

PREVENTION OF BULLYING

This policy has been drawn up with reference to the DCSF guidance: *Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools*. A copy of this document, is also available in the staff room for staff reference and on staffshare. This policy reflects the aims of the Every Child Matters agenda and is in line with Ofsted's National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools.

1. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is behaviour which makes other people feel uncomfortable or threatened whether this is intended or not. Sometimes bullying behaviour is direct and explicit, at other times it may be more subtle and indirect. It may take the form of one incident but can also be an ongoing, low level pattern of behaviour which is repeated over time. There are different types of bullying but the main types are:

- **Physical** - kicking, hitting, taking or hiding belongings including money
- **Verbal** - name calling, teasing, insulting, writing unkind notes, texting or emailing in an aggressive or unpleasant manner
- **Emotional** - being unfriendly, excluding or isolating, tormenting, spreading rumours, running abusive initiation procedures etc
- **Cyber** – sending malicious or hurtful texts, e-mails or photos or using malicious, insulting or other hurtful descriptions or comments on social networking sites such as Facebook or MySpace, or during instant messaging conversations such as MSN or Google Talk. Prolonged campaigns of harassment can occur. (Mrs R Saunders is the member of staff in charge of all e-safety issues in school.)
- **Forms** – Bullying can take a number of forms including:
 - **Racial, religious or cultural**—*this is when people are persecuted because of their race, their cultural practises or their faith. Social and political issues can be a factor here.*
 - **Special educational needs or disability focused** – *this is when people are persecuted because of their particular educational needs or because of particular disabilities they might have. Young people with SEN and disabilities, do not always have the levels of social confidence and competence, and the robust friendship bonds, that can protect against bullying, so particular monitoring is crucial here from staff.*
 - **Appearance or health focused** – *This is when those with health or visible medical conditions, such as eczema, become targets for bullying behaviour. Perceived physical limitations, such as size and weight, and other body image issues, can result in bullying, and obvious signs of affluence (or lack of it) can also be exploited ruthlessly.*

- **Homophobic** – *this is bullying related to sexual orientation. Evidence of homophobic bullying suggests that children and young people who are gay or lesbian (or perceived to be) face a higher risk of victimisation than their peers. Homophobic bullying is perhaps the form of bullying least likely to be self-reported, since disclosure carries risks not associated with other forms of bullying. The pupil may not want to report bullying if it means 'coming out' to teachers and parents before they are ready to.*
- **Sexist or sexual** – *this may be characterised by name-calling, comments and overt 'looks' about appearance, attractiveness and emerging puberty. In addition, uninvited touching, innuendos and propositions, pornographic imagery or graffiti may be used. Pupils identifying as transgender or experiencing gender dysphoria (feeling that they belong to another gender or who do not conform to the gender stereotypes they perceive) may also be targeted.*

None of these are acceptable in any way at Prior's Field.

People react differently. It is not always possible to tell if someone is hurt or upset. Bullying can be very serious, in that it can cause, over time, serious psychological damage (and, it can, in extreme or repeated cases, lead to suicide). Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour and Prior's Field would involve the police in dealing with a bullying incident, if it was felt appropriate to do so.

2. Aims

The aims of our prevention of bullying policy are :

1. To clarify for girls and staff that bullying is always unacceptable and our response to it will always be robust and prompt. No girl should have to suffer the pain and indignity which bullying can cause.
2. To remind the whole community that every girl has the right to feel safe and happy in school and to be protected when feeling vulnerable. (This applies to everyone in school including staff and further information specifically for staff can be found in Appendix D.)
3. To prevent, de-escalate and or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour.
4. To react speedily, reasonably and consistently to bullying incidents.
5. To apply clear disciplinary sanctions to the bullies to ensure their behaviour stops and is not repeated.
6. To provide support, security and reassurance to the pupil who has experienced bullying.
7. Centrally, our approach to combat bullying in Prior's Field is to be pre-emptive. By fostering an atmosphere of mutual trust, support and ongoing encouragement and of full and open communication at all levels, we aim to anticipate possible problem areas and prevent bullying before it starts. This is at the heart of our approach to pastoral care.

