

Penyrheol Comprehensive School



Anti-Bullying Policy

Updated April 2021

A Definition of Bullying

Bullying can take various forms. Usually bullying is the persistent targeting of an individual by another person or group with the intention of causing psychological or physical harm. However, bullying can sometimes be a single event, if there is a significant difference in power between the bully and the victim. For example, if a number of pupils gang up on one individual or if there is a significant age / size / strength difference between the bully and the victim.

Bullying is not friends falling out with one another or a one-off incident of an unpleasant nature between pupils of a similar age and size.

Bullying can express itself through name-calling, teasing, ridicule, jostling, punching or kicking, intimidation, extortion, excluding someone from a group, sending unpleasant messages on a mobile phone or computer and, occasionally, violent assault. For the victim it can mean fear, humiliation, insecurity, anxiety, isolation and loneliness.

Bullying can be classified in three categories as follows:

Physical bullying

hitting, kicking, taking or hiding others' property, including money etc.

Verbal bullying

name-calling, teasing, insulting, writing unkind notes, texts or messages etc.

Emotional bullying

being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, spreading rumours, giving nasty looks, intimidating etc.

The victims can be anybody, but pupils who stand out as different in some way, such as stature, size, race, ability or any other difference may be more vulnerable than most.

Bullying occurs at times in all large organisations. No school can truthfully claim that bullying never takes place within it. However, our view is that bullying should not be accepted as an inevitable part of school life or of 'growing up'. We recognise that it affects everyone, not merely the bully and the victim; it can sour the atmosphere among all who witness it and have a negative effect on the school ethos. We recognise, therefore, that as a school we have a responsibility to create a secure and safe environment for all our pupils. There is a zero tolerance approach to bullying at Penyrheol.

Reasons for Bullying

There are many reasons why some people bully others and there is no one type of bully. Some of the reasons why people become bullies include:

- They have been bullied themselves (in school, at home or elsewhere).
- They want to fit in with a particular group.
- They are jealous of someone else.
- They like a feeling of power over others.
- They think it will make them popular.
- They lack basic human values and morals.

The Recognition of Victims

There is no typical victim by the time pupils get to secondary school and many reasons why someone might be the target of a bully. Younger pupils may suffer more than senior pupils, because they are physically smaller. But bullying also occurs within the peer group at all ages.

We must be particularly observant of the needs of pupils who:

Are often on their own and appear to have few friends.

Appear upset, worried and anxious.

Stand out as different in some way from their peers.

Truant or are reluctant to come to school.

The Effects of Bullying

Bullying will most often make the victim miserable, upset and frightened. It may make him/her reluctant to come to school. It may also have a very negative impact on the victim's self-esteem and push him/her into behaviours that would not have been followed otherwise, such as introversion, aggression, disruption, self-harm and, in a small number of cases, suicide. These are all reasons why we must have a zero tolerance approach to bullying.

Cyber-Bullying

By cyber-bullying or e-bullying we mean:

- Bullying by texts or messages or calls on mobile phones.
- Use of mobile phone cameras to cause distress, fear or humiliation.
- Posting threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating material on websites, in chat rooms or anywhere on any of the social media platforms.
- Hi-jacking email accounts.

Pupils should be continually reminded that:

- Hacking is criminal.
- Behaviour that causes alarm or distress is criminal harassment if it occurs enough to constitute a course of conduct.
- The misuse of telecommunications to cause alarm or distress is criminal.
- 'Happy slapping' is associated with criminal action (i.e. assault) and may amount to conspiracy.
- Mobile phone bullying, by text, picture or video messages, can be a particularly emotionally damaging experience for children as it is not confined to the school, or street but can continue into the 'safety' of the child's home.

In the event of mobile phone bullying or any form of 'cyber-bullying' occurring pupils are advised of the following:

- Tell someone.
- Do not answer abusive messages but log them and report them.
- Do not give out personal details.
- Never reply to abusive emails.
- Never reply to someone you do not know.
- Stay in the public areas of chat rooms.

As part of the school's code of conduct mobile phones are allowed to be brought into school by pupils, although it is recommended that they are not. Pupils are continually reminded that if they are used in lessons or for any form of 'cyber-bullying' the phone will be confiscated until collected by a parent.

