



# PRIORY SCHOOL

EDGBASTON

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

### Mission Statement

*Priory School is a thriving Independent Catholic school which welcomes those of all faiths and none.*

*We love, live and learn joyfully as children of God.*

*In partnership with parents or guardians, we provide a caring community with high standards of teaching and learning, enabling all pupils to achieve success.*

Approved by Risk & Compliance Committee 19 January 2018

1. The governors and staff of Priory School are committed to providing a fully accessible environment which values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional or cultural needs.
2. The staff, governors and pupils are committed to the safeguarding and welfare of pupils and staff.
3. To meet the needs of our school community all our policies, including this one, can be made available in different formats such as different font sizes or styles, colour or alternative languages.
4. The governing body understands that it has responsibility for ensuring the effective oversight of this policy and will assess, evaluate and review as necessary.

## PRIORY SCHOOL

### Anti-Bullying Policy

**(To be read in conjunction with the whole school Safeguarding Policy, Positive Behaviour Policies (Prep and Senior) and our whole school Online Safety Policy)**  
**This Policy includes the Early Years Foundation Stage**

#### Response to the Mission Statement

We all want Priory School to be:

- A safe, friendly, secure and inclusive environment
- A school where good behaviour is expected, encouraged and recognised
- A community that fosters mutual respect
- A school in which every child can fulfil his/her potential without fear or hindrance

At Priory School we believe that we are a caring community and that it is fundamentally important that everyone is safe and happy within it. The ethos of the school is central to establishing and maintaining high standards of behaviour.

We constantly strive to provide an environment in which our children are secure and confident. All pupils, parents and staff are treated equally, with respect, in a just and fair manner. The school promotes equality of opportunity and a sense of fairness is evident in the work of the school.

Priory school is committed to training staff on a regular basis to manage all aspects related to these policies. This policy applies to all pupils and staff at Priory School irrespective of their age and whether or not a pupil is in the care of the School when/if bullying behaviour occurs. The guidelines in this document have been devised with the assistance of the guidance issued by the DfE "Preventing and Tackling Bullying" (October 2014) and will be reviewed against any new government guidance issued on a regular basis.

#### Definition of Bullying

The DfE defines bullying as:

*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 message or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children or perceived differences. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority, but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical bullying; teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case.*

*Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve the 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), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having*

*access to the support of a group, or the capacity to social 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.*

“Preventing and Tackling Bullying, advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies” (October 2014) defines bullying as:

*‘Behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time and intentionally hurts another pupil or group physically or emotionally and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted or a carer – it may occur directly or through cyber-technology (social website, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email).’*

## **Aims and Objectives**

Priory School aims to create an environment which fosters the all-round personal development of pupils. Bullying is morally wrong and undermines the creation of this environment. Bullying is unacceptable and is taken seriously at Priory School. All members of staff have a duty to be vigilant in and around the School site at all times. Reported incidents are recorded and appropriate action taken. Parents are encouraged to support the work of the school and children are regularly reminded of their responsibilities for the happiness of those around them. Staff receive regular formal and informal training in anti-bullying and cyber bullying and are encouraged to look for and report worries about children in their care. The policy reflects and supports the aims and ethos of our school. The policy is designed not only to help staff, parents and pupils to deal with bullying when it occurs, but even more importantly, to ‘prevent’ it.

This policy is informed by:

- *Preventing and Tackling Bullying* (July 2017)
- The Education and Inspectors Act 2016
- Cyberbullying: Advice for head teachers and school staff
- Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying
- DfE Behaviour and Discipline in Schools Guidance
- Supporting children and young people who are bullied: advice for schools
- Counselling in schools a blueprint for the future: advice for school leaders and counsellors
- Independent school standard regulations 2015
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Equality Act 2010

A key part of The Equality Act 2010 is a new public sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5 April 2011. The Duty has 3 aims:

- Eliminate 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.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

### Statement of Policy

At Priory School, we believe that bullying is any behaviour that is deliberately intended to hurt, threaten or frighten another person or group of people. It is usually unprovoked, persistent and can continue over a long period of time. It always reflects an abuse of power and is often difficult for victims to defend themselves.

We will do our best to:

- Make it clear that all forms of bullying are unacceptable
- Encourage pupils to not suffer in silence
- Eliminate bullying
- Enable all pupils to learn in a caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied

### Examples of Bullying

Bullying can mean many different things, but includes any behaviour that intentionally or thoughtlessly harms, threatens, intimidates or distresses someone else.