8. To ensure that we all recognise that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under Child Protection procedures.

Objectives

The prevention of bullying policy will work to achieve the above aims through the promotion of:

- i) positive attitudes towards individuals
- ii) an understanding of the sensitivities of others in the community
- iii) a sense of personal safety in school
- iv) assertiveness, self-esteem and self confidence
- v) self discipline
- vi) an appreciation of the abilities and limitations of all

4. Success Criteria

The policy will be deemed to be successful if:

1. There is a decrease in bullying
2. Incidents are dealt with effectively, consistently and speedily
3. Good, focused learning is in evidence throughout the school
4. Everyone is aware at all times of actions that can cause someone to feel bullied

5. Methodology

5.1 Implementation

The Pastoral Deputy Head is responsible for the implementation of the policy by negotiating with members of staff to prevent bullying in the following areas:

1. The Head of PSHCE and the Heads of Year are responsible for aspects of prevention of bullying education through the PSHCE programme. The PSHCE Programme will address friendship, peer pressure, self-confidence, rights and responsibilities, identity, self-confidence, self-esteem, conflict, assertiveness, relationships, bullying and interactive behaviour, ebullying.
2. The Form Tutors deliver the PSHCE programme and provide the first line of contact when an incident occurs and may discuss issues which are relevant to their group in tutor sessions.
3. Form Tutors may well choose to address elements of prevention of bullying, during their twice-weekly Form Time sessions. (National Prevention of Bullying weeks often provide particular focuses for these discussions.)
4. Prefects may also be involved in the prevention of bullying, either by supporting the Form Tutor during Form Time sessions or PSHCE sessions addressing the topic, or by acting as a mentor and a confidante for girls in the Form.

5. Within lessons, teaching staff will address anti-bullying issues through specific subject content to reinforce the delivery of the anti-bullying programme. For example:
 - ◆ English – using works of literature dealing with various aspects of bullying, conflict and intimidation;
 - ◆ Drama – experience of situations in which conflict arises are dealt with through role-play, extempore and formal drama;
 - ◆ Religious Studies – opportunities for discussion and debate on many personal and moral issues, including bullying;
 - ◆ PE – group dynamics within team and individual sports allow pupils to develop their awareness of others that may not be amongst their friends;
 - ◆ History – exploration of historical models of aggressive or bullying behaviour to develop awareness of conflict and intimidation;
 - ◆ Assembly – Whole School, Year and House assemblies are all opportunities to reinforce the school ethos of understanding and tolerance;
 - ◆ School Council – provides an important forum for the discussion of issues raised by girls;
 - ◆ Boarding “circle times” (with younger girls), Boarding meetings and informal discussion and chat amongst mixed age boarders provides an important, cross year group forum for discussion;
 - ◆ Extra-curricular activities – these can engender an understanding of others and involve girls and staff in differing, supportive situations.
 - ◆ A cross-curricular approach is also effective: when older pupils use drama to tackle the issue of bullying with younger pupils.
 - ◆ Trained and carefully selected Prior’s Field peer mentors also run assemblies and weekly mentoring drop-ins to allow another avenue of support to pupils.
6. All teaching staff, support staff, prefects and pupil mentors will work to create an atmosphere where girls who feel bullied, will be listened to and taken seriously. The Prior’s Field “Listening Tree” (See Behaviour Policy) is published throughout the school and makes clear the support structures available to all girls.
7. All staff will be aware of the Behaviour Policy which makes clear the sanctions available to address poor behaviour including bullying. Although the particular sanction imposed for bullying will vary depending on the circumstances, the sanction will always reflect the seriousness of the charge. And all proved examples of bullying will incur a sanction. Sanctions specific to bullying may include: pupil interviews with Senior Staff (generally, the deputy Head Pastoral and the Head), detention, Head’s detention, letters home to parents, meetings between parents and senior staff, police involvement, suspension and, in the cases of severe and persistent bullying, exclusion.
8. All staff will be clear about the chain of communication should bullying occur.
 - ◆ In the early stages or when a concern is first raised, staff should inform the form tutor. The form tutor and the Head of Year will work

together to address the issue. (If the pupil is a boarder, then the Junior or Sixth Form Housemistress will also be informed.)

