

**PRISM Independent School**

**Anti-Bullying Policy**

**Statement of Intent**

PRISM Independent School is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our learners so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all learners 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.

This policy is written with reference to the DFE guidance ‘Preventing and tackling bullying – advice for school leaders, staff and governing bodies.’

**What is Bullying?**

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

* Emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
* Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
* Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
* Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
* Homophobic because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
* Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
* Cyber all areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse

Mobile threats by text messaging & calls

Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities

**Why is it important to respond to bullying?**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. EveryBody has the right to be treated with respect. Learners who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

**Purpose of the Anti-bullying Policy**

* To provide a recognised definition of and common types of bullying including reasons why bullying may occur;
* To detail how PRISM works to prevent, monitor and appropriately respond to incidents of bullying, including how the whole school community is involved in keeping the profile of anti-bullying high;
* To provide guidance for staff when dealing with incidents of bullying, including the use of sanctions in line with PRISM’s Behaviour Policy, supporting victims and procedures for recording and reporting.

PRISM’s Anti-bullying policy covers the bullying of school staff, by learners, parents or other staff as well as the bullying of learners.

**Where bullying can take place**

Bullying can take place:

* between learners, between learners and staff, between staff, between parents and staff;
* by individuals or groups;
* face-to-face, indirectly or using a range of cyber-bullying methods.

Bullying can take place in and out of school. Head teachers are permitted by law to take ‘reasonable’ action to regulate the behaviour of learners when off-site. School staff may impose disciplinary sanctions for inappropriate behaviour, including bullying that takes place out of school.

While at PRISM, as far as is possible, learners are under constant supervision. Staff must always be vigilant in identifying and dealing with any incidents of bullying as they occur. When planning patterns of supervision including locations of supervisory staff, arrangements for break-times and timetabling for different groups, consideration must be given to the prevention of bullying occurrences.

**Identifying and reporting bullying.**

A learner or parent may raise a bullying concern or report an incident that they have experienced or witnessed. Staff may themselves observe an incident or suspect that bullying is taking place. The following may indicate that bullying is present:

Victims’ attendance may be poor. They may be more anxious and insecure that others, having fewer friends and often feeling unhappy and lonely. Victims can suffer from low self-esteem and negative self-images, looking upon themselves as failures – feeling stupid, ashamed and unattractive. Victims may present a variety of symptoms to health professionals, including fits, faints, vomiting, limb pains, paralysis, hyperventilation, visual symptoms, headaches, stomach aches, bed wetting, sleeping difficulties and sadness. Being bullied may lead to depression or, in the most serious cases, attempted suicide. It may lead to anxiety, depression, loneliness and lack of trust.

During induction, learner are made aware of a number of ways in which they can report a bullying incident or concern in confidence, including those that allow them to do this in anonymity from other students:

* learner can speak directly to any member of staff – this can happen at any time and structured youth-work that takes place every break-time provides regular informal opportunities for this to happen;
* Learners can use drop-in or pre-arranged appointments with the Health Worker to raise concerns;
* Senior management operate an open-door policy for any learners who wish to talk about a bullying (or any other) concern;
* Learners may slip a note under the door of the staff office to alert staff of a concern - this will be followed up at the earliest possible opportunity and always the same day.

Parents and carers are encouraged to report any bullying concerns by telephone. PRISM staff has a responsibility to respond promptly and sensitively, keeping parents informed of progress made and action taken.

If learner and parents/carers are not satisfied with the way a bullying concern has been handled they may wish to make an informal or formal complaint using the PRISM Independent School Complaints Procedure, which is available on request.

Where a member of staff wishes to report a bullying incident between learners and staff, parents and staff, or between staff, they should in the first instance speak with their line manager or a member of senior staff. For further support, a member of staff may wish to contact their trade union or professional association for support and advice.

**Sanctions relating to bullying and behaviour**

Bullying in any form will not be tolerated. This is made clear during induction where all new learners sign a behaviour contract agreeing that they will ‘not bullying or intimidate anyone else’. Staff will challenge learners on all bullying behaviour whether it is low-level or overt. PRISM’s Behaviour Policy outlines the specific strategies in place for dealing with misbehaviour and bullying. Parents will be informed if their son/daughter is engaging in bullying behaviour.

