupils feel safe and confident in raising any concerns. We believe that a culture and ethos of tolerance and understanding regardless of age, special needs or disability, racial/cultural heritage, religious belief or sexual orientation is central to our anti-bullying approach. This Anti-Bullying Policy forms a fundamental part of our approach to providing excellent pastoral care to **all** pupils.

Key documents with which this Policy is in accordance:

- Childrens Act 2004
- Education and Inspections Act 2006,
- The Equality Act 2010
- Education Act 2011
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- DfE Preventing and Tackling Bullying guidance 2017
- Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2014
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018
- Independent Schools Inspectorate Handbook January 2017

2. Aims

The Falcons School for Girls regards any form of bullying, including the use of electronic media, as harmful and unacceptable. We believe that everyone has a right to feel safe. The School does not tolerate bullying of any kind.

The aims of this policy are:

- to promote good and tolerant behaviours based on the school aims
- to prevent bullying in so far as reasonably practicable
- to help staff, pupils and parents to deal with bullying when it occurs

At Falcons School for Girls our community is based upon respect, good manners, fair play and mutual tolerance. The school and the Alpha Plus Group 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 to co-operate so that they can learn in a relaxed; but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils are encouraged and expected to care for and support each other
- We believe parents/guardians have an important role in supporting Falcons School for Girls 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 full regard to relevant legislation, guidance and the Independent Schools Standards regulations listed above in section 1, with which this policy complies. The policy will be regularly reviewed and updated in accordance with national standards and guidance.
- Our anti-bullying approach also involves other school policies, especially the Behaviour and Sanctions Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, School Rules, The 'Power of One' oath (See Appendix 1) and E-Safety Policy.
- We use PSHEE lessons and activities, assemblies, projects, stories and literature, current affairs, historical events, tutorials and other curriculum approaches to help create a tolerant culture where bullying is most likely to be prevented in the first place and where incidents of bullying can be appropriately discussed as part of learning.
- We train staff to recognise the potential signs of bullying and how to deal with it when it occurs through the Induction Programme at the start of each year and the issues are revisited annually when the policy is updated.
- Systems are established to fully and sensitively investigate any incidents of alleged bullying in accordance with this protocol summarised below in section 6.
- Allegations of bullying can be brought to the attention of staff either by the victim(s), their friend(s) or their parent(s)/guardian(s).

3. What is bullying?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups (for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities). It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case.

Many experts say that bullying involves 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.

This DfE definition includes:

- hurting, harming or humiliating of another person by physical (including sexual and sexist¹) means
- verbal bullying (including electronic media like chat room and SMS messages)
- emotional bullying (by excluding someone, tormenting them or spreading malicious rumours about them)
- manipulating other people to tease or torment someone
- complicity that falls short of direct participation in bullying.

Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, homophobic, religious or cultural and which focus on disabilities or physical attributes (such as their appearance, hair colour or body shape), or a person's sexuality.

Using ICT in these ways is also bullying – we call it 'cyber-bullying' (see below for more information on cyber-bullying).

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 can be intimidatory but it is often hidden and subtle. Whatever its nature, bullying is treated seriously at Falcons School for Girls 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
- it can also be a criminal offence, for example if the behaviour amounts to harassment or to threatening behaviour

¹ Sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up. Further details can be found in our Safeguarding Policy.

When any incidents of alleged bullying occur the school will consider the needs of the alleged victim(s) and perpetrator(s) in the context of our duty to promote pupil welfare. If necessary, the school will liaise with external agencies in order to ensure the right help is provided to respond to individual needs.

4. Cyber-Bullying

Cyber bullying is:

- the sending or posting of harmful or cruel messages, texts, videos or images
- using the internet, including, but not limited to, social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, email and blogs, gaming, wikis, text messages, twitter posts and instant messages to send cruel messages, texts, videos or images;
- tampering or interfering with electronic files or data;
- setting up or promoting inappropriate websites;
- inappropriate sharing of images from webcams/mobile phones.

As with other forms of bullying, cyberbullying is wilful and is a conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone. It can be obvious or subtle, can take place over an extended period of time and is often more extreme than direct forms of bullying because the perpetrator frequently conceals their identity, thereby feeling safe from detection via anonymity.

The ICT leader and school's ICT technician install and utilise all available and appropriate filters, firewalls and forms of personal protection in all ICT equipment where possible/necessary in school

The ICT leader and the school's ICT technician are vigilant in their checks of ICT equipment and, if required, investigate any allegations of cyber-bullying immediately and thoroughly in order to establish concrete evidence wherever possible.