- ◆ In more serious cases, the Year Head should be informed immediately and they will work with the Deputy Heads and/or the Head of Boarding.
 - ◆ All serious incidents of bullying should be recorded on "Pupil Concern Sheets" and will also be monitored in the SLT monitoring folder on staff share. The Deputy Head Pastoral will hold a separate log of all bullying related incidents. This will be reviewed and monitored on a termly basis by the Deputy Head Pastoral and the Year Heads, to enable patterns to be identified and progress noted. Records will be kept in the relevant pupil files.
 - ◆ Details of slt review and monitoring strategies will be logged on concern sheets and/or in the slt monitoring file on staffshare.
9. All pupils will be aware (through the Listening Tree) of the range of support available to them and will be regularly reminded by Form tutors, prefects and through PSHCE and Assembly, of the people they can talk to.
 10. The school will recognise that both the bully and the girl being bullied will need support and will offer counselling, advice or guidance as appropriate through the various "Listening Tree" avenues.
 11. Staff will be prompt and professional in fulfilling their staff duties – for example in the dining Hall, to ensure high standards of behaviour amongst all the girls and across all year groups, during break and lunchtime where bullying might be more likely to occur.
 12. Boarding staff will be a constant, but unobtrusive presence in boarding areas, will log any concerns meticulously and be quick to raise them and deal with them under the standard anti-bullying methods – raised above.
 13. The prevention of bullying will be specifically covered by the school prefects in their training and will be a regular item on their prefect meeting agendas – providing opportunities for them to feedback on concerns they might have and agree strategies for addressing these.
 14. Regular inset will be available to all staff on prevention of bullying.
 15. Attention will be given to the topic at regular times throughout the year – particularly at "National Anti-bullying week" and so on.

6. Monitoring

The Pastoral Deputy Head is responsible for monitoring the policy by:

- ◆ Circulating this policy and ensuring that all staff are clear about it and have assimilated it.

- ◆ Ensuring that all staff are aware of what sort of behaviour might cause someone to feel bullied.
- ◆ Monitoring the behaviour of the girls with Year Heads, the Head of Boarding and Assistant Housemistresses and Form Tutors.
- ◆ Devising strategies for monitoring the handling of individual cases with the Heads of Year and the Head of boarding in accordance with the specific needs of those involved.
- ◆ Reviewing and revising the PSHCE programme to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the girls.
- ◆ Setting up appropriate INSET. (Prevention of bullying inset will be available to all staff at regular intervals.)
- ◆ Observing the programme of extra-curricular activities to ensure sound group dynamics.
- ◆ Setting up ongoing feed-back sessions with prefects, peer mentors, House Captains and the school council to assess their perception of the success of the policy.

7. Evaluation

The Pastoral Deputy Head will be responsible for assessing the effectiveness of this policy by:

- ◆ Evaluating the PSHCE Programme with the Head of PSHCE, the Year Heads and with key pupil groups.
- ◆ Ongoing discussion with the School Council to identify areas of concern to the girls.
- ◆ Reviewing the procedures with each Head of Year after any specific incidents during the year.
- ◆ Monitoring the number of bullying cases recorded on a termly basis.

8. Review

The Pastoral Deputy Head and the Year Heads will review this policy annually.

Date of Next Review: March 2011

(See next page for Appendices.)

APPENDIX A

Advice and Guidance for Staff

1. The most effective approach to bullying is to be pre-emptive. We want, as much as possible, to prevent bullying before it starts. To this end, all staff should:
 - (i) Know the girls they teach (or tutor) well
 - (ii) Have a sense of the relationships operating within their classes
 - (iii) Ensure that they are punctual to lessons (much bullying occurs in the unstructured times between classes),
 - (iv) Take the personalities of girls into account when planning lessons (this should be an integral part of lesson planning),
 - (v) Encourage open communication with the girls at all times
 - (vi) Be swift to raise concerns, no matter how slight they seem, either with the Form Tutor or the Year Head
 - (vii) All staff but particularly pastoral staff (Form Tutors, Year Heads, Boarding staff and so on) should also encourage and welcome frank, open dialogue with parents.

