The Priory School, Hitchin

Educating Students for Success in Life

Name of policy	Anti-Bullying
Statutory	No
Date policy was updated	Summer 2025
Date of next review	Autumn 2026
Governors committee	Wellbeing and Inclusion
Member of staff responsible for the policy	Lawrence Foster

Responsibility   Respect   Resilience

The Priory School

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. RATIONALE

➢ No student should be bullied or caused anxiety by another whilst at school. Bullying is considered to be any behaviour that **repeatedly** harms/hurts another person, either physically or emotionally. The school views bullying as a serious anti-social behaviour and will always take firm action again it.

2. Aims

➢ To clarify between what is 'unkind behaviour' and 'bullying', such that all stakeholders understand the difference
➢ We intend that members of the school be encouraged to respect and appreciate the strengths of one another
➢ The school aims to create a safe learning environment where all students can be happy and achieve their full potential
➢ Students are made aware of the effect bullying has on other students' physical and emotional wellbeing as well as the legality of such bullying issues
➢ The school will aim to prevent incidents of bullying by identifying what bullying is and ensuring that support is available for those who are bullied, both in and outside school
➢ The Pastoral team will work in conjunction with the students in an effort to change their behaviour

3. Definitions

➢ While there is no single definition of bullying, the DfE identifies three points which most definitions share:
  o The behaviour is intended to cause distress
  o The behaviour is repeated
  o There is an imbalance of power between the perpetrator/s of bullying and the target

'Behaviour by an individual or group usually repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally' (Safe to Learn, DfE 2007)

'People carrying out unkind behaviours on purpose that can be difficult to stop' (Safe to Learn, DfE 2007)

➢ Bullying can take place between students, between students and staff or between staff, and can include (this list is to give examples of behaviours, but is not exhaustive):

  o Name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments (even if disguised as 'banter')
  o Offensive graffiti
  o Excluding people from a group
  o Gossiping and/or spreading rumours
  o Kicking, hitting, punching, pushing or any other violent physical contact
  o Taking belongings
  o Cyberbullying – including sending inappropriate, offensive or degrading messages/emails/images; setting up degrading websites designed to embarrass an individual

- Students may be bullied for a number of reasons (this list is to give examples, but is not exhaustive):
  - Ethnic background, religion or culture
  - Disability or learning/behavioural need
  - Sexual orientation
  - Gender (including sexualised bullying)
  - Size, appearance or health conditions
  - Social or economic status
  - Age/maturity
  - Home circumstances – students in public care, young carers or those with same sex parents/carers or whose parents/carers have mental health difficulties or disabilities may be particularly vulnerable

- Bullying is not to be confused with (but is not mutually exclusive from) 'unkind behaviour'. Unkind behaviour may involve one or a number of the behaviours listed above but lacks the pattern of repetition over time.
- The school will sanction unkind behaviour according to the behaviour for learning policy and will use this terminology in communication with the child and the parent.
- Where the school is able to identify that unkind behaviour is repeated on several occasions and/or is happening over a protracted period of time, these behaviours may be identified as 'bullying' and recorded as such on SIMS.

4. Signs and Symptoms

- A student may display signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a child:
  - is frightened to walk to/from school
  - does not want to go to school on public transport/school bus
  - is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
  - begins to truant
  - becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacks confidence
  - attempts or threatens suicide
  - runs away from home
  - cries increasingly or begins to have nightmares
  - begins to feel ill in the morning
  - displays signs of anger or aggression
  - has dinner money or other monies continually 'lost' or 'missing'
  - has unexplained cuts or bruises
  - starts stammering
  - begins to do poorly in school work
  - begins to bully other children or siblings
  - stops eating
- These signs or behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered as a possibility and should be investigated
- Parents/carers should work with the school and in accordance with the anti-bullying policy in order to investigate any potential bullying behaviours

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- All members of the school community have a responsibility to challenge bullying if it occurs. All staff at the school are made aware of the procedures that they should follow if an incident of bullying occurs

- The first point of contact for parents should be the student's Form Tutor and then the Head of Year or Head of Key Stage
- The Deputy Headteacher in charge of Behaviour and Attendance has the ultimate responsibility for the Anti-Bullying Policy alongside the Headteacher
- We recognise that reporting bullying may not be easy and members of the school community may fear negative repercussions. As far as possible, we will protect the anonymity of those who report bullying.
- Perpetrators of bullying rely on the silence of others to succeed. We will not tolerate students refusing to cooperate in an investigation into bullying and may treat such conduct as a behaviour incident in its own right.

