

Priory RC Primary School



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Priory RC Primary School Anti-bullying Policy 2015

Statement of Intent

Article 19 (Protection from all forms of violence): Children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally.

At Priory Roman Catholic Primary we believe that everyone has the right to feel safe, secure and respected within a caring, Christian environment regardless of gender, race or social circumstance. As a Catholic community we are committed to living, working and growing together as one in God's family. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING school. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

Objectives of this Policy

- To uphold the mission statement of Priory RC Primary School and the vision of this policy
- To ensure all governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents have an understanding of what bullying is.
- To ensure governors and teaching and non-teaching staff know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- To ensure that, as a school, we take bullying seriously and clearly demonstrate a zero tolerance towards bullying
- To ensure that, as a school, we respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying
- To ensure that pupils and parents are assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Highlight and encourage pro-social behaviour
- Be constantly alert to bullying
- To ensure that incidents of bullying are correctly recorded and monitored.
- Ensure that there are clear and efficient lines of communication.
- Ensure that, where necessary, staff professional development includes training in dealing with bullying and anti-social behaviour
- Ensure that parents are kept informed of anti-bullying arrangements through newsletters, meetings and presentations
- Ensure that children are involved in anti-bullying procedures through assemblies, the curriculum, the School Council and visual displays
- Ensure that this policy is updated regularly

Definition

Bullying can be described as being 'a deliberate act done to cause distress solely in order to give a feeling of power, status or other gratification to the bully. It can range from ostracising, name-calling, teasing, threats and extortion, through to physical assault on persons and/or their property. It can be an unresolved single frightening incident which casts a shadow over a child's life, or a series of such incidents.'

If an incident of bullying in school involves any form of sexual harassment or impropriety, any action taken must also have due regard to the school's child protection policy.

The Nature of Bullying

There are many definitions of bullying, but most consider it to be:

- Deliberately hurtful (including aggression)
- Repeated often over a period of time (whilst recognising that even a one-off incident can leave a pupil traumatised and nervous of future recurrence)
- Difficult for victims to defend themselves against
- Individual pupils' perspectives on what constitutes bullying is also a key element to take into account

Bullying can take many forms, but three main types are:

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- Physical - hitting, kicking, taking belongings, sexual harassment or aggression
- Verbal - name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks
- Indirect - spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of malicious rumours, sending malicious e-mails, text messages or using social media on laptops, mobile phones and tablets

Name-calling is the most common direct form of bullying:

- This may be because of individual characteristics, but pupils can be called nasty names because of their ethnic origin, nationality or colour; sexual orientation (or perceived); or some form of disability.
- Harassment can also include bullying of children who are from other parts of the United Kingdom.

Any child can be bullied, and although none of these characteristics can excuse it, certain factors can make bullying more likely:

- Lacking close friends in school
- Being shy
- An over-protective family environment
- Behaving inappropriately, intruding or being a 'nuisance'
- Having a precocious talent
- Being different in some obvious respect - such as stammering
- Having Special Educational Needs or a disability
- Physical, mental or sensory impairment
- Scarring or disfigurement on the face or body
- Mental illness
- Having a long-term medical condition such as diabetes or asthma
- Physical characteristics, such as 'thinness' or obesity. Different stages of
- Puberty can mean individuals may be early or late developers. Being different from the perceived norm of the peer group may mean you are seen as a target for bullying
- Being from a different racial or ethnic group to the majority
- Religious affiliation
- Speaking a different language from the majority of the pupils
- Possessing expensive accessories such as mobile phones or computer games (or conversely not possessing these)
- A knowledge or perception that a child has a sexual orientation which is different from the majority
- Having physical characteristics or traits which do not conform to recognisable traditional forms of masculinity or femininity
- Coming from a different social class than that of the majority of the pupils
- Evidence of poverty
- Clothing
- Being from a family with unorthodox or 'different' family structures
- Looked After Children or young carers

Our Policy at Priory Catholic Primary School

At Priory Catholic Primary School staff, parents and children work together to create a happy, caring, learning environment. 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. Research has shown time and time again that the extent of bullying in schools is greatly underestimated. The school recognises that bullying can have serious effects on the health and wellbeing of the victims and, therefore, takes its responsibility seriously to investigate and resolve all incidents of bullying behaviour.

Bullying can be brought to the attention of staff either by the victim(s), their friend(s), their parent(s) or other interested people. Pupils will be encouraged to understand that they have a right to be listened to and what they should do if they have a problem. Parental concerns will be taken seriously and reported incidents will be investigated and followed up in accordance with the school's procedures.

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Raising Awareness

The school will be proactive in raising awareness of the problem of bullying, of the school's anti-bullying policy and of strategies to deal with bullying, through assemblies, PSHE lessons, group discussions and meetings of the School Council.