2. Staff must be aware at all times of behaviour which causes distress to others, not only in lessons, but also particularly the informal areas of school life. Staff should watch for early signs of distress in pupils. For example:
 - (a) deterioration in work
 - (b) spurious illness
 - (c) isolation
 - (d) the desire to remain with adults
 - (e) erratic attendance
 - (f) becoming shy or nervous
 - (g) lack of concentration

Such behaviour may be symptomatic of other problems but it might also be the earliest signs of bullying. When staff suspect someone is being bullied or is in distress, take action quickly. Never assume that it is someone else's responsibility. It is important to create an atmosphere in school where students feel that those bullied can find a sympathetic ear and that action will be taken swiftly. Those bullied should understand that to remain secretive, gives bullies the message that they can continue. Others may be put at risk. Use all your pupils as a positive resource in countering bullying; for example, ask reliable pupils to help shy pupils or newcomers feel welcome and accepted.

Procedures For Dealing With Bullying

If staff have to deal with a bullying incident, the following actions should be taken:

1. The girls should be separated before being spoken to by staff, who should speak first to the pupil(s) who has/have reported the incident. (It is ideal if the Form Tutor(s) of the girls concerned can be involved in this discussion too.)

2. The account of the incident by the bullied pupil(s) should be recorded in writing. Re-assure them, offer them immediate support and don't make them feel inadequate or foolish. Help them to understand that revenge is not appropriate.
3. The account of the incident by the girl(s) accused of bullying should also be recorded in writing. At this stage, do not apportion blame, but encourage her/them to see the other person's point of view and acknowledge the impact of this behaviour on others.
4. If staff feel able to deal with the incident, they should do so, using one or a combination of the strategies listed below. All written records, including action taken, should be sent to the relevant Form Tutor(s) and the Year Head(s). Punish the bully only if it is appropriate, but avoid reacting emotionally, aggressively or punitively as this gives the message of power to the bully. Always explain the punishment and why it is being given. Counselling for the bully should continue even if sanctions are used.
5. Always inform the Head of Year, the Head of Boarding (if the girls are boarders) and the Pastoral Deputy Head as soon as possible of any incidents that you have dealt with and any actions you have taken. The Head of Year will consider further action and counselling for the victim and bully.
6. If the incident is serious, staff should see the Head of Year, Head of Boarding or the Pastoral Deputy Head as soon as possible to discuss the most appropriate action to be taken in the circumstances. It is likely that significant sanctions will be put in place, as stated in the Behaviour Policy.
7. The Head of Year will ensure that a summary of the incident is placed on file in the victim(s)' and the perpetrator(s)' files in the School Office.
8. Parents on both sides will generally be informed as soon as an allegation has been made. This will generally come from the Head of Year or Head of Boarding.
9. All serious bullying incidences are logged separately by the Deputy Head Pastoral. It is vital that all details are passed through to her as soon as possible.
10. In serious cases, the Head will be informed of what is happening and it is vital that everything that has happened is recorded in a clear factual way. If the bullying behaviour continues and counselling and other strategies do not work, appropriate sanctions will be used. These could include Head's detention or in serious and persistent cases temporary or permanent exclusion. Counselling will be maintained for both parties.

Strategies and Sanctions to Respond to Bullying

Prior's Field employs a range of strategies to prevent or reduce bullying. These include:

- a) detailed discussion between the girls concerned
- b) co-operative group work
- c) circles of friends

- d) working cooperatively on a joint project – eg: setting up a webpage / producing a year group newsletter, working on a House event
- e) mentoring – through prefects or peer mentors
- f) mediation by adults or peers
- g) active listening/counselling
- h) deterrent through a range of sanctions (see the Behaviour Policy)

APPENDIX B

Advice and Guidance for Pupils (under review)

*"All it takes for **evil to flourish** is for good men to **do nothing**" – Edmund Burke*

Bullying is behaviour designed to hurt – either physically, verbally or indirectly.

