



Anti-Bullying policy

April 2021

This policy is written with regard to the following guidance;

- Department for Education – Preventing and Tackling Bullying; Advice for Head-teachers, staff and governing bodies. (July 2017)
- Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff (2014)
- The Equality Act 2010, to make sure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and to respect all pupils special educational needs (SEN). This includes age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation.

The PHS behaviour policy is reviewed annually and communicated to parents, pupils and staff via the school website

Introduction

Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, some types of harassing or threatening behaviour or communications could be a criminal offence under the **Protection from Harassment Act 1997**, **Malicious Communications Act 1988**, **Communications Act 2003**, **Public Order Act 1986**. If school staff feel an offence may have been committed, they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the *Malicious Communications Act 1988*, any person who sends an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender, is guilty of an offence, if their purpose in sending it was to cause distress and anxiety to the recipient.

It should be noted that when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm', a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern under the Children Act 1989. Where this is the case, the school staff should discuss their concerns with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, who should in turn report their concerns to the appropriate Local Authority Children's Social Care, where their criteria for referral are met, and work with them to take appropriate action.

School staff members also have the power to prevent pupils from misbehaving outside the school premises. Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 say that a school's powers can be used 'to address pupil's conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff, but only if it would be reasonable for the school to regulate pupil's behaviour in these circumstances.' This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops or in town or village centre. The Principal is permitted to implement on-site consequences for off-site incidents.

What is Bullying?

The DFE advice ‘Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017) indicates that a working definition of bullying is as follows:

'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 and may happen directly or indirectly (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.'

Bullying may involve 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), derived from an intellectual imbalance, or from 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.

Bullying is not acceptable. The effects of bullying can be potentially very serious, causing psychological damage and, at its most extreme attempted or actual suicide.

Whilst bullying is emotionally traumatic for the victim, PHS will, nonetheless, consider the welfare of all parties involved in any incident.

Bullying can include:

- ***Emotional bullying*** e.g. when a victim is taunted, mocked, excluded from groups or the subject of hurtful and untruthful gossip and rumours. Often, those who engage in this form of behaviour do not consider it to be bullying but consider it to be ‘a joke’. If the victim does not find teasing or taunting funny, then it is not. Emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical.
- ***Physical bullying*** -this should not be seen merely in terms of a pupil being physically assaulted. It can include damage done to the victim’s property, clothing or school work.
- ***Verbal bullying*** - this may include name-calling or making insulting remarks which can be sexual/sexist, racial or homophobic in nature.
- ***Cyber-bullying*** is bullying that takes place using technology. Whether on social media sites, through a mobile phone, or gaming sites, the effects can be devastating for the young person involved. Most children have been involved in cyber-bullying in some way, either as a victim, perpetrator, or bystander. By its very nature, cyber-bullying tends to involve a number of online bystanders and can quickly spiral out of control. Children and young people who bully others online do not need to be physically stronger and their methods can often be hidden and subtle.
- ***Attacking property*** – such as damaging, stealing or hiding someone’s possessions.

Bullying can be based on any of the following things:

- **Race** (racist bullying)
- **Religion or belief**
- **Culture or class**
- **Gender** (sexist bullying)

- **Sexual orientation** (Homophobic or biphobic bullying)

- **Homophobic bullying** is bullying that is based on prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views about lesbian, gay or bi people. Homophobic bullying may be targeted at students who are, or who are perceived to be, lesbian, gay or bi. It can also suggest that someone or something is less worthy because they are lesbian, gay or bi. Homophobic bullying is also often targeted at students who have lesbian, gay or bi family members, and students who do not conform to gender stereotypes or are seen to be ‘different’ in some way.

- **For example**

- a boy repeatedly being called ‘gay’ for holding hands with another boy
- a girl who reports that she keeps repeatedly being called a ‘lesbian’ and ‘not a real girl’ by other students because she has short hair
- a boy who is picked on for being gay at break-times because he doesn’t want to play football – *‘He must be gay if he doesn’t like football’*
- a girl who reports that since she came out as a lesbian, other girls in her class keep moving away from her and giggling every time they’re in the changing rooms

- **Biphobic bullying** is bullying based on prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views specifically about bisexual people. Biphobic bullying may be targeted at students who are openly bisexual, those who are questioning their sexual orientation, or students who are suspected of being bisexual. Biphobic bullying may target students with negative stereotyping (for example suggesting that they are greedy) or assume that being bisexual is a phase.

- **For example**

- a bisexual student receiving ongoing name-calling and jokes about being ‘greedy’ because they are attracted to boys and girls
- a bisexual student repeatedly being asked probing or intimidating questions such as *‘can’t you make your mind up – do you fancy boys or girls?’* or *‘why can’t you be normal and just pick boys or girls?’*

- **Gender identity** (Transphobic Bullying)

- **Transphobic bullying** is bullying based on prejudice or negative attitudes, views or beliefs about trans people.
- Transphobic bullying affects young people who are trans but can also affect those questioning their gender identity as well as students who are not trans but do not conform to gender stereotypes.

- **For example**

- students pestering a trans young person with questions about their gender such as *‘are you a real boy?’* or *‘are you a boy, or are you a girl?’* or asking invasive questions like *‘do you wear knickers or boxers?’* or *‘what body parts do you have?’*
- a girl being teased and called names referring to her as a boy or trans because she wears trousers or ‘boys’ clothes’
- a boy who tells his friends that his dad is now his mum suffers other students laughing and repeatedly telling him *‘that can’t happen – your dad’s a freak’*

- **Special Educational Needs (SEN) or disability**

- **Appearance or health conditions**

- **Related to home or other personal situation**

It may be not bullying, for example when:

- two people have an occasional dispute or a falling out.
- pupils engage in rough and tumble play.
- an individual exercises legitimate authority in directing the behaviour of another.

