



Walthamstow School For Girls

"Neglect not the gift that is in thee"

Policy Document

Countering Harmful and Abusive Behaviour Policy

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I. INTRODUCTION

At Walthamstow School for Girls, we believe that every student has the right to learn, the right to respect and the right to feel safe.

We expect all staff and students to behave in a way that maximises learning and enjoyment for all students regardless of differences due to: disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (Equality Act 2010).

All students have a right to feel safe and secure from harmful and abusive behaviour (HAB) whilst at school.

Teachers and adults should take all reported incidents of HAB seriously and take appropriate action following the school Countering HAB Policy.

2. DEFINITION OF HARMFUL AND ABUSIVE BEHAVIOUR

HAB in this context is aggressive or insulting behaviour by an individual or group, intended to put another person down or gain advantage over them, whether a single incident or one which is repeated over a period of time.

It is behaviour that attempts to humiliate, hurt, frighten, or threaten someone, particularly if the behaviour is repeated or persistent.

We recognise that HAB may take many different forms:

- Physical - hitting, punching, biting, pushing, shoving, taking or damaging belongings, stealing or demanding money.
- Verbal - name-calling, insulting, racist or sexist or homophobic remarks, mocking, teasing, intimidating, threatening, making things up to get someone into trouble.
- Indirect - spreading rumours, promoting hatred against someone, isolating, writing or drawing offensive graffiti, taking friends away, excluding someone from the group.
- Online HAB - sending abusive texts, or e-mails to someone or to a group, posting abusive messages on social media, spreading rumours or making threats using a social network, posting pictures or information on the internet intended to promote hatred, isolation and in order to hurt and humiliate.

3. FREQUENT TYPES OF HAB

HAB may take many forms:

Actions may include:

- Name calling.
- Racist or sexist abuse.
- Physical violence
- Intimidation.
- Interfering with personal property.
- Isolating peers or conspiring with others to isolate individuals.
- Hurtful comments looks or actions.
- Use of technology to send hurtful messages/pictures.
- Spreading gossip.
- Spreading rumours that are deliberately designed to upset/cause pain.
- Threatening behaviour.
- Homophobic abuse.
- Transphobic abuse.

4. ONLINE HAB: GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS

DOs

- Follow the school Acceptable Use of ICT Policy

- Keep your passwords confidential.
- Ensure you follow the school rules in the use of ICT equipment, the internet and e-mail.
- Do not use social networking sites whilst at school.
- Ensure that you understand how any site you use operates and therefore the risks associated with using the site.
- Consider carefully who you accept as friends on a social networking site.
- Take care when publishing information about yourself and images of yourself online – assume that anything you release will end up in the public domain.
- Take screen prints and retain text messages, e-mails or voicemail messages as evidence.
- Follow school rules with regard to phones and keep your mobile phone secure at all times when you have it on your person.
- Answer your mobile telephone with 'Hello' rather than your name, if the number on the display is unknown to you.
- Report all incidents online HAB to your Parents / Carers, Tutor or Student Progress Leader.
- Support friends who are subject to online HAB

DON'Ts

- Don't allow any online HAB to continue by ignoring it and hoping it will go away.
- Don't seek to return e-mails, telephone calls or messages or retaliate personally to the HAB.
- Don't put information or images on-line, take information into school, or share it with students when these images or information may cause offence.
- Don't release your private e-mail address, private phone number or social networking site details to anyone.
- Don't pretend to be someone else when using electronic communication.
- Don't take pictures of other pupils without getting their permission.
- Don't attempt to contact school staff via social networking sites.

5. POSITIVE APPROACHES TO ENCOURAGE GOOD BEHAVIOUR

Teachers should be pro-active in encouraging caring and positive behaviour.

This may include any of the following:-

- Developing strategies within the classroom for encouraging good behaviour, using the Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy 2022/23
- Focus on countering HAB in PSHE and other curriculum areas.
- HAB should be a theme for School Leadership assemblies and Year Group assemblies termly.
- Student Progress Leaders should highlight HAB in Year Group assemblies responding to behaviour patterns as they happen throughout the year.
- Actively discourage name calling, the use of racial or sexist terms or other unpleasant references to others.
- Active discussion of the Student Code of Conduct (in PBFL Policy 2022/23) through Registration activities and in PSHE lessons.
- Encourage pupils to report HAB and students to understand that all incidents will be treated seriously.
- Encourage students to discuss HAB and how they can initiate change through supporting each other.
- Countering HAB week assemblies, activities and awareness raising.

6. SUPPORTING THOSE SUBJECT TO HAB

Those subject to HAB will need to be given support to report and identify the student(s) who is/are perpetrating this behaviour, as they may be scared and reluctant to report the HAB.

