POLEGATE SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Bullying is repeated hurtful behaviour which makes other people feel uncomfortable or threatened whether this is intended or not. It can be difficult to defend against this type of behaviour.

'Bullying as behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that is intended to hurt or harm another individual or group, either physically or emotionally. Bullying is often aimed at certain groups, for example because of their race, religion, gender or sexual orientation. The rapid proliferation of new technologies has provided a new medium for bullying, in the form of cyber bullying through social media, gaming, and text messages.' UK Parliament 2020

This policy follows all requirements as set out in 'Keeping children safe in education 2025.'

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, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying), physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse), sexual violence, sexual harassment. (Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025)

Bullying has many forms. Three main types are:

PHYSICAL	hitting, kicking, taking or hiding belongings including money
VERBAL	name calling, teasing, insulting, writing unkind notes/text messages/e-mail, racist remarks, homophobic remarks
INDIRECT	being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, spreading rumours, nasty looks

Cyber bullying

The rapid development of and widespread access to technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur outside the school. Cyber bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with potentially bigger audience.
The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber bullying.

People react differently. It is not always possible to tell if someone is hurt or upset.

Possible signs of someone being bullied

Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy, nervous, feigning illness or giving excuses to not attend school. They may show changes in their work patterns, lack concentration or truant from school.

Aims

At Polegate School we wish to encourage an environment where independence is valued and individuals can flourish without fear. Every pupil has the right to be safe and happy in Polegate School and be protected if feeling vulnerable. At Polegate we will not tolerate bullying of any kind.

Prevention

Our response to the issues of bullying do not start at the point at which a child has been bullied. We deal with the issue proactively and develop strategies to prevent bullying

occurring in the first place. This includes lessons about issues of difference, dedicated events, projects and assemblies. We work hard to create an ethos of outstanding behaviour where pupils treat one another and staff with respect. (refer to the Code of Conduct policy) No reports of bullying raised by staff or children does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. Therefore, staff need to record any concerns regarding child on child abuse to the Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher or Assistant Head Teacher.

Encouragement to tell

It is important that we create an atmosphere in the school where students who are being bullied, or others who know about it, feel that they will be listened to and believed and that action taken will be sensitive to their concerns. Staff will always take allegations of bullying seriously and will deal with them promptly and appropriately. Not telling protects the bully or bullies. We fully encourage our pupils to tell if they or someone else is being bullied.

Dealing with a bullying incident

It should be made clear to the targeted pupil that revenge is not appropriate and to the bully that their behaviour is completely unacceptable. Every effort will be made to resolve the problem by involving both parties. We will apply disciplinary measures to pupils who bully in order to show clearly that behaviour is wrong. Disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably taking account of any special educational needs that a pupil may have and taking account of the needs of vulnerable pupils. We also consider the motivations behind bullying behaviour and whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator.
This policy will be used in conjunction with the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.

"All staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children, that are actually abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.". Polegate School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

A number of decisions will need to be made which will depend on each individual incident. The following needs to be taken into consideration when dealing with a bullying incident:

- The feelings of the pupil who has been bullied.
- Response to be immediate, appropriate and with a sensitive investigation.
- The targeted child offered appropriate support.
- pupils involved in the bullying are also offered support.
- Consideration given as to whether involvement of others, including the police is necessary.

Procedures

- A statement will be taken from pupils involved. (On standard bullying Incident Form).
- If there is pupil injury, correct procedures will be followed to ensure the pupil gets necessary medical attention.
- Parents of both parties may be informed of what has happened and how it has been dealt with so far.

- Incidents or alleged incidents are recorded by SLT on Bullying Incident form
- Appropriate action will then be taken.
- All Bullying incidents will be logged centrally on MyConcern
- If the confirmed bullying behaviour continues then further sanctions/actions will begin as appropriate.

Possible Sanctions/Action:

- Informal meeting with or between pupils with mediation.
- Safeguarding Risk Reduction Plan co produced with parents
- No-blame approach
- Coaching session at breaktimes/lunchtime.
- Involvement of Parent/Carer.
- Involvement of other agencies or professionals such as police
- Report Card for monitoring purposes
- Fixed Term exclusion (would only be used in order to put in place precautions/ risk assessment and make necessary changes to maintain safety)
- Permanent exclusion. (depending on severity and previous incidents)

Immediate possible Support/Strategies for the pupils:

- Counselling (refer through Inclusion Team).
- Reflect and Reset Coaching
- Anti-bullying support groups (refer through Inclusion Team).
- Buddy support system within class group.
- Encouragement/strategies in place to tell should it re-occur.
- Lunchtime Nurture Club (refer through Deputy Headteacher)
- Frequent and regular monitoring from all staff
- Nurture support group

Advice to Pupils

If you are being bullied, or you know that someone else is, please tell staff straight away and it will be dealt with. Not telling means the victim will continue to suffer and the bully will carry on bullying. We all have a responsibility to make sure that bullying is not allowed to continue in our school. Do not suffer in silence.
Advice to pupils on how to deal with bullying is given through circle times, PSHE programme and Anti-bullying displays.