Aims of the PHS bullying policy

- To ensure that all members of PHS understand the nature of bullying, its effects and how it may be prevented;
- To set out the school's measures to minimise the incidence of bullying behaviour;
- To set out the procedure for managing and recording suspected cases of bullying.

Prevention of bullying at PHS

PHS is very clear that the school does not tolerate bullying. Parents, staff and pupils should feel confident that any complaint of bullying will be taken seriously.

School initiatives to prevent and tackle bullying:

We use a range of measures to prevent and tackle bullying including:

- A student-friendly anti-bullying policy *available on the school website* ensures all students understand and uphold the anti-bullying policy.
- Ensures the anti-bullying policy is communicated to parents, pupils and staff via the school website.
- Raises awareness of staff through training so that the principles of the school policy are understood, legal responsibilities are known, action is defined to resolve and prevent problems and sources of support are available.
- Tutor time provides regular opportunities to discuss issues that may arise in class and for form tutors to target specific interventions.
- The school values of equality and respect are embedded across the curriculum to ensure that it is as inclusive as possible
- Stereotypes are challenged by staff and students across the school
- Encourages all staff to be proactive in terms of gathering evidence about pupils who might provoke conflict and to raise these issues with the Principal or the Behaviour Mentor.
- Encourages all pupils to be proactive in terms of reporting any behaviours displayed by other pupils that may cause them concern. Posters are placed around the school advising pupils who they may speak to, however, they are also encouraged to discuss concerns during weekly tutorials with their Learning Mentors in tutorials.
- Difference and diversity are celebrated across the school through diverse displays, books and images. The whole school participates in events including Anti-bullying week, Black History Month and LGBT History Month
- Uses educational elements such as personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), projects, drama, stories and literature to educate pupils regarding bullying and its impact.
- Ensures consequences for bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident and help act as a deterrent.
- Ensures a regular adult presence in social areas.
- Ensures that all members of the community are willing and able to report concerns.
- Involves parents in any incident which has occurred in relation to their child (either as a bully or as a victim)

- Supports parents so that they can develop an understanding regarding bullying and its prevention. This is particularly important in terms of cyber-bullying which often occurs at home but has an impact in school.

How are bullied parties encouraged to come forward?

- Posters are displayed around school informing pupils of correct procedures to follow if they experience bullying or suspect others are being bullied.
- Bullying is regularly addressed in Learning Mentors' weekly tutorials with those pupils able to engage in them.
- Periods of focussed time within PSHE are timetabled into the academic year, encouraging open dialogue between pupils and staff about bullying.

How are suspected cases of bullying managed?

- Staff who observe bullying or have bullying reported to them should listen and record concerns on the PHS Anti-Bullying incident form. The incident forms are on CPOMS i.e. staff record incidents electronically.
- Once completed, the bullying incident form is automatically sent to the Principal and the Behaviour Mentor to review and ensure appropriate consequences have been undertaken.
- The Principal and the Behaviour Mentor monitor incidents over time to gain a picture of any patterns which might occur.
- For cases that are judged to be serious, or repeat offences, the Principal and Therapy Director must be informed before a management strategy is decided.
- A strategy discussion will take place between the relevant people involved. This discussion will consider the wishes of the bullied child and may determine the course of action.
- If a bullying incident gives cause for concern regarding safeguarding, then it should be raised with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Primary Interventions may include:

- Discussion with the bully (or relevant group).
- Discreet monitoring of the bullied person or member of staff.
- Discussion between the bully and victim that is moderated by a suitably skilled member of staff.
- Appropriate consequences/sanctions will be applied in accordance with the school behaviour policy, considering the special educational needs of those involved in the incident.
- Contact and discussion with parents when deemed appropriate.
- Guidance for the bully on how their behaviour is expected to change and what support they will be given to achieve this.
- Pastoral care arrangements to ensure that the wellbeing of all parties is monitored following established cases of bullying.

Secondary interventions may include:

- A member of the Teaching or Therapy staff undertaking a home visit to discuss concerns.
- Escalation of discussions (longer/more frequent).
- Avoidance measures will be implemented to reduce the likelihood of bullying behaviour.

- Children's Social Care will be contacted if it is felt that a child may have or be suffering significant harm.

How will records of bullying be kept?

- A central record is kept of all bullying allegations and incidents by the Principal/Behaviour Support worker via CPOMS.
- Completed bullying forms included a record of actions taken in terms of both the bully and the victim
- Bullying records will be retained for a minimum period of 10 years after a pupil has left.

How is bullying monitored?

- Pupils have regular tutorials with their Learning Mentors and are asked to raise concerns about bullying.
- High staff:pupil ratio and awareness of bullying to encourage staff vigilance.
- The Principal and the Behaviour Mentor review completed bullying forms/behaviour incident forms to look for patterns of behaviour

Training

- The head teacher is responsible for ensuring that all school staff, both teaching and non- teaching receive regular training on all aspects of the anti-bullying policy.

Monitoring and reviewing

- The head teacher is responsible for reporting to the Directors (and the local authority where applicable) on how the policy is being enforced and upheld, via the termly report. The directors and development group are in turn responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the policy via the termly report and by in-school monitoring such as learning walks and focus groups with students.
- The policy is reviewed every 12 months, in consultation with the whole school community including staff, students, parents and carers and governors.