- Staff should encourage the victim of HAB to continue to co-operate fully in identifying the perpetrator, as the best way of securing their safety in the future and also that of others.
- The subject needs to know that they will be listened to and supported throughout and that staff will establish a way to end the HAB towards them.
- The subject needs to understand that the perpetrator may try to continue to use HAB against them again in the future.

- Encouragement should be given to the victim to involve their Parents / Carers and their peers to give them confidence to report any incident of HAB towards them.

7. SUPPORTING THE STUDENT SHOWING HAB

- Working with the student showing HAB takes time and skill. Those showing HAB may have been subject to HAB themselves.
- Some perpetrators of HAB will have circumstances in their own lives that cause them distress and therefore they use fighting and threatening behaviour as a way of coping.
- Some perpetrators may observe HAB out of school and believe that this is normal behaviour.
- Some perpetrators bring family feuds into school and their parents/ carers may encourage the HAB to continue whilst at school.

A range of techniques to work with the perpetrators is required to reduce the likelihood of the behaviour being repeated. They need to understand that the school will not tolerate HAB and that there are systems in place to investigate all reported incidents and if confirmed, act upon them within the clear procedures identified in the school Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy 2022/23.

Support may be offered through mentoring by an identified member of staff, attending anger management, self-esteem and self-confidence courses arranged by our Learning Mentor and/or referrals to the School Counsellor, Safer Schools Police Officer, or the Borough Multi-Agency / Early Help Team.

8. TEACHING STAFF

Actions to be taken when dealing with incidents of HAB, following the PBfL Policy 2022/23.

All staff should take action when a student reports they are being subjected to HAB and each reported incident of HAB is to be taken seriously.

In class: Tutor, Class Teacher, Middle Leader.

- Talk to both parties individually. Take a written statement where appropriate (a member of staff should scribe for a pupil who is unable to write their own statement).
- The Subject of HAB should be reassured of their safety and given advice on where to go if they feel threatened.
- The perpetrator should reassure staff that they understand why their actions have caused distress to another student.
- Where appropriate the subject and perpetrator could be brought together to discuss the incident supported by a member of staff (Restorative Justice).
- A SIMS Behaviour Referral should be completed by staff and the Student Progress Leader should be made aware of the referral.
- A record will be placed on the student's file with any action taken.

Sanctions and Consequences

These may include any or all of the following:

- Verbal warning.
- Detentions.
- Apology – verbal or written.
- Restorative Justice.
- Suspension from lessons – placed in the Duty Room for an internal suspension.
- In extreme cases an external suspension may be necessary to protect the victim.
- A reintegration meeting will be held with all parties prior to a return to school.
- Parents / Carers informed by telephone or in writing.
- Permanent exclusion may be considered in the unlikely event of serious injury or serious persistent HAB.

9. BREAK AND LUNCH BREAK

Duty staff should be pro-active in their duty and attempt to prevent an escalation of unpleasant behaviour. Should a more serious incident occur requiring more action than students being separated and warned, this should be reported to the Duty Team. The Duty Team Leader will make initial investigations and may pass it to the appropriate Student Progress Leader for further investigation.

Sanction/s applied.

The Duty Room staff are available to support staff at lunchtimes.

10. SERIOUS INCIDENTS REFERRED TO OR DEALT WITH BY SENIOR STAFF

Procedures should be followed as above. The actions taken should be recorded on the SIMs Behaviour Referral

Sanction/s applied.

Copies of all reports will be placed in the student file.

SPL and member of the Leadership Team alerted to SIMs referral information.

11. HAB OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL PREMISES

Schools have a duty to discipline students for misbehaving outside the school premises “to such an extent as is reasonable”. This can relate to HAB that occurs off the school premises and which is witnessed by a member of staff or is reported to the school. The Headteacher and the Leadership Team will consider whether it is appropriate to inform Parents / Carers and apply sanctions according to the school PBfL Policy 2022/23.

12. COMMUNICATION OF THE POLICY

The Countering Harmful and Abusive Behaviour Policy should be communicated regularly to students, Parents / Carers, Staff and Governors:

- To students through School assemblies, Year Group Assemblies, Tutor Time, posters, School website, PSHE and Subject Schemes of Work.
- To Parents / Carers through the school website and Greensheet
- To staff through Office 365 and meetings.
- To Governors at meetings

13. REVIEW OF THE POLICY

- An annual review of the Countering HAB Policy by the Governing Body.
- An annual review of the Countering HAB Policy by The Assistant Headteacher responsible for the policy.
- An annual review of the Countering HAB Policy with opportunities for staff, students, Parents / Carers to participate.

14. LINKS WITH OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES AND STATEMENTS

- PBfL Policy,
- E-Safety Policy,
- Acceptable Use of ICT Policy,
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy,
- Exclusions Policy,
- Equal Opportunities Policy.