- Cruel nicknames
- Isolating/rejecting someone from their peer group
- Making threats
- Physical assaults
- Insults or excessive teasing
- Writing or telling lies about someone
- Damaging, taking or hiding others' property
- Sending cruel text messages, video messages, emails
- Spreading rumours
- Posting inappropriate comments on websites or social media apps
- Being unfriendly or turning someone against someone
- Extortion or coercion by means of intimidating behaviour

**Cyberbullying:** Cyberbullying is the use of information and communications technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones, text messages, photographs, social networking sites, emails and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else. (See Cyberbullying: safe to learn: embedding anti-bullying work in schools (DCSF 00658-2007, guidance issued by the Department for Children, Schools and Families.) Priory has a separate Online Safety policy which includes Cyberbullying.

**Intention:** Not all bullying is deliberate or intended to hurt. Some individuals may see their hurtful conduct as "teasing" or "a game" or "for the good of" the other person. These forms of bullying are equally unacceptable but may be non-malign and can often be corrected quickly with advice and without disciplinary sanctions. A bully who does not respond appropriately to advice or sanctions would ultimately have a temporary or, in extreme cases, permanent exclusion.

**Responsibility:** It is everyone's responsibility to ensure, whatever the circumstances, that no pupil becomes a victim of bullying. A person may be vulnerable to bullying because of his/her age, physical appearance, nationality, colour, gender, sexual orientation, religion or disability, or because s/he is new in the School, appears to be uncertain or has no friends. S/he may also become a target because of an irrational decision by a bully.

**Legal aspects:** A person who makes a physical or sexual assault on another, or who steals or causes damage to the property of another, commits a criminal offence and also a civil wrong for which there can be legal consequences outside the School.

Bullying may occur for a variety of different reasons. The reasons may not be immediately obvious. It may be related to:

- Race, ethnicity, religion or culture
- Special educational need or disability
- Appearance or health
- Sexual orientation
- Sexual harassment
- Sexism

And can take a number of forms:

- Verbal, physical or emotional
- Homophobic bullying (looks like other sorts of bullying, but in particular it can include spreading rumours that someone is gay, or suggesting that someone is inferior).
- Sexual assault and threatening behaviour and may target any pupils or staff regardless of sexual orientation.
- Cyber-bullying

### **Cyber-bullying**

The rapid development of, and widespread access to technology has provided this new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying (using on-line spaces to spread rumours about someone or exclude them. It can also include text messaging, video and picture messaging, email, photographs or abusive phone calls) that can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more opportunities for people to forward-on content at a 'click' (See Online Safety policy).

The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones.

Please refer to our Online Safety Policy for further information on how children are educated about the dangers of cyberbullying at Priory School.

### **Warning Signs of Bullying**

Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lack of concentration or truanting from school. Staff must always be vigilant for signs of bullying. The seriousness of bullying cannot be overstated. Bullying can cause severe psychological damage and even suicide (bullying itself is not a criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour).

It is important to be aware that children who are being bullied will potentially exhibit symptoms in many different ways. Staff should always be vigilant and look out for the following:

- Unwillingness to return to school
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or unusually underperforming, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged.
- Change to established habits e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary
- Diminished levels of self confidence
- Frequent complaints of feeling unwell
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Isolating themselves from their peers
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty sleeping, experiencing nightmares, change in sleep patterns, eg disturbed sleep
- Talking of self-harming, running away or suicide

### **Prevention of Bullying**

All staff should proactively gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place. This might involve talking to pupils about issues of difference; in lessons, projects and assemblies. Staff should then be able to determine what will work best for their pupils, depending on the particular issue that needs addressing. Staff should promote good behaviour at all times, helping to create an ethos where pupils treat one another and the staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave. Values of respect for staff and other pupils, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others should permeate the whole school environment and be reinforced by staff and older pupils who set a good example to the rest.

### **Procedures, Actions and Sanctions**

If a pupil is being bullied, he/she can expect that:

- He/she will be listened to and taken seriously
- Action will be taken to help stop the bullying

- He/she will be given an opportunity to talk about how the bully(ies) has made him/her feel
- If a pupil is ever in fear of their physical safety, staff will take immediate action to keep him/her safe

If a pupil is experiencing any of the issues above, they should talk to a member of staff immediately, even if they think they can handle the situation. There are a number of people who would be happy to listen in order to find a solution to the problem; Form Tutor (Senior School), Class Teachers and Teaching Assistants (Prep), Assistant Heads (Senior and Prep), Deputy Head (Senior and Prep), Senior Prefects, Prep Prefects, Peer Mentors (Senior) and the Head teacher.

