

Anti-Bullying Policy

[Next update – September 2019]

PRIORY SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Child Protection Policy and its Behaviour and Disciplinary Policy, both of which are to be found on the school's website - www.prioryschool.org.uk.

As a school with a Christian ethos, we have a very particular approach to dealing with any kind of bullying whether physical, verbal, emotional, psychological or involving use of any kind of mobile or digital transmission. It is utterly antithetical to every value we stand for and is subject to the full measure of the disciplinary process and its sanctions.

This policy is not limited to, but by regulation we are required to note it does include, the following kinds of bullying:

- * Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, derogatory name-calling
- * Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- * Racial: taunts, graffiti, gestures
- * Sexual/sexist: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- * Homophobic: focussing on the issue of sexuality
- * Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- * Cyber: all areas of internet, such as email and chat room misuse; mobile phone threats by text messaging or calls; misuse of associated technology, for instance camera and video facilities
- * Disability: this includes special educational needs (SEN)

The rules relating to any cyber bullying as noted below are particularly stringent - we forbid the personal use of mobile phones or any communication device in school time. Pupils are required to hand in mobile phones to the school office at the beginning of the school day. In seeking admission to Priory School and by attendance at Priory School, both pupils and their parents/guardians are understood to agree with this policy without condition, and to adhere to it.

Aims and Objectives of this Policy

1. Aims

- To create an atmosphere in which every student has a clear sense of his or her own innate dignity and worth, and their involvement in the wider community of which the school community is a microcosm, within which he/she can develop as a young person of integrity, independence of thought and conscience, with a sense of justice and of kindness, and the confidence and courage to express and uphold those values
- To be a community in which everybody feels valued and safe and in which the concept of the rule of law, applicable to all and accessible to all without fear or favour, is paramount.
- To ensure that individuality, difference and variety may and does flourish and is protected by the ethos of the school and its system of rules.

- We maintain that every pupil has the right to enjoy school and pursue his or her studies in safety, free from anxiety of any kind. Consequently, everybody has these distinct **rights**:
 - to be valued
 - to feel safe
 - to learn
 and these **responsibilities**:
 - to respect others
 - to use common sense
 - to be supportive towards others
 - to keep the rules

The school operates a system of formal checks and communication procedures that ensure the swift flow of information, particularly where pupils' welfare is concerned. The ability to report bullying and the communication of the importance of doing so is enhanced (see the Child Protection Policy for details). The school will work with the local safeguarding board in the application of thresholds for further action.

Every pupil has the right and responsibility to take a stand on bullying, whoever is the victim. It is never necessary to suffer in silence; every support and, where appropriate, confidentiality will be given to any person who reports bullying, whether as a victim or an onlooker.

In establishing the facts in any case of disputed behaviour, Priory School will always seek to find and obtain at least two separate witness statements, in order that any disciplinary sanction has a basis in evidence and can be sustained in the face of any enquiry or examination of its procedures. This impartial approach protects all those involved. Priory School respects the confidence of any report given and will not reveal its source except with the consent of the person affected, unless the report identifies an issue of possible criminal behaviour or highlights a serious issue of child protection (see the Child Protection Policy).

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, 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.

- It is generally persistent.
- It involves manipulation and the abuse of power.
- It causes distress to another.
- It is usually premeditated and calculated rather than thoughtless or accidental.

- It can involve an individual or become part of a group activity.
- It can vary in intensity from banter and horseplay to serious physical assault.

The school will not accept any low-level disruption or the use of offensive language. These will not be dismissed as banter or horseplay. Early intervention sets clear expectations of behaviour that is or isn't acceptable and will help to stop negative behaviours developing.

Peer on Peer abuse:

Children can abuse other children. This is known as peer on peer abuse. It can include bullying, cyberbullying, sexual violence and harassment, physical abuse, sexting and initiating/hazing type violence and rituals. The school will take all steps to stop any signs of this type of abuse.

Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school/public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- has sudden, prolonged periods of quietness
- unwillingness to socialise, tendency towards being a "loner"
- starts stammering
- receives anonymous telephone calls
- attempts or threatens suicide, or speaks of it
- runs away or "bolts"
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money/lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

What can pupils do if they are being bullied?

1. **Tell the bully to stop.** Make it clear that the behaviour is unwelcome and hurtful.
2. **Seek help.** Talk to somebody trusted.
3. **Report it.** Priory School views bullying as a very serious offence and supports all those who report it and has specific procedures on both confidentiality and evidence.
4. **Put it in writing** and hand the note in to the school office.
5. **Send an email to mail@prioryschool.org.uk.** All reports and discussions are in confidence and use of any reports is never made without the consent of the person reporting unless the report identifies an issue of possible criminal behaviour or alerts to a serious issue of child protection (see the Child Protection Policy).

What should a pupil do if (s)he knows someone is being bullied?

