

Pippa's Guardians Anti-Bullying (including Cyberbullying) Policy

Overview

This content of this policy applies to anyone working on behalf of or alongside Pippa's Guardians. It's purpose is to provide information to all staff, homestays, volunteers, and parents about what we can do to prevent and recognise bullying or to support a student that reports that they are being bullied. This policy should be read in conjunction with our Online Safety Policy (found at www.pippasguardians.com/our-policies/) which covers Cyberbullying in more detail.

Separate age-appropriate guidelines on how to recognise bullying and access support is available to our students in our Student Handbook which is given to all of our students in person on their arrival in the UK.

We recognise that bullying can cause acute distress and affect a person's health and development. All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse and everyone has a role to play in preventing and stopping all forms of bullying.

What is bullying?

Bullying is when individuals or groups seek to harm, intimidate or coerce someone who is perceived to be vulnerable (Oxford English Dictionary, 2021). Bullying can be a form of discrimination, particularly if it is based on a child's disability, race, religion or belief, gender identity or sexuality

Bullying includes a range of abusive behaviour that is repeated and intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally. It can involve people of any age, and can happen anywhere – at home, school or using online platforms and technologies (cyberbullying). This means it can happen at any time. The emotional effects of being bullied can include sadness, depression and anxiety, low self-esteem, social isolation, self-harm, suicidal thoughts and feelings.

Bullying encompasses a range of behaviours which may be combined and may include (but is not limited to) the behaviours and actions below;

Verbal abuse: name-calling or saying nasty things to or about a child or their family.

Physical abuse: hitting a child, pushing a child, physical assault.

Emotional abuse: making threats, undermining a child or excluding a child from a friendship group or activities.

Cyberbullying/online bullying

Bullying that occurs on social media, online gaming or via mobile phones is called cyberbullying. A child may know the person who's bullying them online – and they might be experiencing bullying in the real world as well. They may also be targeted by someone using a fake or anonymous account. It's easy to be anonymous online and this can also increase the likelihood of engaging in bullying behaviour. Cyberbullying can happen at any time or anywhere and a child might feel like there's no escape from the bullies. It is sometimes difficult to trace the bully online.

Cyberbullying can include:

- sending threatening or abusive text messages
- creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
- 'trolling' – sending menacing or upsetting messages online
- excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups
- setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child or spreading rumours about someone
- encouraging self-harm
- voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name
- sending explicit messages, also known as sexting or pressuring children into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual conversations.

Possible signs of online abuse

The NSPCC list the possible signs of a child who may be experiencing abuse online if they demonstrate a change in behaviour or begin to display unusual behaviours such as;

- Being upset after using the internet or their mobile phone
- Unwilling to talk or secretive about their online activities and mobile phone use
- Spending much more or much less time texting, gaming or using social media
- Many new phone numbers, texts or e-mail addresses show up on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet
- After texting or being online they may seem withdrawn, upset or outraged
- Not wanting to go to school and/or avoiding meeting friends
- Avoiding formerly enjoyable social situations

- Difficulty sleeping
- Low self-esteem

We encourage all Pippa's Guardians staff, parents and homestays to look at the NSPCC Keeping Children Safe online resources which offers expert advice and strategies to help our students navigate the internet safely. This information can be found [here](#).

Filters and monitoring

Pippa's Guardians ask our homestays to do all that they reasonably can to limit our student's exposure to harmful online content. We ask that homestays ensure appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place when our students stay.

The NSPCC website 'Online Safety' offers advice to homestays on using parental controls which includes filtering and blocking content, setting different profiles so that each family member can access age-appropriate content and restricting information that can be shared. More information can be found [here](#).

How can Pippa's Guardians support our students?

Pippa's Guardians has a role to play in reporting signs of possible bullying as soon as possible so that prompt action can be taken to support our students. This would normally be reported directly to school by the DSL. We recognise our responsibility to provide our full support to any of our students who may be being bullied.

The nature and level of support will depend on the individual student but we would expect to work closely with the student's school and parents to ensure we were all providing the appropriate support.

In a situation where it may be a Pippa's Guardians student who is being accused of bullying we would expect to work very closely with school, parents and the student to reach a positive outcome for all involved.

Procedure for dealing with an in person or online bullying report

If a Pippa's Guardians staff member or homestay member receives a report of suspected bullying from a student, parent or other source via a face to face disclosure, email or phone call they should record the disclosure using either the online reporting form found [here](#) or the hard copy reporting form found [here](#).

The disclosure should be reported verbally as soon as possible to the appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead - Sarah Checketts on 07548 833044 or Rose Vigers Belgeonne on 07731 997732 or by using safeguarding@pippasguardians.co.uk or in their absence the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, Ben Hughes on 07714 034749.

The written record of the disclosure should be passed to either Sarah Checketts or Rose Vigers Belgeonne or Ben Hughes (in their absence) as soon as is practically possible using either safeguarding@pippasguardians.co.uk or ben@pippasguardians.co.uk

The DSL will report the incident and written disclosure to the student's school DSL and will ask that they assess the alleged threat and risk to the student and implement an immediate action plan. We will continue to review the situation until a positive resolution has been achieved.

If there is a concern a young person has been harmed the incident should be referred to the police by dialling 101.

If the student is considered to be at **immediate risk** of harm the incident should be referred to the police by dialling 999. The first person to hear of an incident that they feel requires police attention should report this so there is no delay in getting help to the child involved. This should take priority over any other form of reporting. Once the incident has been reported to the police the incident should be recorded as above.

Incidents such as those listed below are **all cases where police involvement is the correct and appropriate response:**

- The incident involves an adult
- There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example owing to special educational needs)
- What you know about the imagery or other content suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage, or are violent
- The imagery or other content involves sexual acts and any pupil in the imagery is under 13
- You have reason to believe a pupil or pupil is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of the imagery, for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming

The Pippa’s Guardians DSL will, if required and requested, work with the school and the relevant Area Manager (if appropriate) to ensure the student is well supported.

Where the Pippa’s Guardians DSL is aware that youth produced sexual imagery or other content has been unavoidably viewed by a member of staff, Pippa’s Guardians will ensure that the staff member is offered appropriate professional support. Viewing youth produced sexual imagery or other content can be distressing for both young people and adults and appropriate emotional support may be required.

If the alleged bullying incident involves a member of the homestay family, or another student staying at the homestay, Pippa’s Guardians will investigate the circumstances fully and if necessary, find alternative accommodation for the student and review their working relationship with the homestay.

All concerns are recorded on the student file to ensure we are kept up to date with the situation and can escalate our input if necessary.

Policy Version Number	V2
Policy Date	22nd August 2024
Policy Review Date	22nd August 2025
Responsibility for Policy Review	Imogen Trevethan