The School will support pupils who have been bullied by:

- Providing an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with Form Tutor, Class Teacher, Assistant Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers or member of staff of their choice
- Offering ongoing support, which may include peer support
- Endeavouring to restore self-esteem and confidence

Support for pupils who have bullied may take the form of:

- Discussing what happened
- Discovering why the pupil became involved
- Establishing the problems and the need to change
- Informing the family in order to help change the attitude of pupils and gain support for the process
- Counselling will also be offered/encouraged to the perpetrator(s) where appropriate.

The following steps should be taken by staff when dealing with incidents:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident should be referred to a member of the Senior Leadership team and a DSL.
- A clear account of the incident will be recorded and logged by the appropriate member of staff
- Appropriate staff will be kept informed of the situation
- Appropriate actions and/or sanctions will be taken in consultation with all parties concerned
- Headteacher, Deputy Headteachers and Assistant Headteachers will be kept informed as appropriate
- Parents will be kept informed as appropriate
- A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern when there is "reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer, significant harm" (Children Act 1989).
- Appropriate external agencies which may include the police and MASH team to be informed where necessary (see Safeguarding policy).

The consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable. The following sanctions may be taken against the bully where appropriate:

- Detention

- Exclusion from certain areas of school premises
- Fixed Term Exclusion
- Exclusion

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, a DSL (see Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy) should report their concerns to MASH team on 0121 303 1888.

### **Bullying Outside School**

This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises e.g. school or public transport, on a trip/visit, in the local shopping centre, or in the immediate vicinity of the school. Where bullying is reported, it should be taken seriously, investigated and acted upon.

### **The Responsibilities of Parents**

Parents who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's Form/Class Teacher immediately. Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school community.

### **The Responsibilities of Pupils in School**

- We emphasise with pupils the role which is expected of them in setting a good example and being helpful to younger pupils and each other. Older pupils are encouraged to keep an eye on younger pupils and offer support, where it is needed.
- Pupils must tell the class teacher, or an adult with whom they feel comfortable, immediately if they feel threatened, hurt or unhappy.
- If a pupil sees another child being threatened or hurt, they must tell the class teacher or the first adult that they encounter.
- A pupil who feels threatened or hurt in any way within the school grounds must tell the supervising adult, peer mentor/friend or class teacher immediately.
- If a pupil sees another child being threatened or hurt, they must tell the supervising adult, peer mentor/friend or class teacher immediately. Children should not intervene themselves but seek help of adults immediately.
- They are reminded about this regularly in assemblies and PSHEE. Pupils are encouraged to build resilience to protect themselves and others, and promote and understand the differences between people. This will also help them to avoid using inappropriate language.

### **The Responsibilities of Pupils outside of School**

- Pupils who have felt threatened or hurt at school are encouraged to discuss the problem and the action taken, with their parents on the same day the incident

occurred. It is important that they give an accurate account of their own or other pupils' actions.

## Recording

In order to identify patterns of bullying, a recording system is used. In recording each and every case and example of bullying, all elements are recorded in writing and stored in individual pupils' files; (perpetrator(s), victim(s), date, place, description, action taken, contact with parents and type of incident). The Assistant Headteachers/Deputy Headteachers will review the information and will have discussions with those involved in the pursuing weeks to endeavour to fulfil our aim of 'preventing' bullying at Priory School. Confirmed cases of bullying are recorded in writing and statements stored in the safeguarding file.

## Anti-Bullying systems at Priory School

- Bullying is talked about within each class, particularly during PSHEE lessons. Role plays and discussions can bring underlying problems to the surface. Classes are introduced to the procedures which result when a member of staff is notified. Pupils are encouraged to approach staff or older pupils if bullying is taking place on a 'no blame' basis.
- Parents are encouraged to contact the school if there are any concerns/suspicions that bullying may be taking place. Having telephoned the school the parents must feel that action is being taken and that we are aware of the trauma felt by everyone.
- Once we are notified by the 'victim', pupil or parent, then the 'no blame' approach is taken pending a full investigation. This approach aims to tap into the children's capacity for empathy; using the way they feel rather than relying on external rewards or sanctions. This is seen after the event as being fair, although in the heat of the moment, parents and others want sanctions.
- Inform the Deputy Head or Assistant Head of Prep or The Assistant Head of Senior School of the problem either verbally or in writing

The following procedure should then be followed by the member of Leadership team involved:

- Member of Leadership Team will interview all parties concerned, asking them to write down what happened if they are old enough. If they are too young or not able to do so, the adult interviewer should write a transcript of the issues/incidents involved. This should then be read back to the interviewee, so that they can agree/sign it.
- Interview other closely involved individuals. Request written accounts if possible. (Each child should be seated away from all other pupils involved throughout the whole process in order to exclude the possibility of 'rewriting history'.)
- Assess the situation – the nature of the incident, is it 'one off' or part of a pattern involving an individual or group.
- Work out plan of action. Talk to all parties. Try for an agreement for the new start. Alert staff to watch for a reoccurrence.

