

# ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

This section should be completed following ratification of the Policy.

Audience	Trust Leaders, DSL's & All Safeguarding Staff All staff & All Parents
Ratified	September 2023
Other Related Policies	Behaviour & Fundamental Values Policy, Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, Online Safety Policy and General Data Protection Policy
Policy Owner	Executive Team & Performance Committee
Review Frequency	Annually in September

## Ownership

Preston Hedges Trust is responsible for the production and maintenance of this document. It is issued by the Clerk, [catherine.gautrey@prestonhedges.org](mailto:catherine.gautrey@prestonhedges.org) to whom any change requests or queries should be directed.

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### 1. Aim & Introduction

#### ANTI BULLYING POLICY

Written from Guidance in Preventing and Tackling Bullying (DFE July 2017) and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023

**Bullying is action taken by one or more children with the deliberate intention of hurting another child either physically or emotionally.**

The Preston Hedges Trust is committed to providing a safe and secure environment where all can learn in a positive climate. Every child has a right to reach their full potential in a safe and positive environment. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at

our schools. If it does occur, all children know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. All children are taught respect for themselves and for each other so that incidents involving bullying are rare, however, we remain constantly vigilant.

This policy applies to everyone in Preston Hedges Trust. The term school is used to represent each school, in turn, in the Trust.

**We pay due regard to current guidance and relevant Acts.**

### **The Education and Inspections Act 2006**

Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides that schools must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst children. We have a Trust Behaviour & Fundamental Values Policy and a range of strategies in place to recognise positive behaviour.

**We pay due regard to the changes introduced through The Equality Act 2010**

The Duty has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- 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

Where there is concern that a child could suffer significant harm as a result of bullying, we recognise that this should be treated as a Safeguarding concern under the **Children's Act 1989**. We will also access external agencies, as required, where it does not reach this threshold, but we have concerns about a child.

## **2. 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 or online), 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.”

“Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve 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 socially 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 Dfe July 2017*

We define bullying as the use of physical or verbal aggression with the intention of hurting another person. A bully uses power, be it physical, mental, verbal or by exerting influence against another person or persons. Bullying can result in pain and distress to the victim. Bullying can include:

- ✓ Emotional. Excluding children from groups or friendships, tormenting a child, or ganging up on another child. Deliberate actions which are proven and impact on another child’s mental health, well-being and emotional state
- ✓ Physical: Punching, kicking, hitting, biting or any use of violence
- ✓ Racist: Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, remarks or any name calling of a racist nature
- ✓ Sexist: Emotional or physical abuse as a result of gender
- ✓ Sexual: Inappropriate or unwanted physical contact or abusive comments
- ✓ Verbal: Name-calling, sarcasm, teasing, spreading rumours
- ✓ Homophobic: Motivated by the issue of sexuality. Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying is unacceptable
- ✓ Cyber: All areas of the internet, such as e-mail, app & internet chat room misuse. Mobile threats by text messaging and calls. Misuse of associated technology, ie. Camera and video facilities.

Bullying is a behaviour that involves the abuse of power. Bullying may not be just confined to children as adults can also display bullying behaviour towards each other and children. Bullying is something which happens "several times on purpose."

Bullying is not:

- ✓ Responding to nastiness from another person.
- ✓ When children with the same power, numbers, and strength fight or argue.
- ✓ Friendship fall outs

Bullying can sometimes be unintentional, or the effects of the bully's actions are greater than they expect but the issue is the same.

### 3. Cyber bullying

Definition:

Cyber-bullying takes place online, such as through social networking sites, messaging apps or gaming sites. Like other forms of bullying, it is the repetitive, intentional harming of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. (See also the Behaviour & Fundamental Values policy.)

The majority of adults and young people find using the internet and mobile technology a positive and creative part of everyday life. Sadly, such technologies can also be used in a very negative way. Young people who are the target of bullying via mobile phones, gaming, social media, apps and chat rooms can often feel isolated and alone. Therefore, it is pivotal that children, staff, parents and carers understand how destructive cyberbullying can be, and how it differs from other forms of bullying. Therefore, the school actively uses assembly, and other Online Safety sessions to promote a culture of confident users who support online safety. The school also sends information/leaflets on cyber-bullying to parents so that they are aware of the signs, how to report it and how they can support children who may be affected.

