



PLYMSTOCK SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying Policy

Governors' Committee: Curriculum

Lead Officer: Mr K Dyke

Date for Review: Autumn 2019

Aims of this policy

1. All staff, students and parents should understand what bullying is.
2. All staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
3. All students and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
4. As a school, we take bullying seriously. Students and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
5. Bullying will not be tolerated.

Definition

The Department for Education (DfE) defines bullying as '***Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over a period of time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally***'.

Bullying will not be tolerated at Plymstock School and is seen as the misuse of power. The school community has a duty to protect all its members and provide a safe, healthy environment.

Creating a climate to prevent bullying

While recognising that bullying happens in all schools and within the wider community, parents/carers and students at Plymstock School are encouraged to report incidents of bullying to any member of staff and be confident that action will be taken as per the school procedures set out in Appendix 1 to deal effectively with the victims of, and those responsible for, acts of bullying.

Education to prevent bullying will be provided to all students during their time at Plymstock School and appropriate behaviour will be reinforced during lessons and around the school site.

Curriculum opportunities are used to address bullying through:

- Subject areas e.g. EPC (Ethics, Philosophy and Culture)
- Life Education (Personal, Social, Health and Employment Education / Citizenship)
- Assemblies e.g. National Anti-Bullying Week, National Safer Internet Day
- Presentations and workshops from outside agencies e.g. Amber Initiatives
- Tutor time activities and discussions
- Peer Mentors

Students are encouraged to develop and understand:

- Patience
- Empathy
- Co-operation
- Understanding

As well as British Values:

- Mutual respect
- Democracy
- The rule of the law
- Individual liberty
- Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs

Plymstock School communicates its stance on bullying to all students via assemblies, tutor time, our student safeguarding leaflet, the student planner, our Life Education curriculum and day-to-day staff-student interactions/conversations. Plymstock School communicates its stance on bullying to all parents via emails, in the student planner and by publishing this policy on the school website.

Types of bullying

The school recognises that there are several forms of bullying and that they can be thought of as bullying if they are done maliciously, deliberately or persistently to hurt or upset or have that effect. Bullying can occur in many ways. For example:

Verbal

- Deliberate, unkind and persistent remarks.
- Racist, sexual or homophobic name calling.
- Being hurtful about appearance.
- Name calling, sarcasm, persistent teasing.

Emotional

- Spreading hurtful rumours.
- Writing graffiti or using images/offensive materials.
- Tormenting, humiliating.
- Excluding someone and leaving them out on purpose.

Theft/Damaging property

- Taking someone's bag deliberately and breaking it.
- Malicious damage to property e.g. pencil case, uniform etc...

Physical

- Pinching, punching, pushing, kicking and hitting.
- Any violence that is done on purpose to others.

Racist

- A racial taunt, graffiti, gestures.
- Making inappropriate comments regarding faiths and beliefs.

Sexual

- Making sexual comments.
- Inappropriate touching.

Cyber bullying

- The use of ICT, particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else.
- Hurtful, harmful messages sent from individuals and groups.

Homophobic

- Focusing on the issue of sexuality.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs of behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Is frightened of walking to or from school doesn't want to go on the school/public bus begs to be driven to school.
- Changes their usual routine.
- Is unwilling to go to school (school-phobic).
- Begins to truant.
- Becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence starts stammering.
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away.
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares feels ill in the morning.
- Begins to do poorly in school work.
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged.
- Has possessions which are damaged or 'go missing' asks for money or starts stealing money to pay bully has dinner or other monies continually 'lost'.
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises.
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable.
- Stops eating.
- Is frightened to say what's wrong.
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above.
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone.
- Is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received.

This is not an exhaustive list. These signs and behaviour could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

School procedures

The school recognises that bullying is never acceptable and will follow the procedures as outlined below:

1. Incidents of bullying should be reported immediately to any adult on the staff who in turn will report the matter to the appropriate Head of Year and tutor.
2. All students will be listened to, and individual issues understood. The school provides opportunities for students to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to and the incident acted on.
3. Staff will take appropriate action on information given. It will be the professional judgement of senior staff to determine the nature of the problem and the appropriate level of response and course of action.
4. In most cases written accounts of the incident will be taken through discreet interviews where necessary and following investigation, the incident will be dealt with appropriately.
5. Incidents of bullying will be recorded on SIMS by type and outcome. This data is used for monitoring and evaluation and is shared with the governing body.

A variety of appropriate strategies may be used to deal with reported incidents:

- Apology from bully to victim (verbal/written).
- Discussion of victim's own behaviour leading up to the incident (incidents are not always clear cut).
- Positive steps to be taken with bully to encourage improved behaviour.
- Monitoring of bully after incident to see any repeated behaviour.
- Counselling of victim/bully.
- Parents /carers may be contacted by letter/telephone/invited into school, if appropriate.
- Implement disciplinary sanctions, including detentions/exclusions.
- Record incidents of bullying according to type on SIMS and use this data to monitor incidents of bullying in the school.
- Use specific organisations and resources for help with problems.
- Work with the wider community such as the police and children's services where bullying is particularly serious or persistent and when a criminal offence may have been committed.

The law and statutory guidance with respect to bullying

The Equality Act 2010

Under the Equality Act 2010, new duties on schools and other public bodies came into force from April 2011. The Act strengthens and simplifies existing equality legislation. The Act brings together existing duties not to discriminate on grounds of race, disability and gender which schools are already bound to comply with, and it extends these to include duties not to discriminate on the grounds of age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or gender re-assignment. It places a requirement on governing bodies and proprietors of schools to eliminate discrimination and promote equal opportunities.

Safeguarding Children and Young People

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, the school staff should report their concerns to their local authority children's social care. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, schools may need to draw on a range of external services to support the student who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child doing the bullying.

Criminal Law

Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind 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 school staff feel that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communication 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.

Monitoring and evaluation

The pastoral team with the Deputy Headteacher (Behaviour) will annually review bullying data and trends to see if this policy needs amending. The pastoral team will regularly evaluate and update their approach to bullying to take into account the developments in technology.

This policy will be reviewed by governors every two years.