- See the group to follow up for an assessment.
- Parents of pupils involved will be informed as deemed necessary giving them details of the case and the action taken and daily monitoring could take place.

Written accounts can reveal a different perception of incidents. Sometimes a vulnerable pupil may overreact to 'a look' or comment or misinterpret the definition of bullying. Above all, pupils need to know that they will be listened to and know that something will be done without fear of reprisals.

Sanctions might include being 'on report', not being allowed out at break time (supervision must be arranged) or in extreme cases – suspension (internal or external) and exclusion. In the last two cases, the Headteacher will need to be informed and further procedures will be their decision. A suspension or exclusion policy is available on our website.

We encourage pupils to be aware everybody has a responsibility to report bullying. We encourage all pupils to be involved and understand the school's approach and that they are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders.

The feeling of a family and group responsibility is actively fostered in our school and should be reiterated in the case of bullying. The Class Teacher is the first person to approach and then a member of the Leadership Team. Matters of behaviour and possible bullying should be raised at morning briefings to alert all staff, or immediately if required.

- Bullying outside school and on school trips (including residential) will be dealt with accordingly.
- Through regular assemblies and participation in anti-bullying week, Priory School aims to 'prevent' bullying. Children are also informed about Childline (08001111).

### **Raising Awareness**

Through the curriculum, the School will raise awareness of the nature of bullying in form time, assemblies and subject areas, as appropriate. This will aid the prevention of bullying. Direct action in assemblies regularly reminds pupils that all forms of bullying are unacceptable. Bullying is a regular topic for discussion in School Councils in each section of the School.

### **Anti-bullying culture**

Ethos: Our expectation of all members of the School community is that:

- Everyone will uphold the school rules which are printed in the Virtual Staff Room and on our virtual learning environment, Firefly, and The Golden Rules are displayed in Prep Classrooms.
- Any pupil or a member of staff who witnesses or hears of an incident of bullying will report it.
- Any complaint of bullying will always be taken seriously.
- No one will tolerate unkind actions or remarks or stand by when someone else is being bullied.

### **Equal opportunities**

- Discriminatory words and behaviour are treated as unacceptable.
- Positive attitudes are fostered towards people with special educational needs and disabilities and towards ethnic, cultural and social groups within and outside the School.
- Positive attitudes are fostered towards both genders.

### **Staff Responsibilities**

All school staff understand the principles and purpose of the school policy, its legal responsibilities regarding bullying, how to resolve problems, and where to seek support. This will be done through effective staff training. Members of staff are expected to promote an anti-bullying culture by:

- Celebrating achievement;
- Anticipating problems and providing support;
- Disciplining fairly and consistently;
- Making opportunities to listen to pupils;
- Acting as advocates of pupils.

Pupils: Through our pastoral care systems and PSHEE lessons, pupils are informed and taught that bullying will not be tolerated in the School. They are encouraged:

- To celebrate the effort and achievements of others;
- To hold and promote positive attitudes;
- To feel able to share problems with staff;
- To turn to someone they trust, if they have a problem;
- Not to feel guilty about airing complaints;
- To treat meals as pleasant social occasions.

### **Links with other Policies**

Priory School also has a PSHEE programme (see Policy) which is integral to the promotion of anti-bullying. Anti-bullying strategies are discussed at least annually at School Council meetings.

It is essential also that the subject of bullying is regularly discussed at Staff meetings; drawing attention to it, alerting staff to the likelihood of it and providing them with strategies to deal with it. The recording strategy allows staff to be informed of particular forms of bullying/particular places around School where bullying has previously taken place in order to reduce the risk of bullying.

The School's Positive Behaviour Policies echoes the School's view of bullying.

This policy will be reviewed annually to assess its effectiveness and update it as necessary. It will be reviewed by the designated member of the Governing Council.

Checked by the Chair of the Risk and Compliance Committee.