Bullying is unacceptable in any form and will not be tolerated at Prior's Field.

If you are being bullied, or you suspect bullying YOU MUST ACT.

Don't be intimidated.

Don't let the bully win.

Don't suffer in silence.

IF YOU ARE BEING BULLIED:

- ❖ Be firm and clear – look them in the eye and tell them to stop;
- ❖ Get away from the situation as quickly as possible;
- ❖ Tell an adult what has happened straight away;
- ❖ Do not be intimidated.

AFTER YOU HAVE BEEN BULLIED:

- ❖ Tell a teacher or another adult in your school as quickly as possible;
- ❖ Tell your family;
- ❖ If you are scared to tell a teacher or an adult on your own, ask a friend to go with you, or tell your prefect or mentor;
- ❖ Keep on speaking up until someone listens;
- ❖ Don't blame yourself for what has happened;

WHEN YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT BULLYING WITH AN ADULT, BE CLEAR ABOUT:

- ❖ What has happened to you;
- ❖ How often it has happened;
- ❖ Who was involved;
- ❖ Who saw what was happening;
- ❖ Where it happened;
- ❖ What you have done about it already.

APPENDIX C

Misuse of ICT / Social Networking / Texting / Cyber-bullying

Prior's Field School is committed to promoting high standards of behaviour in all areas of pupils' lives, including in their use of internet technology, social networking sites and texting and emailing. All girls are required to sign up to the ICT Acceptable Use policy and will be banned from the school ICT network if they infringe this policy.

All staff have a duty to be vigilant regarding girls' behaviour on social networking sites. Ensuring girls are fully aware of the risks of misuse of social networking sites forms a robust and vigorous part of our PSHCE education; and is an area that we will revisit with every year group. Any misconduct on social networking sites, or any behaviour or communication which brings the school's reputation into disrepute, will be treated very seriously and is likely to result in a significant sanction.

Equally, the school takes very seriously, any sign of bullying or hurtful behaviour to other girls through the network or using technology. This might include: sending malicious or hurtful texts, e-mails or photos or using malicious, insulting or other hurtful descriptions or comments on social networking sites such as Facebook or MySpace, or during instant messaging conversations such as MSN or Google Talk.

Any report of this sort of behaviour, will be regarded as bullying and treated in the same way by the school. (See the Prevention of Bullying policy.)

Whilst the school recognizes that much of this behaviour takes place outside of school and out of school hours, the school accepts its responsibility to follow up any allegations of persistent bullying through the network and parents will invariably be involved in any discussions of this nature with the relevant pupils.

APPENDIX D

Acceptable Behaviour Between Staff

Prevention of bullying is not just focused on pupil relationships. It is equally important to ensure harmonious and mutually respectful relationships between and towards staff. However, if it should be the case that a member of staff does feel bullied by a colleague, a parent or a pupil, they should not keep it to themselves or suffer in silence.

The following guidelines should be followed if a member of staff does feel harassed or bullied by another staff member, a parent or a pupil.

If a member of staff feels bullied by a member of staff or a parent:

1. Careful records of all alleged issues must be kept.
2. In general, an informal approach is always better in the first instance to try to resolve the concern, which may be more to do with communication problems or misunderstandings than any desire to intimidate. So, talking through the problem with the member of staff or parent concerned is the best first approach.
3. If this does not work, they should refer their concerns as soon as possible to their line manager.
4. If this is unsuccessful (or inappropriate for any reason – eg: they feel their line manager is responsible for the intimidating behaviour), then they should refer the problem to a member of the SLT: generally, a Head of Year, one of the Deputies, the Bursar or the Head of Boarding.
5. If this does not resolve the matter, they should have recourse to the school's grievance procedures which will be put into action following this. (See school's Grievance Procedure for further information. It can be found in staffshare/school policies.)

If a member of staff feels persecuted by a pupil:

1. They should be meticulous in keeping records of all instances.
2. They should refer their concerns as soon as possible to their line manager.
3. If this is unsuccessful, or if the problem continues, they should refer it to a member of the SLT – generally, the Year Head relevant to the pupil in question, should be the next port of call.