- Care enough to take action, whether personally involved or not.
- Intervene at an early stage so that the problem is dealt with before it gets out of hand. In school we are “our brother’s keeper”. Always remember: “Evil flourishes when the good do not act”.
- Have the courage to report it.
- Never be afraid in the face of bullying. The bully is often unhappy him or herself and needs help as well, but that can never excuse his or her actions.

What can a pupil do to prevent bullying?

- Respect yourself and others.
- Try to create a relaxed atmosphere in school for everybody.
- Do not follow friends when you disagree with what they are doing.
- Learn to be tolerant and broad-minded about differences of opinion or personality. Never join in the “crowd” when they are taunting or cold-shouldering someone. Have the courage to stand alone and maintain a sense of fairness and decency. Events will always vindicate you. Bullies usually lie, and are found out by the use of thorough investigative measures that the bully may not be aware of.
- Be aware of the school’s anti-bullying policy and give it your full support.
- Sometimes bullies exclude people. If you are popular and have a positive peer-group, include the victim in your activities.

Procedures

1. Bullying incidents should be reported to staff, usually in the first instance the form tutor.
2. Bullying incidents will be recorded by staff in pupils’ records. A note is always kept of any report in the Principal’s Disciplinary file, which is kept off site.
3. Parents may be informed and asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
4. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted.

5. All bullying behaviour or threats of bullying will be investigated in order to stop the bullying quickly.
6. An attempt will also be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour, and sanctions often have that double role, to punish but also to help to amend.

Strategies

Priory School will use a range of strategies to deal with incidents of bullying. These could include:

- a) Talking to the children involved – sometimes pupils do not recognise that their behaviour is bullying. This also establishes from all witnesses the facts of any case.
- b) Putting the pupils involved together, if appropriate, which can be the case if it is in the same year class, discussing the situation and agree or lay down the steps forward. This can have the advantage of allowing the person who is being bullied to confront the perpetrator, but that is not invariably appropriate. Each case will be handled according to its own merits and for the swiftest resolution ie the bullying stops and permanently. As far as possible this is always done on the basis of “two witnesses” to allow proper evidence to be presented
- c) Where relevant, putting support in place for the person being bullied or the perpetrator.
- d) Involving parents.
- e) Signing anti-bullying contracts if necessary and if considered to be effective
- f) Using school sanctions: - detention, formal notification, suspension (see Behaviour & Disciplinary Policy for standard procedures in all areas of discipline)
- g) If appropriate, involving outside agencies, e.g. Police, Social Services, EWOs.
- h) Working with the bullies.
- i) In very serious, persistent cases where other interventions have failed, the school will not hesitate to use the sanction of expulsion. In cases where there is the potential for actual physical harm and the continuance of the bullying outside school though still linked to school, the police may be drawn in and a strategy of protection devised. The school will always advise and press for charges to be brought by the police against those threatening pupils, where the bullying and threats are of such a kind to merit that step. Parents and families need to know they will receive whole-hearted and dedicated support from the school in this. Close working between school and home is vital if the problem is to be properly dealt with.

It is important that issues of bullying are dealt with swiftly, and the appropriate sanctions applied with clarity and consistency. There is always a danger of a “victim” feeling he or she is unsupported, and staff and pupils need to be aware of the vulnerability involved in this, especially if the bullying has happened over a period of time, or has only just come to light having been sustained for some time.

What Can Parents Do?

1. Ensure that they encourage anti-bullying behaviour.
2. Ensure that their children understand that it is unacceptable to use language that offends a person. This can include remarks about an individual's appearance, family or personality, nature, character, behaviour.
3. Ensure that their children understand that it is a criminal offence to use racist language.
4. If there is an incident of bullying, refer it to the school rather than taking matters into their own hands. Other pupils involved should never be approached directly.
5. Understand that the school regards bullying as a very serious matter.
6. Recognise that the school must look at all sides.
7. Support the school's anti-bullying policy.
8. Encourage their children to take action on bullying, but that this does not mean retaliating either physically or with name-calling. Reinforce the school's policy above on "**What can a pupil do to prevent bullying**".
9. Show an example by being firm but positive and not aggressive in their approach to discipline.
10. Confront the possibility that their own child may be a bully.
11. If their children are being bullied, report it – the school will take action.

MONITORING

Priory School monitors and renews its Anti-Bullying Policy regularly, along with its Child Protection Policy, in order to ensure its effectiveness.

**Authorised by E J Matyjaszek, Principal
September 2018**

This policy is designed to incorporate current legislation including:

DfE Behaviour and Discipline in Schools Guidance – January 2016

Mental health and behaviour in schools advice for school staff – March 2016

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) – September 2018

Working together to safeguard children – September 2018

Preventing and Tackling Bullying DfE advice – July 2017

The Equality Act 2010