Strategies for Dealing with Bullying

The following is a list of actions available to staff depending on the perceived seriousness of the situation. The emphasis is always to begin with on a caring, listening approach as bullies are often victims too - that is why they bully.

- Discussions at length with the victim. This will require patience and understanding:
Remember - listen, believe, act, reassure
- Identify the bully/bullies. Obtain witnesses if possible. Advise the Head as soon as 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 at Priory Catholic Primary School.
- If they own up then follow the procedure outlined below and in the Behaviour Policy
- If they do not own up, investigate further. If it is clear that they are lying, continue with the procedure. Children usually own up if presented with all the facts
- Hold separate discussions with parents of bully and victim in order to secure their understanding and full support.
- Record all incidents and follow up action in the school's anti-bullying log.

This will be kept for monitoring purposes in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's policy

- Sanctions for the bully will be applied in accordance with the Behaviour Policy (see above) and will depend on the seriousness and extent of the bullying. Usually, as with other examples of bad behaviour, lesser sanctions (such as detention/ loss of privileges/ letter of apology) will be applied to begin with, graduating to more significant formal sanctions for repeated or serious incidents (see above)

- Develop support and intervention strategies, aiming to solve/ to reduce the problem such as:

- Cooperative group work
- Circle time
- Circle of friends
- Buddying or befriending
- The support group approach
- Mediation by adults
- Mediation by peers
- Peer support
- Circle time
- Assertiveness skills
- Working with victims
- Working with outside agencies
- Continue monitoring the situation by observing at playtimes/lunchtimes and having discussions with victim and bully to ensure no repetition
- In some cases the extent of the bullying may result in the exclusion, permanent or fixed term, of the bully

As the behaviour of the bully (hopefully) improves, then favoured activities etc. can be reinstated, and the child should be praised for good behaviour. This will rebuild the child's self-esteem, which may have been damaged after being caught bullying, or could have been low anyway, hence the bullying.

Bullying because of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability or long-term health condition

The school recognises that incidents of bullying may arise because of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability or long term health condition. Incidents of racism may not necessarily constitute bullying and therefore this policy works in conjunction with the School's Education for Ethnic Diversity policy which details procedures for dealing with racist incidents. The school is aware that some aspects of sexual bullying may involve child protection issues. In these instances this policy works in conjunction with the school's Child Protection Policy and staff are asked to report any concerns to the school's Child Protection Officer.

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The school will deal with specific incidents in these areas in accordance with the procedures outlined above. It will also seek to explore issues of diversity, difference, racism, sexism and discrimination throughout the curriculum in order to educate and raise pupils' understanding.

Bullying by text messages on mobile phones, by email and social media

This is an increasing problem and is difficult to trace, requiring schools to be particularly vigilant and innovative in finding solutions. The school will remind children to be careful who they give their phone number to, and keep a record of the date and time of any offensive message.

Victims will be encouraged to save messages they are concerned about and let a member of staff see them. When pupils report bullying text messages the school will take the complaint seriously; the child's family might also need to contact the police. If such bullying has been carried out by one or more pupils on a persistent basis, or there has been a threat of violence, it will be dealt with firmly (see approach to sanctions outlined above). The same also applies to malicious e-mails sent by other pupils.

Bullying outside school

Whilst the school is not directly responsible for bullying off its premises, it will nevertheless encourage pupils to speak up if they are being bullied (e.g. on the way to school) and it will take steps to support them and to resolve the situation. Possible supporting actions might include:

- Talking to the local police about problems on local streets (if necessary seek a police presence at trouble spots)
- Considering involving parents or members of the local community
- Talking to the head of another school whose pupils are bullying off the premises
- Talking to pupils about how to avoid or handle bullying outside the school premises

Being Proactive in Identifying bullies/ incidents of bullying

- In order to identify incidents of bullying and the identities of bullies, at Priory Catholic Primary School staff will carry out the following strategies:
 - All staff watch for early signs of distress in pupils - particularly exercising vigilance in areas outside the classroom such as corridors/ playground/ dining room/ toilets
 - All staff listen, believe, act, reassure
 - Worry boxes in school where children can put written notes if they feel they cannot speak about their problem
 - Posters in school advertising these measures and dissuading children from bullying
 - The ChildLine telephone number to be displayed clearly in school

Management, monitoring and review of anti-bullying policy

The management of this policy will be under the direction of the Head. The policy and its implementation will be monitored and reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team, working in consultation with all staff and pupils, as part of the school's cycle of self-evaluation and review. The views of all stakeholders will be sought through, for example, class discussions in form periods/ PSHE, meetings of the School Council and questionnaires.