Advice to Parents/Carers

Please contact the school, your child's Class Teacher or Team Leader, as soon as you are aware of any bullying incident either to do with your child or someone else's child. Refer to 'Parent Information Guide'. The school will take your concerns seriously and action will be taken.

Advice to Staff

Polegate School will not tolerate bullying. If bullying is brought to your attention, then you must contact a member of SLT immediately. SLT will investigate the report of bullying and ask the students to provide as much detail as they can about the incident. This will be written onto a bullying incident form and logged on MyConcern. After full investigation, we will inform all parents. Staff on break and lunch duty need to be particularly vigilant at all times: in corridors between lessons, in the playground and the toilets. These are the times and places where targets are more vulnerable and bullying is not easily seen. The presence of staff is a key deterrent to bullying.

Bullying outside the school's premises

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises to such an extent as is 'reasonable' This can relate to bullying incidents occurring

anywhere off the school premises such as on school or public transport or in Poleagte itself.
Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The Head Teacher will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or pose a threat to a member of the public, the police will always be informed.
The school will:

- Investigate all reported incident and record.
- Take action as detailed above as required.
- Encourage Parents to report the incidents to the local police and discuss 'trouble spots'
- Provide support as appropriate within the school.
- Map safe routes to school and let pupils know.
- Talk to students about how to avoid or deal with bullying outside the school premises.

Procedures for non-teaching staff when aware of a Bullying incident taking place

You may see bullying taking place around the school building, in the dinner queues etc. and it is important that you are aware of what you can do about it.

If a pupil discloses that they are being bullied, or if you notice that a Pupil is being bullied, the following should take place:

- Ask the pupil if they would like something to be done about it. They should be encouraged to make a statement. The bullying will not stop if nothing is said or done.
- If the pupil is in agreement, report it to the Class Teacher who will then refer it to SLT if appropriate
- You could let the pupil know that a number of actions could take place: For your information this is what we do offer:

    - **A quiet informal word with the bully/ies – no sanctions**
    - **A mediation between both parties – informal, no sanctions**
    - **A no-blame meeting – formal**
    - **Pupils could be sanctioned – (see behaviour policy)**
    - **Parents could be involved**

    - The pupil completes statement.
    - Member of staff initiates action. All information, statements and actions recorded on a Bullying Incident form
    - Follow up and updates made as and when appropriate.

During the investigation the following is considered:

- Severity of the incident.
- Is the pupil injured?
- Should the parents be involved?
- Should the police be involved?
- Are there any other incidents in the bullying Log (relating to these pupils)

The different sorts of support for students include the following:

- Anti-bullying support group
- Safe spaces at break times
- Referral to outside agency

IMPORTANT: An online bullying log for all year groups is kept by the senior leadership Team electronically.
Forms are also uploaded to pupils online Profiles on MyConcern

Procedures for staff when dealing with a Bullying Incident

If a pupil disclosed that they are being bullied or you suspect that bullying is occurring, the following should take place:

- Ask the pupil if they would like something to be done about it. They should be encouraged to make a statement. The bullying will not stop if nothing is said or done.
- If the pupil is in agreement, report it to the Class Teacher who should then take over investigation and actions.
- Explain to the pupil that a number of actions could take place:

    - **A quiet informal word with the bully/ies – no sanctions.**
    - **A mediation between both parties – informal, no sanctions.**
    - **No-blame meeting – formal**
    - **Pupils could be sanctioned – isolation / exclusion**
    - **Parents could be involved.**

- Ask pupil how they would like the situation to be dealt with, having given above examples.
- The pupil completes statement.
- Member of staff initiates action. **All information, statements and actions recorded on a Bullying Incident form**
- Follow up and updates made as and when appropriate.

During the investigation the following should be considered:

- Severity of the incident.
- Is the pupils injured?
- Should the parents be involved?
- Should the police be involved?
- Are there any other incidents in the bullying Log (relating to these pupils).

Other Support for students could include:

- Anti-bullying support group – See DSL
- Safe spaces at break times – See DSL
- Web sites: www.coastkid.org.uk / www.childline.org.uk / www.kidscape.org.uk
- The Anti Bullying Alliance: founded 2002 by NSPCC, good practice
- Beat Bullying: lesson plans for teachers and resources for parents.

- Telephone support: The Bullying Line 0300 323 0169
  Kidscape 020 7730 3300
  Childline 0800 1111

Cyber bullying
ChildNet International
Think U Know
Digizen
Advice on Child Internet Safety 1:0