Cyber bullying may take place outside of the school gates, but will often be reported in school. If this occurs, it must be acted upon. The DFE guidance on 'Preventing & Tackling Bullying' 2017, states that teachers have the power to discipline children for misbehaving outside school premises: 'If an incident of bullying outside the school premises or online is reported to the school, it is important that it is investigated and appropriate action is taken. This will send a strong signal to children that bullying will not be tolerated and perpetrators will be held to account.'. Furthermore, The Education Act 2011 gives wider search powers

to tackle cyberbullying by providing a specific power to search for, and if necessary, delete inappropriate images or files on electronic devices.

In relation to a specific incident of cyber-bullying, the school will follow the processes set out in the school Behaviour and Fundamental Values policy. Where illegal, inappropriate or harmful material has been spread among children, the school will use all reasonable endeavors to ensure the incident is contained.

#### **4. Child on child abuse**

Children can abuse other children. This is generally referred to as child-on-child abuse and can take many forms. This can include (but is not limited to) bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiating/hazing type violence and rituals.

Staff should be aware of KCSIE 2023 referencing “upskirting,” which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. This is a criminal offence.

We recognise that child-on-child abuse can happen and we would deal with issues in line with child protection actions if a child came to harm (additionally, use associated guidance and policies including the anti-bullying policy and behaviour policy). Child-on-child abuse can also be sex specific issues – for example, girls being sexually touched or boys being subject to an initiation/ violence. As such, any adult with any concern around child-on-child abuse must refer the concern to the DSL/ DDSL as well as the Principal. Any allegations of sexual harassment must be reported to the Principal and recorded on the sexual harassment log.

We believe that abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up.” We operate a zero-tolerance policy and once the issue is deemed to be child-on-child abuse, we will ensure that a DSL/ DDSL is present during investigations that are made by the Principal. Where the Principal is a DSL, another member of the safeguarding team or member of the SLT must be present. The victim will be treated with respect and dignity with due consideration to their wishes. We will ensure that immediate provisions are put in place to protect the individual and will work with partner agencies and the pupil’s parents to ensure that the correct actions are taken for the specific circumstances.

We recognise the following from KCSIE 2023:

- recognition of the sex of the child of child-on-child abuse (i.e. that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators), but that all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously;
- the different forms child-on-child abuse can take, such as:
- sexual violence and sexual harassment
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery):

The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) Education Group has published guidance [on sharing nudes and semi nudes; advice for education settings working with children and young people \(2020\)](#).

The many forms that child-on-child abuse might take, can be found in KCSIE 2023 page 105 – 107.

Our school insists on high standards of behaviour, including appropriateness, and all staff are consistent and vigilant.

The school have a duty to provide adequate support for both victims and perpetrators of child-on-child abuse, and any other children that may have been affected. This will include age appropriate discussions around the behaviours, partnership work with parents (including sharing information to help support their child such as Pantasaurus) and external agencies if needed.

## 5. Sexual violence

It is important that school staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way. When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of **any** age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.



Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. It is important that **all** victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support.

Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Please refer to the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy section 26.

## 6. Prevention

Preston Hedges Trust is a caring Trust where every school has a positive ethos where all children and staff are valued. Our priority is that children are safe and feel safe. Children and staff are encouraged to look after themselves and each other. To prevent incidents of bullying, we:

- Have whole school values that enable the highest standards of behaviour and conduct.
- Praise and reward good social behaviour.
- Have an ethos that constantly promotes self-esteem, friendship, and feelings, dealing with bullying and reporting bullies.
- Have a curriculum designed to educate children on their rights and responsibilities, including promotion assemblies to remind them what to do if bullying does occur.
- Help parents and children understand the difference between disagreements and bullying.
- Teach assertive strategies that are non-aggressive as part of our day to day work.
- Devise sets of classroom expectations to promote positive social behaviour in line with school expectations.
- Have appropriate levels of supervision and easy access to a range of approachable adults.
- Have senior staff responsible for pastoral support for the children. These staff are also readily available to support and advise staff and parents.
- Specific members of staff identified to support all children who may be LGBT.
- Easy access to key leaders, including the Principal so that concerns can be reported by any member of the school community.