Sanctions must be applied fairly, proportionately, consistently and reasonably, taking into account any special educational needs the learner may have. Where bullying persists, senior staff will become involved and a 3-way meeting between the learner, parent and referring school will take place. A fixed-term exclusion for the bully may be appropriate and occasionally, where strategies do not resolve the problem, permanent exclusion may be justified in the most serious and persistent cases, particularly where violence is involved.

All strategies used should make it clear to the perpetrator that what he/she has done is unacceptable, deter them from repeating that behaviour, and signal to other learners that the behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from doing it.

**Support for victims**

Bullying victims are always listened to, and there it is appropriate and possible to do so (i.e. if the information shared does not indicate that a learners’ safety is at risk), confidence should be respected. Consideration is given to the need to support a victim and take steps to help re-build their confidence. This may include removing a bully from the victim’s group (or site if appropriate) and providing one-to-one sessions, team building or peer mentoring activities. Victims’ parents will be informed and updated regarding steps taken and sanctions imposed. Where a victim has been provoked to react angrily or aggressively towards a bully, special sensitivity and full consideration of the situation must be used when deciding on appropriate consequences for their actions.

Recording bullying incidents

Staff must record all incidents of bullying using the behaviour report on the database. All records should include:

* A clear indication that the behaviour is bullying;
* The date of the incident;
* Identification of the ‘type’ of bullying and reason for it (i.e. name-calling, homophobic);
* Details of the incident;
* Action taken (including sanctions for the perpetrator and support for the victim);
* Indication of whether situation was resolved or is ongoing;
* Details of any follow-up required.

Any serious disciplinary incidents or those resulting in injury should also be recorded in the Incident Book or Accident Records. Further details are available in the ‘Incident Reporting Policy’.

**Monitoring and Review of incidents**

Senior management will monitor behaviour records to identify, respond to and report (to the Local Authority) any developing trends in bullying behaviour. Information from these records will also enable senior staff to determine the effectiveness of the policy and this will feed into its review.

**Maintaining a high Anti-bullying profile**

The profile of Anti-bullying will be kept high through a number of strategies:

* During the entrance interview, the anti-bullying ethos is made explicit and learners agree not to engage in bullying or intimidation;
* Issues surrounding bullying are raised and addressed within the PSD and PSHE curriculum that all learners access and through specific lesson on anti-bullying.
* Staff challenges all bullying, however low-level and opportunities arising from this are used to discuss anti-bullying issues;
* learners are encouraged to discuss any bullying concerns with staff, either formally or informally at any time;
* Visual information on anti-bullying including where help and advice can be obtained is displayed on each site;
* Anti-bullying week is utilised as an opportunity to raise the profile with specific activities taking place;
* Learners’ views on bullying are sought during youth forum;
* New staff read the anti-bullying Policy during their induction;
* PRISM staffs discuss bullying concerns and complaints with parents and carers and seek their support in upholding the Anti-bullying Policy;
* Bullying issues are discussed during the weekly staff team meetings;
* Staff training on recognising and dealing with bullying behaviour takes place during staff away-days and training weekends.

**Outcomes**

1. The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologies. Other consequences may take place.
2. In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered in discussion with referring agency.
3. If possible, the learners will be reconciled.
4. After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case with be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

**Prevention**

PRISM Independent School will use a variety of methods for helping learners to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, there may include:

* Writing a set of project/group rules
* Signing a behaviour contract
* Make sure that information is available and accessible for learners
* Build in sessions for learners to promote anti-bullying and to understand the implications of bullying e.g. writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying; making up role-plays and discussing how to cope/manage situations; having discussions about bullying and why it matters

**Review of Anti-bullying procedures and policy**

A full review of the Anti-bullying procedures and policy will take place at least every 2 years. This will involve the whole school community (parents, learners, and staff). Information gathered over the previous two years, through behaviour records, youth forum feedback, PSD and PSHE lessons, parental comments will be combined with specific feedback and input gathered at the point of review. Anti-bullying week (each November) is a good opportunity to carry out this process, when the profile of Anti-bullying is already high in the media and through activities within the PRISM Curriculum.

**HELP ORGANISATIONS:**

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) 08088005793

Children’s Legal Centre 08453454345

KIDSCAPE Parents Helpline (Mon-Fri, 10-4) 08451205204

Parentline Plus 08088002222

Bully Online [www.bully.co.uk](http://www.bully.co.uk)

Acknowledgements:

[www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)