In instances of cyber-bullying, staff are advised to proceed as per the Anti-Bullying Policy just as they would in all other forms of bullying.

The Falcons School for Girls aims to work with parents and other agencies (e.g. the police neighbourhood school's officer) outside of the school community to prevent cyber bullying and to identify and eliminate it where it occurs.

Pupils are taught about internet/electronic safety and about identity and personal data protection in PSHEE and ICT lessons.

Pupils are not allowed, as a general rule, to bring mobile phones to school. In instances where this has been agreed, these are handed in to a class teacher during school hours.

5. Possible signs of bullying

Changes in behaviour that 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 Room or School Office 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, experiences 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.

6. How we deal with bullying.

Preventative measures:

- Themed assemblies explain the school policy on bullying. Our P.S.H.E.E 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 support the messages within the 'Power of One' oath (See Appendix 1).
- During assemblies and P.S.H.E.E lessons children are taught the steps that they can take if they feel they are being bullied- Add a note to the class 'Your Voice' box; speak to a trusted adult in school; speak to their parent(s) or ask their class student councillor for support in approaching a trusted adult in school.
- Outside agencies, such as theatre groups, are invited into school to promote anti-bullying
- Annual Anti-Bullying week is a week focused on friendships, relationships and bullying awareness. This is in addition to our P.S.H.E.E scheme of work.
- Subjects such as RE, history, English and drama are used to highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce the anti-bullying message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable.
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site, particularly areas where bullying might occur. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour.
- Each playground has a 'Buddy Bench' that is monitored by staff and the Student Council. This is a place where children can sit if they feel that they have no one to play with. Children are encouraged to invite people from the Buddy bench to join in their games.
- Annual Anti-Bullying training for staff and parents
- A strong and experienced team of class teachers and the First Aid Officer, who support the Head of Pastoral Care and Welfare, Deputy Heads and Head to identify possible signs of bullying and to take appropriate action
- Our SLT gives support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies.

- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures
- The school acknowledges its responsibility to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the school, involving our pupils

Bullying outside school premises

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises “to such an extent as is reasonable”. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises and cyber-bullying.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on by a member of SLT. The Head will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil, or in extreme circumstances, the police where it is thought the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public.

In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying the teacher can only discipline the pupil on school premises or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the staff member.

Procedures to follow to prevent and deal with bullying

In order to identify incidents of bullying and the identities of bullies, all staff watch for early signs of distress in pupils, and listen, believe (until otherwise proven) and act on any concerns raised by pupils. In severe cases, pupils who are found to have bullied others may be temporarily or permanently excluded in accordance with the school's 'Exclusion Policy'.

The following is a list of actions available to staff depending on the perceived seriousness of the situation. The emphasis is always on a caring, listening approach as bullies are often victims too – that is why they bully.

Stage 1: Discussion at length with the alleged victim. This will require patience and understanding. Remember – listen, believe and act. Ensure that pupils are aware that some information may need to be disclosed to others and how that information may be used.

Stage 2: Identify the alleged bully/bullies. Obtain witnesses if possible. Advise the Head and contact the Director of Schools & Colleges at APG Head Office immediately.

Stage 3: Discussions with the alleged bully to ask them to tell the truth about the situation/incident. Make it clear that bullying is never tolerated at The Falcons School for Girls.

Stage 4: If they 'own up' then, in the first instance, anyone who exhibits bullying behaviour will be asked to talk about their actions and encouraged to find ways to change it. Everyone involved has responsibility for helping them to do this. Sometimes bullies do not realise how upsetting their behaviour has been and need help in order to be able to apologise or take appropriate remedial action.

Stage 5: If they do not own up escalate the investigation to a senior level and take advice from external agencies as considered appropriate in the circumstances.

Stage 6: Separate discussions with parents of alleged bully and alleged victim. Alleged victims may need to deal with their feelings and will be offered methods of support. Except for the most straightforward cases in which truth has been established and the matter has been resolved swiftly, discussions will generally be conducted by the class teacher or Head. A record will be kept of the interview and what is said to be corroborated. Notes, a brief summary and copies of any letters sent to parents will be put on file, with cross referencing as appropriate.

Stage 7: Where the Head deems it appropriate, sanctions for the bully will be put in place, depending upon the perceived severity of the incident(s). The Head will make a professional judgement on the perceived severity. Strong sanctions such as exclusion may be necessary in cases of severe and persistent bullying.

