



PARMITER'S SCHOOL POLICY STATEMENT ON BULLYING

BULLYING: “Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally.” (Safe to Learn DCSF 2007)

Introduction

All students have the basic right to a schooling which is free from humiliation or abuse, whether physical, verbal or psychological. When a student's experience of school is as free from stress as possible, he/she is more likely to develop self-esteem, self-discipline and adhere to high standards of behaviour which contribute to effective learning and his/her academic and social development. Because bullying is a major cause of stress in the victim, it must be addressed effectively. The following statement outlines how the Parmiter's School community seeks to achieve this.

Bullying may be defined as **the wilful, conscious desire to hurt or distress another and put him/her under stress through physical, verbal or psychological abuse**. The behaviour is repeated and there is an imbalance of power between the perpetrators of bullying and the target/s. This broad definition includes students being subjected to the following:

- being called names
- being teased or ridiculed
- being pushed or pulled about
- being hit, attacked or intimidated
- having possessions taken and thrown about
- having rumours spread about them
- being ignored and left out
- being taken advantage of e.g. my sweets for your watch; being forced to hand over money or possessions
- being attacked because of religion, race or colour, gender, sexuality or disability
- being sent threatening notes
- gang pressure
- cyber bullying – including:
 - sending inappropriate, offensive or degrading text messages, emails, images or instant messages via the internet
 - setting up websites designed to embarrass or upset individuals
 - maliciously excluding them from social networking sites.

The seriousness of the above situations will vary but it is how they are perceived by the victim that is crucial. These issues will be addressed, no matter how trivial they may appear to others. This will involve time spent in counselling both the victim and the bully, and possibly others. Incidents of Bullying and Racism are recorded on SIMS Behaviour Log. These logs are monitored by Heads of Year in conjunction with the Heads of Key Stage.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the e-safety policy.

Recognition

It is acknowledged that, in any school, some students experience bullying. Bullying can take place on the school premises and at home via computers and phones, during school activities elsewhere, and while travelling to and from school.

The problem of bullying is everyone's business. It is important that the whole school community - teaching, administrative, technical, supervisory, school-keeping and maintenance staff, students, parents and governors - are aware of potential forms of bullying and of their possible consequences. Furthermore, **it is the joint responsibility of all in the school community to watch for and expose bullying when it occurs and to work together both to stop it and seek to prevent it.**

It is important that this awareness of the problem of bullying and how it should be tackled is maintained regularly in an on-going anti-bullying programme:

among students: through the curriculum, through assemblies and tutor group activities, the Life Skills programme, the Resilience programme, Peer Mentoring, Learning Together and the Anti-Bullying Policy;

among parents: through school documents and parents' meetings;

among staff: through the **Procedures for Dealing with Bullying** sheet and relevant meetings;

among governors: dissemination of policy.

Response

The School response to the problem of bullying will be both proactive and reactive:

- Proactive**
- (a) By the promotion of a general ethos within Parmiter's in which empathy, consideration, unselfishness, mutual respect, support and care, and responsibility for one's own behaviour are the norm. Interpersonal skills, social confidence and a positive self-image must be objectives in a wide variety of curricular, pastoral and extra-curricular activities throughout the school.
 - (b) By the induction of new students. Particular care will be taken to ensure a welcoming and informative induction for those new students who are not part of a regular intake at the beginning of a school year. Specific briefing of late entrants will include an information booklet containing a plan of the school, copy of the school rules, which are included in the **Behaviour Policy**, information concerning the Library, the pastoral chain, and names of key staff and their responsibilities. Students will be introduced to a "buddy" from their tutor group, who will help them to settle into the school routine.
 - (c) By encouraging a broad, interesting and challenging curriculum, and a publicised full and varied programme of extra-curricular activities in order to provide a focus for the positive use of both classroom and non-classroom time.

