

# Harrow Young Musicians Anti-Bullying Policy

***This policy takes account of the DfE Guidance 2013: Preventing and Tackling Bullying***

## **Introduction**

**At Harrow Young Musicians** trustees, staff/contractors, parents, volunteers and children work together to create a happy, caring, learning environment in which respect for one another is actively promoted. Bullying, either verbal, physical or indirect will not be tolerated. It is everyone's responsibility to aim to prevent occurrences of bullying and to deal with any incidents quickly and effectively. Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, it may cause psychological damage, and there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour. This policy is available to all parents through the HYM's website and to staff/contractors in the staff/contractors handbook.

## **Objectives**

We believe every trustee, staff/contractors, parents and children have the right to enjoy their time at HYM free from any form of intimidation and that they should feel safe and supported.

It is also important to educate any perpetrators so that they understand that what they have done is wrong. Bullying behaviour may be symptomatic of deep seated, sometimes unacknowledged unhappiness. The perpetrator should understand the seriousness of the situation and will not re-offend.

## **Aims**

- To make it clearly understood by all members of the HYM community that bullying will not be tolerated
- To prevent as far as is possible bullying taking place
- To respond effectively to particular incidents
- To raise awareness about bullying behaviour, challenge attitudes about bullying behaviour, increase understanding for bullied pupils and help to build an anti-bullying ethos.

## **What is bullying?**

**There are many definitions of bullying, but most have three things in common:**

- It is deliberately hurtful behaviour
- It is repeated often over a period of time
- It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves

**Bullying can take a number of forms:**

- Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, making threatening gestures
- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Religious and cultural: e.g. disrespectful comments about religious practices
- Racist: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual/Sexist: sexual harassment in any form is bullying
- Homophobic: reference to, or focusing on, the issue of sexual orientation

- Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber: involving the internet, email, text messaging, social websites, chat rooms and mobile phone calls. Misuse of camera and video facilities.
- Special Educational Needs and Disability: drawing attention to or exploiting a person's disability to harm or upset them
- Physical appearance: making unkind comments about a physical condition (size, glasses etc)

### **Remember**

That there is a difference between the premeditation of cruel words or violent actions and a spontaneous outburst. For this reason, bullying can be defined as the repeated behaviour by individuals or groups

### **Possible signs of bullying in children:**

- Be unwilling to go to HYM
- Begin performing poorly
- Come home regularly with clothes damaged
- Become withdrawn
- Become distressed or stop eating
- Cry themselves to sleep or have nightmares
- Bed wet
- Have unexplained bruises or scratches
- Refuse to say what is wrong
- Lose belongings
- Become isolated

### **Who are the victims?**

Anyone can be bullied. However, there are certain risk factors, which make the experience of bullying more likely. These include:

- Lacking close friends, lacking social skills
- Being shy
- Coming from an over protective family environment
- Being from a different racial or ethnic group to the majority
- Being different in some obvious respect from the majority
- Having special physical or educational needs
- Being a "provocative victim" – a child who behaves inappropriately with others

### **Strategies for dealing with bullying**

#### **Prevention**

Preventive measures are based on raising awareness amongst pupils, staff/contractors and parents. Everyone therefore should know what the policy is:

- Everyone has the right to feel comfortable, safe, at ease and happy at HYM
- Bullying in its various forms will not be tolerated
- Anyone who is aware of bullying must report it – to a friend who can tell a staff/contractors member, to an adult at HYM, to a parent.
- Bullying will be dealt with very seriously
- Staff/contractors should minimise opportunities for bullying behaviour through vigilance and punctuality

## Responses

The most effective way of dealing with bullying is to create an atmosphere in which it cannot flourish. It is important that all the pupils are aware of the part they play when they find themselves as bystanders. Bullying can be brought to the attention of staff/contractors either by the victim(s), their friend(s), their parent(s) or other interested people and forwarded on to the anti-bullying representative. The response should involve corrective action and supportive action both for the victim and the bully. Investigations of the reported bullying should have a high priority, but discretion is important. The children should know that there is always somebody ready to listen and to provide immediate support.

Staff/contractors (through assemblies) will make children aware of Anti Bullying and ensure that they understand what they should do if they are being bullied or they know someone who is.

All Staff/contractors should be vigilant at all times.

Parents - Parents are encouraged to inform us as soon as they have any knowledge or any suspicion of bullying that may be happening.

### **Recommended procedure when an incident occurs:**

The following is a list of actions available to staff/contractors 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.

- Investigate the incident as soon as possible
- Arrange separate discussions at length with the victim and the accused bully. This will require patience and understanding. Remember – Listen, believe, act. Obtain witnesses, if possible.

Discussions with the bully. Confront them with the details and ask them to tell the truth about the situation/incident. Make it clear that bullying is not acceptable. In minor cases a verbal reprimand should be given and the conductor involved. In more serious cases an Incident Report Form should be completed and the Chair advised. These forms (both blank and completed) are kept in a file in the HYM Office. Incidents of bullying should be recorded. This record should furnish details of the incident and responses.

- If they do not own up, investigate further. If it is clear they are lying, continue with the procedure. Children usually own up if presented with all the facts
- If they own up then follow the procedure outlined below
- Separate discussions with parents of bully and victim
- Put sanctions in place for the bully which may include exclusion from HYM, depending on the perceived severity of the incident(s). A proper apology should be made to the victim
- Staff/contractors should be informed and colleagues should be made aware of the situation so that they may watch carefully for any reoccurrence.
- Continue monitoring the situation by observing and having discussions with victim to ensure no repetition
- As the behaviour of the bully (hopefully) improves the student should be praised for good behaviour.

All bullying incidents are recorded to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted and to enable patterns to be identified.

Review cycle: Every 3 Years

Date Adopted: 3 November 2016

Next Review Date: November 2019