6. Prevention of Bullying

- Prevention is better than cure so at The Priory School we are vigilant for signs of bullying and always take seriously reports of bullying
- We use the curriculum and other appropriate times (form time, assemblies) to reinforce the ethos of the school and help students to develop strategies that combat bullying-type behaviour
- In line with the Behaviour for Learning policy, the school reserves the right to maintain jurisdiction over students and offences caused off-site in relation to any form of bullying
- We use a variety of methods to help students prevent bullying. As and when appropriate these may include:
  - Home-school agreement
  - Displays around school and in classrooms
  - Student wellbeing survey
  - Inclusion week
  - Anti-bullying assemblies
  - Awareness weeks (e.g. Black History Month, LGBT awareness, Downs Syndrome awareness)
  - Year 10 and Year 13 form peer mentors/prefects
  - Sixth Form inclusion and diversity prefects
  - Parent Forum surveys
  - Student panel surveys
  - Student Leadership Committee
  - Form time discussions
  - Citizenship curriculum (delivered during form time)
  - Pastoral support plans
  - Anger management programme
  - Form Tutor/Head of Year/external mentoring
  - Parental involvement
  - PSHE lessons

7. Actions to Tackle Bullying

- All reported incidents of bullying are investigated and taken seriously. A record is kept of all reported incidents. If bullying includes racist, sexist or homophobic abuse, it is reported to the relevant senior member of staff.
- The following indicates an example of the steps that may be taken when dealing with bullying incidents:
  - When a bullying incident is reported to the Pastoral team it is investigated immediately by the relevant member of staff (e.g. Form Tutor, Head of Year, Head of Key Stage, Pastoral manager)
  - An account of the bullying incident is recorded and given to the relevant member of staff

- The member of staff will interview the student(s) involved and where necessary ask them to write down their own version of events (a statement)
- The alleged perpetrator will be given a clear warning about their conduct while the investigation is ongoing, which will include an instruction not to contact the victim, either directly or indirectly, in or outside of school
- Parents will be informed of the reported incident, where necessary
- The relevant member of staff will carry out any necessary mediation between the students. Ongoing interactions between students will be monitored where possible.
- Staff are made aware, where necessary
- Support systems and/or sanctions are used in accordance with the Behaviour for Learning policy and in consultation with all parties concerned

- Students are told that they must report any incidence of bullying to an adult within the school, and that when another student tells them that they are being bullied, or if they see bullying taking place, it is their responsibility to report this to a member of staff
- Should a student feel they are the victim of bullying from a member of staff, the student and or their parents should report this to the Deputy Headteacher for Behaviour and Attendance to investigate further

8. Joint enterprise

Perpetrators of bullying do not always act alone and may rely on or be encouraged by other students. We will treat students as joint perpetrators of bullying if they are found to have:

- made comments, either in person or online, that support the perpetrator's actions
- made comments, either in person or online, that describe what has happened to the victim in a mocking or humiliating way
- made inflammatory remarks to either the victim or the perpetrator that are intended to prolong the issues between them or make them worse
- shared material (e.g. messages, video footage, sound clips etc.) that describe or celebrate what has happened to the victim
- supported the organisation of occasions when the victim can be targeted further
- withheld information or evidence, given limited cooperation with or hindered an investigation

Students found to have acted in this way may also be issued with a consequence in line with the Behaviour for Learning policy

9. Cyberbullying

- Where any form of cyberbullying (as previously defined) affects another student or may bring the school into disrepute, the school reserves the right to be involved whether the electronic material was produced within the school or outside
- The school will review the electronic material where necessary, including their email account, mobile phone or social media accounts if we suspect that bullying is occurring
- Students must be aware that some forms and levels of cyberbullying are illegal and the school will inform the police where necessary
- Where these forms of bullying occur the students will receive the necessary and appropriate sanction as outlined in the consequence system (see Behaviour for Learning policy)
- Stakeholders must accept the limited input school can have on some cyberbullying issues. Where we feel it is necessary, we will recommend to parents that they contact the police to help resolve the matter.
- A termly report of cyberbullying incidents is reported to the Governing Board and SLT

7. **Racist and HBT (homophobic, bisexual and transgender) bullying**

> The school has a zero tolerance approach to HBT and racist bullying. Where these forms of bullying occur the students will receive the necessary and appropriate sanction as outlined in the consequence system (see Behaviour for Learning policy)
> Students must be aware that some forms of racist and HBT bullying are illegal and the school will inform the police where necessary
> The number of racist and HBT bullying incidents are reported to County Council in an annual report
> A termly report of HBT and racists incidents is reported to the Governing Board and SLT

10. **External Agency Support**

> Where necessary we will call on an outside agency to aid investigation, or offer support to a victim and/or the bully
> Such agencies include the police, Behaviour Support Team, Youth Connexions, Outreach counsellors, external mentors or the Youth Offending Team (YOT)
> This will always be done in partnership with the parents

Related Policies

Behaviour for Learning	Equality and Diversity	Transgender
Screening, Searching and Confiscation	Online Safety	Social Media