Letters written to parents of the pupils directly involved will detail the nature of the offence and any sanctions imposed, and will set out the improvements the school expects to be made in behaviour (with reference to the School's Behaviour Policy and the Falcons Rules) as well as the consequences of failure to improve. Wherever possible the identity of informers, and pupils other than the daughter of the parent, will not be disclosed.

Stage 8: Where appropriate, and with consent from the parents, bullies may be referred to an Educational or Behavioural Psychologist. The Head will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil, or in extreme circumstances, the police where it is thought the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public.

Stage 9: Continue monitoring the situation by observing at playtime/lunchtimes and having discussions with the victim to ensure that there is no repetition. Both the bully and the victim will be monitored to ensure positive relationships are built and maintained.

Stage 10: Support for the Bully and the Victim through Counselling

Both bully and the victim require support, which may include one-to-one counselling. When children have problems they feel upset, frightened, confused or embarrassed. They need a chance to air their views and feelings or to be helped to do so. In all counselling situations, the member of staff must reiterate that any form of bullying is harmful and unacceptable, and that we believe that everyone has a right to feel safe and that the school does not tolerate bullying of any kind.

Counselling children in these instances requires certain basic skills. These include:

- being genuine - a sense of honesty which attracts trust;
- an interest in the child's worries reflecting an honest concern;
- showing children they are accepted, valued and respected without any preconditions.
- rejection by the teacher of a bully will create barriers and will prevent effective teaching and learning. One technique to show positive regard towards a child who is bullying is to divorce the child from her bullying behaviour, e.g. "We like *you* - it's your behaviour we don't like and cannot tolerate."
- empathy - the sensing of other people's feelings and conveying this through verbalisation, positive speaking and voice quality

Counselling can help prevent anticipated problems occurring. It can help children cope with an ongoing problem which is outside their control and can help resolve or minimise problems / behaviour presented in school.

Stage 11: As the behaviour of the bully (hopefully) improves, then favoured activities, etc., can be reinstated and the child praised for good behaviour and upholding the Falcons Rules, with specific reference to 'Falcons Girls are Kind'. This will rebuild the child's self-esteem, which may have been damaged after a bullying incident, but which may have been low anyway. The bullied child will be monitored by the staff, and (where necessary) helped to build her confidence through praise and further counselling.

Stage 12: The situation will be monitored carefully to prevent it recurring.

If bullying is repeated or persistent, pupils may be temporarily or permanently excluded in accordance with the school's 'Exclusion Policy'.

Procedure in the EYFS

The procedure outlined in section 6 also applies for pupils in the EYFS, with the caveats that both the classroom practitioners and the Head will tailor their language and approach appropriately to ensure that:

- the alleged bully can fully understand what went wrong, and why she must not repeat offensive behaviour;
- the victim understands that they are not at fault.

If the bullying is severe, repeated, or persists, EYFS pupils may be temporarily or permanently excluded in accordance with the school's 'Exclusion Policy'.

It should be noted that staff in EYFS settings are duty bound to 'look beyond the setting' in respect of the behaviours young children are bringing into the setting and to raise discussions with parents and carers in order to respond to inappropriate behaviours or activities.

7. Actions/Sanctions

In all cases of bullying, parents of the bully will be tactfully informed of the situation and will be expected to support the school's sanctions.

A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer, significant harm.

These disciplinary sanctions reflect the seriousness of the incident and convey a deterrent effect.

Where bullying occurs as part of a larger behavioural problem, pupils may be placed on an Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP), listing targets for expected behaviour and sanctions applied should targets not be met. The IBP will be drawn up with active involvement from the pupil in question and the class teacher. The IBP will be circulated to all staff involved with the child concerned, and discussed at subsequent staff meetings during Pupil Feedback sessions. A copy of the IBP will be kept in the pupil's file.

Sanctions will be in the form of 'privileges' withdrawn, both at home and at school, in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy. As noted above, strong sanctions such as exclusion may be necessary in cases of severe and persistent bullying (in accordance with school's 'Exclusion Policy').

Where incidents of bullying have occurred, the Head will follow-up within two weeks and again within the following half term to ensure that there are no repeat incidents.

All incidences of bullying or alleged bullying will be recorded in writing; only the Head may update this log. Records of discussions will also be kept in the pupil's file on SIMS.

8. Related policies are:

- Accessibility Policy
- Behaviour and Sanctions Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Exclusion Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

9. Further sources of Information

A number of useful additional sources of information can be found by following the link below

<https://www.gov.uk/education/school-bullying>

Appendix 1: The Power of One Oath

I will not bully others

I will not stand by while others are bullied

I will report bullying wherever I see it

Because I have the Power of One