



Penn Fields School Anti-Bullying Policy

Boundary Way

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Introduction

At Penn Fields School, we are aware that students may be bullied in any school or setting, and recognise that preventing, raising awareness, and consistently responding to any cases of bullying should be a priority to ensure the safety and well-being of our students.

Aims

We are determined to promote and develop a school ethos where bullying behaviour is regarded as unacceptable, to ensure a safe and secure environment is sustained for all students. We aim for all students to reach their potential academically, socially, and personally through learning and playing in a safe and secure environment.

All staff, parents/carers and students will work together to prevent and reduce any instances of bullying at our school. There is a zero-tolerance policy in place at Penn Fields School

In line with the Equality Act 2010, it is essential that our school:

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

What is bullying?

At Penn Fields School, we discuss what bullying is, as well as incidents we would not describe as bullying, with all students through assemblies and PSHE lessons.

We agree that: behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally”.

Bullying is generally characterised by:

- Repetition: incidents are not isolated but are frequent and happen over a period of time.
- Intent: the perpetrator means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm – it is not accidental.
- Targeting: bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- Power imbalance: whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against a group, for example on the grounds of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or because a child has caring responsibilities.

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Types of Bullying

- Cyber-Bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual bullying', which can occur in and outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying which can happen beyond the school day into home and private space, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content.

- Racist Bullying

This refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, both physical and psychological, that make the person feel unwelcome marginalised and excluded, powerless or worthless because of their colour, ethnicity culture, faith community, national origin or national status.

- Homophobic Bullying

This occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual people.

- Vulnerable Groups

We recognise that some groups of students may be more vulnerable to bullying, including:

- Looked After Children
- Children having caring responsibilities.
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children
- Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)
- Children from ethnic minorities
- Children entitled to Free School Meals
- Children for whom English is an Additional Language
- Children who are perceived to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transsexual.
- Bullying often involves intimidation of a person through violence or isolating the individual physically or online.

Legal framework and statutory guidance

The requirement to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying is found in The Education and Inspections Act 2006. The Act requires that schools communicate how they will do this through a behaviour policy, communicated to all students, staff and parents. The Anti-bullying Policy is used in conjunction with the school's Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and child protection policy.

The school must comply with part 6 of the Act making it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a student or potential student in relation to admissions, the way it provides education for students, access to benefits, facilities or services, or by excluding a student or subjecting them to any other detriment.

The Children Act 1989 stipulates that bullying is addressed as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to suspect the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

The guidance 'Preventing and tackling bullying', published by the DfE in July 2017, contains further advice for schools on meeting the above requirements.

Preventing bullying

The prevention of bullying is the responsibility of the entire school community. Staff, parents and students all have vital roles to play in ensuring that the school remains free from bullying.

The school's response to bullying begins before a child is bullied. We take a proactive approach and endeavour to prevent bullying through better understanding and proactive intervention methods. School staff members proactively gather intelligence regarding potential situations that may lead to bullying. These situations are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Staff are trained to look for common indicators that a child is being bullied, which may include:

- Unexplained injuries.
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewellery.
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness.
- Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating.
- Appearing tired and distracted in class, often due to difficulty sleeping.
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school.
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations.
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self-esteem.
- Self-destructive behaviour such as running away from home, harming themselves or talking about suicide.
- Displaying signs of stress or anxiety.

Once a member of staff has identified a potential victim of bullying, whether through spotting the signs or through a report, the following process will be followed:

Incidents will be reported to the DSL or DDSL who will investigate the incident, they will work with wider SLT to set appropriate sanctions for the perpetrator. The incident must be recorded on My concern in order for staff to monitor.

To prevent the continuance of bullying and to lessen the chances of bullying having an ongoing impact on wellbeing and attainment, school staff will:

- Encourage student co-operation and the development of interpersonal skills through the use of group work and pair work.
- Discuss bullying as part of the PSHE curriculum, promoting subjects such as diversity, difference and respect for others, through various lessons.
- Organise seating arrangements in class to prevent instances of bullying..
- Ensure a safe, and supervised place, is available for students to go at lunch and breaks if they are involved in conflict with their peers or wish to avoid confrontation.

Record keeping

The member of staff involved in the incident should write out a brief summary of the incident on My Concern, where it is stored electronically. The Phase Manager for each student involved in the incident must be informed.