School Policy

1. We must assume that bullying does take place rather than wait for it to happen. We must seek to reduce its frequency through assemblies, the PSE programme and the counselling of pupils.
2. The pastoral programme has specific sections on bullying, especially for Years 7 and 8 for whom the fear of bullying is very real. These sections must come early in the year and be given priority. Bullying is also addressed via Year and Whole School Assemblies and the school regularly takes part in 'Anti Bullying Week' in the Autumn Term.
3. It is vital that we get across the message that pupils must tell a teacher if they are victims of or witnesses to bullying. Knowledge is our greatest weapon against bullies.
4. Assure victims that action will be taken. Make them feel comfortable about coming forward to tell.
5. Accounts of bullying must be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly, including a search for witnesses. Never accept at face value the bully's denial – but do not bully the bully, which reinforces the wrong message.
6. Provide feedback of information and ensure that there is continuity of support.
7. Form Teachers have the most crucial role, both for listening to and supporting the victims and for dealing in the first instance with the bully. As adults working in the school we should all look at the ideal of prevention being better than cure. We should always be on the lookout for the following signs of bullying:
 - a). Look for signs of a pupil being subjected to niggling punches, being teased, being called names or being threatened in your lesson or around school.
 - b). Treat all information given by other pupils as serious and follow up this information or pass it on to the relevant member of staff.
 - c). Look out for personality changes or behaviour that is not the norm for a pupil.
 - d). Look out for changes in attendance patterns or lateness to registration or lessons.
 - e). Look out for equipment not up to the normal standard with a pupil.
 - f). Look out for a sudden reduction in academic performance.

This list is not exhaustive. You have to be aware that any change in the normal pattern of any pupil could suggest bullying.

8. Prefects should be vigilant during break and lunch time and swift to intervene or report concerns to a member of staff.
9. Staff presence in both the school interior and exterior during non-teaching time is seen as important. There is a carefully worked out plan for ensuring that there is a rota of staff who perform supervisory duties in designated areas at break, lunchtimes and after school.
10. CCTV is in operation in the main building and the Annexe.
11. Parents of victims need to be told what the school is doing or has done and how they might help their child. Victims need parental help to improve self-esteem and to overcome feelings of inferiority and guilt. Parents of Year 6 pupils are given an advice sheet at Open Evening.
12. Every teacher in every classroom must frown on aggression and praise non- aggressive behaviour.
13. The everyday language of prejudice (be it sexist, racist or whatever) should be challenged when heard and should be analysed in language lessons.
14. With regards to 'cyber-bullying' we will :
 - a). Continually remind pupils that cyber-bullying and harassment are invasions of privacy at all times. They may also involve criminal acts.
 - b). Support victims and work with the police to detect those involved in criminal acts.
 - c). Use our policy of confiscation where necessary to prevent pupils from committing crimes or misusing equipment.
 - d). Encourage all members of the school community to bring to the attention of the appropriate person
 - e). any example of cyber-bullying or harassment they know about or suspect.
 - f). Block access to inappropriate web-sites from school equipment and continually re-enforce our School
 - g). ICT Acceptable Use Policy (a summary of which is found in every pupils' planner).
 - h). Monitor all ICT communications on school equipment.
 - i). Endeavour to ensure that all images of staff and pupils are secure.
15. In extreme cases referral to outside agencies may be required for support and guidance e.g. Educational Psychologist.

16. When a serious incident occurs we will:
- a). Offer the victim(s) comfort and immediate support.
 - b). Make it clear to the bully and his/her parents that such behaviour is not acceptable at Penyrheol and must never be repeated.
 - c). Make the bully and the victim record the event (separately) in writing.
 - d). Counsel the victim about ways that he/she can help avoid being bullied.
 - e). Use all sanctions available to us to correct, punish or remove pupils who bully fellow pupils or harass staff like detentions and exclusions if necessary.
 - f). In extreme cases, refer the bully to outside agencies for guidance and support e.g. Educational Psychologist, Behaviour Support Team.
 - g). If necessary, refer the bully to the disciplinary committee of the Governing Body.



Pupils attend an Anti-Bullying training session held in our Library Resource Centre.