- (d) By focusing on the issue of bullying and how to respond to it through identifiable activities within the core curriculum, for example through Drama, Religious Education and Life Skills lessons, and through assemblies and tutor group activities. This anti-bullying programme will be on-going.
- (e) By endeavouring to maintain high standards of classroom control and increasing levels of supervision throughout the school buildings and grounds at all times of the school day by all members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching.
- (f) By encouraging a willingness among students - both victims and onlookers - to expose bullying whenever it occurs - it is "**OK to tell**". Students may report any incidence to a teacher, either by speaking to them in person or writing a note to them and handing it in at the school office marked with the teacher's name and headed "confidential". Students are able to use the **oktotell** email address which is monitored by members of SLT. Year 7 students can also confide in the Sixth Form Year 7 form prefects who are affiliated to their form.
- (g) By encouraging parents to report bullying.

- Reactive:**
- (a) By applying an agreed procedure for dealing constructively with bullies and their victims (see **Procedures for Dealing with Bullying**).
Staff, students, parents and governors will regularly be made aware of this procedure.
The procedure will be applied with consistency, and sensitivity as soon as possible after the incident has been reported. An effective response to "minor" cases will help to preclude major incidents.
 - (b) By ensuring that the victim receives support and protection, and is offered counselling to help him/her to respond appropriately to the bully. This might include an offer of follow-up support by a member of staff or a senior student.
 - (c) By offering counselling to both bullies and onlookers. The behaviour should be criticised rather than the person, and positive encouragement given to more sensitive and considerate conduct.
 - (d) By increasing vigilance in areas in the school where there is a danger of bullying at times identified as the result of information received from students, and by the provision of safe havens for students who may feel in need of such a facility.
 - (e) Where instances of bullying involving our students occur outside school jurisdiction and are drawn to our attention, parents will be informed. This includes any incidents of cyber bullying.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING

This document outlines agreed procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying at Parmiter's School. It is important that all staff take a **consistent** approach to the problem in accordance with the following guidelines.

1. **It is the responsibility of all staff - teaching and support - to be vigilant for incidents of bullying and to intervene** when they occur. Deterioration of work, dubious illness, staying close to staff, lagging behind at lesson changes, frequent loss of possessions or money can be signs of distress and should alert staff to the possibility of bullying.
2. **Victims and other students or parents who report incidents must be taken seriously.** They must feel they can trust staff to deal with the matter promptly and sensitively.
3. An **initial log** should be made on SIMS by the teacher, HOY or HOKS (depending on whether the incident occurred in the classroom or outside of lessons).
4. **Victims, witnesses and suspects should be interviewed individually** away from the scene of the incident. The member of staff should try to record:

WHEN the incident took place;

WHERE the incident took place;

WHO was involved - as victim, bully and onlooker. It is important to record the names of onlookers. Some may prove to be useful independent witnesses, others may need to be reprimanded for encouraging/assenting to the bullying;

WHAT was the nature of the incident;

WHY the bullying occurred.

Detailed statements from participants in the incident, given without opportunity for collaboration, are a means of crystallising the exact nature of the incident.

5. Where appropriate, a meeting should be set up between all parties involved, in order that grievances can be aired and answered, and a way forward established in cases of on-going problems between students.
6. The bully should be confronted with the accusations in a calm atmosphere and be given the opportunity to explain his/her actions. If guilty he/she must be left in no doubt about the unacceptability of his/her behaviour, and parents will be informed where appropriate.

If breaches of the Behaviour Policy have taken place, they will be dealt with appropriately. An agreement, possibly a contract, may be negotiated, whereby the bully agrees that no future abuse of any sort will occur.

If this undertaking is broken, then contact with parents will result.

7. **The victim will need reassurance** after the incident, and may need advice and help in how to avoid being bullied. This might include:
 - (a) Assertiveness - not to retaliate with abuse, but to resist the bully's play for power by being careful not to appear upset, angry or frightened, and not to give in to any demands made.