- Ensure that all staff are approachable and well informed to deal with issues of disclosure around bullying.
- Ensure that staff remain vigilant and observe relationships amongst children in their care.
- **Have outstanding safeguarding procedures**

## 7. Signs and symptoms

We listen carefully and respond promptly to children's concerns. However, our staff are also highly vigilant and know all our children well. We are aware that they may display other symptoms that can be indicators of bullying and staff know how to action these concerns. These could include;

- Being frightened of walking to or from school
- Change (child's) usual routine
- Not wanting to come to school
- Becoming anxious and withdrawn
- Truancy
- Beginning to do less well at school
- Having possessions go missing
- Asking for or stealing money
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Becoming withdrawn / lacking in confidence
- Becoming aggressive and unreasonable
- Anger
- Bullying other children or siblings
- Giving improbable excuses to any of the above

We also note that parents may identify different symptoms such as bed wetting or wanting to be driven to school. Therefore, working in partnership is vital for identifying any problems.

## 8. Procedures when bullying occurs

Incidents of bullying, when either seen by staff or reported to them, will be dealt with in accordance with our Anti-bullying Policy, however, persistent or serious bullying incidents will be dealt with in line with the Trust Behaviour and Fundamental Values Policy. We will:

- ✓ Provide an opportunity for children to disclose/report bullying.
- ✓ Report all incidents of bullying to the Senior Leadership Team who will follow up the report by talking to the victim, the bully, and any witnesses. All incidents will be recorded and retained.
- ✓ Fully investigate the concerns from each perspective and respond appropriately depending on whether the concerns are founded, misunderstood or unfounded
- ✓ Make sure that if the bullying issue is founded, the identified bully/ will be helped to change their behaviour.
- ✓ Support and guidance will be given to the victim.
- ✓ Consider any safeguarding concerns and the use of outside agencies
- ✓ The bully will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the impact of their actions on another person at an age appropriate level.
- ✓ If, and when appropriate, affected parties will come together to talk through the issue, remove feelings of awkwardness and agree a route forwards.
- ✓ Monitoring to the appropriate degree following the intervention/ action and victims aware of how/ the need to re-report new concerns.
- ✓ If the problem persists, as in line with the Behaviour and Fundamental Values Policy, the bully may be excluded from school for a fixed term or even permanently.
- ✓ If necessary and appropriate, the police will be consulted.

Guidance states that “Disciplinary measures must be applied fairly, consistently, and reasonably taking account of any special educational needs or disabilities that the children may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable children. It is also important to consider the motivations behind bullying behaviour and whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is the case the child engaging in bullying may need support themselves.”

*Preventing and Tackling Bullying Dfe July 2017*

## **9. Supporting pupils with SEN and those with disabilities or Physical Health Issues**

Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain physical health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and off line.

We acknowledge additional barriers can exist in this group of children. These can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood

and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration

- these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children
- the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges
- cognitive understanding – being able to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools of colleges or the consequences of doing so

#### 10. Bullying outside the school premises

Parents and children should be aware that teachers have the power to discipline children for misbehaving outside the school premises **“to such an extent as is reasonable”**.

This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

School staff will gain the facts of the allegations and make decisions based upon individual scenarios. It could result in parents being contacted, the children being spoken to, or the Police being informed.

School will also aim to provide sign posting to agencies that can provide support. We have an expectation that parents of children involved will also take appropriate action.

**In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying the teacher can only discipline the pupil on school premises or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the staff member.**

## **11. Training**

Staff receive training and support from school leaders through safeguarding and online-safety training. There is a culture of supporting the whole child embedded in all our schools and Trust and adults know how to report concerns.

## **12. Responsibilities**

The Trust Performance Committee are responsible for monitoring incidents of bullying that occur and reviewing the effectiveness of this policy.

An overview of Bullying incidents at each school will be provided to the Committee at each meeting by the CEO.

Each school should maintain a bullying log which is checked and signed by the CEO or Executive Principal termly. Complaints about bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the Trust Complaints Procedure

The Principal is responsible for the implementation of this policy and for ensuring that procedures outlined are followed. They will ensure that all children know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable at their school.

The Principal will ensure that all staff receive sufficient training to be equipped to deal with incidents of bullying.

Staff are responsible for the well being of children in their care and for following up incidents of bullying and recording and reporting to Senior leadership. Staff must support all children in their care, establishing a climate of trust and respect for all. By praising, rewarding, and celebrating the success of all children, we aim to prevent incidents of bullying.

Children and parents are responsible for reporting incidents of bullying to staff immediately in the knowledge that they will be listened to carefully. Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy and to actively encourage their children to be positive members of Preston Hedges Trust.

We ask that parents help their children to understand the difference between disagreements and bullying.

### 13. Criminal law

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, we recognise that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

If we feel that an offence may have been committed, we will seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.