Advice to Parents on Bullying

1. Watch for signs of distress in your child e.g. unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches and other ailments, lost equipment, damaged clothing, bruising etc. Look out for:
 - a). Frequent injuries such as bruises or cuts to a child.
 - b). The child who becomes withdrawn and is reluctant to say why.
 - c). The child who is having difficulty sleeping. The school may pick up that the child is always tired.
 - d). Educational attainment being slowly or suddenly reduced.
 - e). A reluctance to go to school. Parents could be unaware as it could be truancy. Any change in attendance should be followed up.
 - f). Sudden request to be taken to school or to be picked up from school.
 - g). The child who comes home hungry all the time could indicate their dinner money is being taken from them.
 - h). Money going missing from the house.
 - i). Depression in the child. Reluctance to eat or over-eating. Child appears generally unhappy, miserable, moody and/or irritable.
 - j). The child who threatens to take their own life.
2. Take an active interest in your child's social life. Discuss friendships, how he/she spends break or lunch times in school etc.
3. If you think your child is being bullied, inform (not blame) the school immediately and ask to speak to your child's Form Teacher or Head of Year.
4. Record details of WHO, WHAT, WHERE and WHEN so that you have evidence if the bullying persists.
5. Recognise that the school cannot solve the problem at the wave of a wand, but will work energetically to isolate the bully and support the victim. Recognise also that youngsters often fall out with each other and that many disagreements are not a case of bullying; sometimes it is six of one and half a dozen of the other.
6. If the problem occurs outside the school, we may still be able to help, but also consider asking your solicitor to send a letter to the bully's parents, if you are certain of your facts and the situation is serious enough. We do not advise rushing round to the alleged bully's house and making wild accusations in the heat of the moment. Approach the parents only if you are calm and are prepared to hear another side of the story.

7. Do not pressurise your child to hit back. It may make matters worse. It may be alien to your child's nature and, in any case, the school can never condone violence and your child would be punished. More positively, encourage your child to recruit friends and play your part in making them feel welcome at your home.
8. Reassure your child that there is nothing wrong with him/her. He/she is not the only victim.
9. If the bullying occurs in identifiable places, work out ways to avoid them.
10. Advise your child not to try to buy the bully off with gifts and never to give in to demands for money. Instead your child must come and tell a teacher if he/she feels under any threat.
11. Be aware that bullying can also occur at home – by both parents and children.
12. Watch that your child is not a victim of cyber-bullying

By cyber-bullying we mean:

- a). Bullying by texts or messages or calls on mobile phones.
- b). Use of mobile phone cameras to cause distress, fear or humiliation.
- c). Posting threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating material on web- sites, in chat rooms or on any social media.
- d). Hi-jacking email accounts.

Dealing with Bullying

Key staff dealing with bullying situations are more often than not, Heads of Year, Pastoral Assistants and / or members of the School Leadership Team. These members of staff all place a high priority on the following:

- Involving Parents
- Supporting Pupils – both the Victims and the Perpetrator
- Recording all incidents effectively and REVISITING the issue on several occasions.

Involving Parents

Often schools are made aware of bullying through notification from the parents of the victim. This is to be encouraged and commended. Schools can deal with instances of bullying only if they are aware they are taking place.

Supporting Pupils

Staff dealing with bullying instances tend to be Heads of Year and / or Pastoral Assistants. These dedicated and experienced staff members will assist victims to develop strategies to become more resistant towards bullying behaviour. In dealing with those who are identified as perpetrators, strategies include confronting the bully with the consequences of his/her actions, reminding the pupil of the school's and society's expectations and reinforcing the school's stance with punitive measures depending on the seriousness of the situation.

Of critical importance here is the sense of absolute commitment which the school conveys to both victim and perpetrator that bullying will not be tolerated.

Recording all incidents effectively and REVISITING the issue on several occasions.

The effective team work and excellent communication skills that exist between the Pastoral staff in Penyrheol continues to be a particular strength of the school and this is extremely beneficial especially when dealing with incidents which cross more than one year group.

All incidents of bullying are recorded on a 'Bullying Form' so that the details of the complaint and actions taken are recorded and kept. The form ensures that members of staff have to 'revisit' the issue, confirming that the problem remains eradicated. The Deputy Head (Pupils) keeps a copy of the form in the Bullying Register for at least half a term.

If the problem persists, consequences for the culprit at this stage could include isolation, further meetings with parents, and a fixed term exclusion.

Above all we should always remember a person who is bullied often blames themselves, they believe they are at fault for some reason. They do not come forward because they feel ashamed that they are not liked. On top of this is the fear factor that the bully likes to emphasise. If you are bullied you have to admit to being a victim which suggests you are weak. Nobody likes to admit to any of this. The pupil will often deny being bullied because of this, so even if you get a negative response at first do not give up on the victim.