Dealing with the bully

The student who was unkind, must be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and be firmly explained to that there must be no further incidents. Inform them of the type of sanction to be used in this instance and possible future sanctions if the bullying continues.

Sanctions

The school utilises the following sanctions:

- Verbal reprimand
- Meetings involving parents
- Missing break & lunch time
- Temporary removal from class
- Unable to represent the school or go on visits
- Withdrawal of privileges

In addition, serious and repeated bullying may be dealt with via serious sanctions, which may include fixed term suspension or ultimately permanently excluded. If possible, try for reconciliation and a genuine apology from the student. This can be face-to-face, but only with the victim's full consent. (Discretion should be used here; victims should never feel pressured into a face-to-face meeting with the bully.)

The following considerations should be made:

- Realise that some students do not appreciate the distress they are causing and are willing to change their behaviour.
- Try to reach agreement on reasonable long-term behaviour.
- Prepare the student to face their peer group – discuss what they will say to others.
- Inform parents about bullying incidents and what action is being taken. Face-to-face meetings between the child's Phase Manager or form tutor may be appropriate.
- Staff to informally monitor student over the next few weeks.

Supporting the victim

The following actions should be taken to support victims of bullying:

- The Phase Manager should check informally, on a weekly basis, for a month after the complaint of bullying.
- The Phase Manager should check formally the week after the bullying, and again during the same half-term.
- If necessary, break up the group dynamics by asking staff to assign places in classes and in the form room.
- Encourage the victim to tell a trusted adult in school if bullying is repeated.
- Encourage the victim to broaden their friendship groups by joining a lunchtime club or activity.

On-going support

Both the perpetrator and the victim will be offered on-going support. The progress of both the bully and the victim should be monitored by identified staff. One-on-one sessions to discuss how they are getting on may be appropriate.

If the incident was sufficiently serious, follow-up correspondence with parents a month after the incidence may be necessary. This should be from the DSL/DDSL.

Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Being listened to (having an immediate opportunity to meet with a member of staff of their choice).
- Being reassured.
- Being offered continued support.
- Being offered counselling where appropriate.

Students who have bullied others will be supported by:

- Receiving a consequence to their actions.
- Being able to discuss what happened.
- Reflecting on why they became involved.
- Being led to an understanding of what they did wrong and why they need to change.
- Appropriate assistance from parents/carers.

Bullying outside of the school

The School has the power to discipline students for misbehaving outside the school premises. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, or in the local community.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, the teacher can only discipline the student on school premises or elsewhere when the student is under the lawful control of the staff member.

The headteacher has a specific statutory power to discipline students for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives headteachers the power to regulate students' conduct when they are not on school premises, and therefore not under the lawful charge of a school staff member.

The headteacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the community police officers in their local authority of the action taken against a student.

If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

Cyber-bullying

As mentioned previously, cyber-bullying is a relatively modern form of bullying and can have serious consequences. The following actions are common forms of cyber-bullying:

- Threatening, intimidating, or upsetting text messages.
- Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips taken or shared via mobile phone cameras.
- Silent or abusive phone calls or using the victim's phone to harass others to make them think the victim is responsible.
- Threatening or bullying emails; possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else's name.
- Intimidating or hurtful responses to someone in a chat-room.
- Unpleasant messages sent during instant messaging.
- Unpleasant or untrue information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites (e.g. Facebook).

The following procedures and responsibilities are in place to prevent cyber-bullying:

- The headteacher, supported by the DSL will be in overall charge of the practices and procedures outlined in this policy and will ensure that their effectiveness is monitored.
- The headteacher, supported by the DSL will ensure that the school maintains details of agencies and resources that may assist in preventing and addressing cyber-bullying.
- All members of staff will be trained to identify signs of cyber-bullying and will be helped to stay informed about the technologies commonly used by students through self-study and regular updates.
- A Cyber Safety Code will be developed, periodically reviewed, and communicated - to help students protect themselves from being caught up in cyber-bullying and to advise them on reporting any incidents.
- Students will be informed about cyber-bullying through curricular and pastoral activities.
- Students and staff are expected to comply with the school's Acceptable Computer Use Policy.
- Parents/carers will be provided with information and advice on cyber-bullying.
- It is made clear in staff meetings and safeguarding training that members of staff should not have contact with current students on social networking sites (specifically, they should not befriend students on Facebook). In addition, it is advisable not to have past students as friends.
- The delivery of PSHE is important and will discuss keeping personal information safe and appropriate use of the internet.
- Students will be educated about eSafety directly and also through projects in other subjects.
- Loudmouth theatre 'Bully for You' is used regularly to support students understanding.
- Outside the curriculum, students will receive regular pastoral sessions about eSafety and cyber-bullying through assemblies, and anti-bullying week.
- Students will have a voice through the Student Council to ensure they are appropriately involved in evaluating and improving policy and procedures.
- Students in upper school will sign an Acceptable Computer Use Policy (where appropriate) before they are allowed to use school computer equipment and the internet in school, and parents will be asked to confirm that they have discussed its contents with their children.
- Parents/carers will be provided with information and advice on eSafety and cyber-bullying via literature, talks, etc.
- A parent/carer workshop for the school community.

If cyber-bullying occurs, the school will take the following steps:

- Advise the child not to respond to the message.
- Refer to relevant policies, including behaviour, eSafety, acceptable use and anti-bullying, and apply appropriate sanctions.
- Advise the student not to delete the message/image.
- Secure and preserve any evidence.
- Inform the sender's e-mail service provider.
- Inform headteacher and the senior leadership team.
- Notify parents/carers of the children involved.
- Consider informing the police depending on the severity or repetitious nature of the offence.
- Inform the ICT lead who has responsibility for eSafety.

If malicious posts or threats are made against students or school staff, the following steps will be taken:

- Inform the site and request the comments be removed if the site is administered externally.
- Secure and preserve any evidence including URLs, screenshots, and printouts.
- Inform the headteacher and senior management team.
- Inform parents/carers
- Send all the evidence to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP).
- Endeavour to trace the origin and inform police if appropriate.
- Inform the school and LA Learning Technologies Team

If the comment/material is threatening or abusive, sexist, of a sexist nature or constitutes a hate crime, the school may consider contacting the police. Under the Communications Act 2003, communications sent via social media are capable of amounting to criminal offences and prosecutors will make an initial assessment of the content of the communication and the conduct in question.

The feelings of the victim are very important and, as with any form of bullying, support for the individual will depend on the needs of the individual and the circumstances. For example:

- Emotional support and reassurance that it was right to report the incident and advice not to retaliate or reply, but to keep the evidence and show or give it to their parent or a member of staff.
- Emotional support and reassurance that they haven't done anything wrong.
- Advice on other aspects of the code to prevent re-occurrence.
- Advice on how the perpetrator might be blocked from the individual's sites or services.

- Actions, where possible and appropriate, to have offending material removed and advice to consider changing email addresses and/or mobile phone numbers. Discuss contacting the police in cases of suspected illegal content.

In addition, the school will take the following steps with the perpetrator of the cyber-bullying, assuming they are a member of the school community:

- Work with the perpetrator and any sanctions will be determined on an individual basis, in accordance with the Anti-bullying Policy.
- Help the person harmed to feel safe again and be assured that the bullying will stop.
- Hold the perpetrator to account, so they recognise the harm caused and do not repeat the behaviour.
- Help bullies to recognise the consequences of their actions and put in support to change in their attitude and behaviour.
- Demonstrate that cyber-bullying, as with any other form of bullying, is unacceptable and that the school has effective ways of dealing with it.

Complaints

Parents and students wanting to make a formal complaint regarding the handling of bullying within the school are encouraged to do so through the school's published Complaints Procedure.

Accountability

To ensure accountability, Ofsted lists 'behaviour and safety' as one of its key criteria for inspections. The school staff and governors are committed to ensuring Penn Fields is a school where children feel safe and secure.

Appendix 1 - Further Information

The following resources offer further information on bullying:

Cyber-bullying

[ChildNet International](#)

[Think U Know](#)

[Advice on Child Internet Safety](#)

LGBT

[EACH](#)

[Schools Out](#)

[Stonewall](#)

[Educate and Celebrate](#)

SEND

[Mencap](#)

[Changing Faces](#)

[Anti-bullying Alliance](#)

Racism

[Show Racism the Red Card](#)

[Kick it Out](#)