- (b) Avoiding situations in which the victim is vulnerable. The help of friends may be enlisted so that he/she is not left alone. Suitable spare time activities or safe havens should be encouraged.
 - (c) If the bullying is retribution for past provocation by the victim, the victim must take steps to resolve this situation.
 - (d) Low self-esteem in the victim may be a cause or effect of bullying. Encouragement should be given and positive achievement rewarded so that self-image is improved.
8. **The incident and how it was dealt with should be reported to the relevant Form Tutor(s) and Head(s) of Year** at the earliest opportunity. It is best to do so in person, but a copy of the statement and any other written material should also be provided. The relevant Head of Key Stage should be informed.
 9. The bully is to be told that the record of the incident will be placed on file and that if there is a further incident, parents will be involved.
 10. **The parents of the victim need to be reassured that the school is addressing the problem.** It might be appropriate to invite the parents of both parties into school to discuss the matter further.
 11. **If the bullying behaviour persists, students and parents will be brought before the Headmaster,** who will take appropriate further action, which will be part of the Social Inclusion Programme.
 12. Persistent bullying is a serious breach of discipline which could result in **permanent exclusion from the school.**

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH RACIST INCIDENTS

These procedures should be read in conjunction with the Single Equality Scheme, which is a separate policy.

Prevention

Students are actively encouraged to report all incidents involving racism. Parmiter's School will actively work towards the prevention of racist incidents through:

- The utilisation of the Single Equality Scheme.
- The delivery of assemblies.
- The inclusion of racist issues and concerns in the delivery of Life Skills.
- The School Congress and the Diversity Focus Group.
- The delivery of a curriculum which recognises the diverse community at Parmiter's School.

Success criteria

Success will be achieved when:

- All incidents of a racist nature are reported and investigated consistently and thoroughly.

- Members of the school community have a shared perception of what is racism and the consequences of being involved in a racist incident.
- Procedures for dealing with racial incidents are recognised as fair and appropriate by students and their parents/carers and other agencies.
- The school is an inclusive environment for all.
- The number of racist incidents declines over time.

Active responses

- It is important that there is a response to each racist incident - this means recording of information and being accountable for all actions. The Herts CC pro-forma should be used, as well as logging on SIMS.
- As soon as possible both the alleged victim and perpetrator need to be interviewed to establish the facts. It is likely that additional witness statements will be needed.
- Reinforce expectations held in the school.
- Emphasise that the school has procedures and that there will be appropriate follow-up.
- Staff must record all actions and ensure that notes are filed.
- Parent/carers will be informed of the incident and reminded of the procedures that follow.
- After investigation, action will be taken in line with the Behaviour Policy, Single Equality Scheme and structure of school discipline. Information will be disseminated through the pastoral structure to the necessary individuals: Heads of Key Stage/ Deputy Headteachers/ Heads of Year, Form Tutors.
- Allegations made against staff involving racism must be passed onto SLT for investigation.

Referral Routes

Incident > Head of Year > Heads of Key Stage > Deputy Headteacher > Headmaster.

Support processes

- Treat all claims seriously.
- Make certain that the victim is fully informed of the procedure and the subsequent chain of events.
- Explain the action that will be taken and state the School's position regarding racism and racist behaviour.
- Talk through the incident. All involved must be interviewed.
- Establish counselling and support as appropriate.

Recording events

- All incidents where there is a perception that racism is involved must be recorded and reported.
- Log incidents and subsequent procedures used, relating to the sanctions imposed.
- Remember that records may be required by other professionals - e.g., CSF, Police.
- Any example of racism perpetrated by a member of staff will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter and will be investigated by the appropriate committee of the Governing Body.
- Serious incidents should be reported to Governors by the Headmaster - e.g. physical violence, repeated harassment, and links with racist groups. The Headmaster will also inform Herts CC as appropriate.

Failure to respond appropriately may be seen as condoning the incident.