

Potter's College

Anti-bullying policy

This school does not tolerate bullying. It has a clear responsibility to help staff and pupils deal with bullying should it occur and to prevent it. Learning takes place most effectively when students feel valued by their teachers, their peers and their family. Much emphasis is placed on the personal responsibility of each member of the school community, staff and students, for ensuring that relationships between staff and students and between students themselves are positive and caring.

The school aims to prevent bullying of all forms within the school community. In this instance, the objective is to provide awareness and training for all (pupils and staff) from the corrosive effects of bullying and the measures that can be taken to prevent this from happening in the first place. We aim to ensure that where bullying does occur, its incidence remains comparatively low. In this respect, our objectives are to become aware of any problems quickly and provide a swift and robust outcome with suitable support (and, if necessary, training) for all concerned to prevent reoccurrence.

RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of all staff to be alert to possible harassment of students, to deal with incidents of bullying as the highest priority and to follow the principles and procedures in this policy when following up cases of bullying. Other specific responsibilities are stated below:

- The Governors will (evaluate and review) the anti-bullying policy, and will ensure that it is non-discriminatory;
- The Headmaster and Deputy Heads will review and amend the policy, using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in the previous year to improve procedures and taking account of new legislation and government guidance. The school will keep a record of all reported incidents and Principals will review this data periodically to ensure an appropriate response to any patterns or trends;
- The Deputy Head (Development) will ensure that staff receive regular training updates;
- The Pastoral Teams will follow up reports of bullying:

Form Tutor Minor = incidents and friendship issues

Head of Year = More serious incidents

Deputy Heads = Very serious incidents

Headmaster & Principals = Cases that could lead to exclusion;

- In all cases, Form Tutors, the Head of Year, Nurse, Vice-Principals, Principals and Headmaster should be informed.

The PSHE Co-ordinator will provide up-to-date resources to Heads of Year on bullying issues, and will ensure that there are Life Skills sessions on the nature of bullying and how to deal with harassment within the programme at appropriate stages of student development.

Subject teachers will ensure that:

- They are alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and that they inform the Form Tutor of such observations;
- They select working groups and pairs so that students have the opportunity to work with a variety of peers, not only friendship groups, throughout the year;
- And the composition of groups shows sensitivity to those who have been the targets of bullying. School Nurses, often the first people to receive reports of bullying, will offer emotional support to the targets of bullying, and will alert the relevant Head of Year and Form Tutor.

Confidential boxes are available near the medical room, near the Reception and near the canteen.

Parents are asked, via the Parent Guidance published on the school's website, to inform the Form Tutor or Head of Year if they are concerned that their child might be being bullied.

Students are asked, either directly or via the Student Planner or email, to tell a member of staff immediately if they are bullied or if they witness bullying of any other pupil.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

We have the following preventative measures in place in order to ensure that bullying does not become a problem:

- All new pupils are briefed thoroughly on the school's expected standards of behaviour. They are told what to do if they encounter bullying
- All new members of staff are given guidance on the school's anti-bullying policy and on how to react to allegations of bullying
- We use assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying. Our PSHE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. The programme emphasises the message about community involvement and taking care of each other
- Standards of behaviour and issues surrounding bullying are regularly discussed by the School Councils. Pupil attitudes to their treatment in school and their relationships with each other are surveyed as appropriate.
- Some lessons, particularly R&P, English and Drama, highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing social skills;

- All our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place in line with our policy on whistle-blowing;
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents. Records of any incidents are kept by Heads of Year and reviewed regularly by the Principals in order that patterns of behaviour can be identified and monitored;
- Our pastoral team gives support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both targets of bullying and bullies
- The school counsellor is an important part of our pastoral support service, providing specialist skills of assessment and counselling. Confidential advice and counselling support is available;
- We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the school, involving our pupils;
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures;

Cyber-bullying – Preventative Measures

In addition to the preventative measures described above, the school:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its policy for the safe use of the internet. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Support Department monitors pupils' use;
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet;
- Issues all pupils with their own personal school email address;
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyber-bullying in the PSHE and tutorial programmes;
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe;
- And bans the use of cameras on mobile phones in school without teacher permission.

SIGNS OF BULLYING

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to school;
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet;
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others;
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged;
- Change to established habits (eg giving up music lessons or DT extra-curricular club)

- Diminished levels of self-confidence;
- Frequent visits to the School Nurse with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches;
- Unexplained cuts and bruises;
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class;
- Choosing the company of adults;
- Talking of suicide or running away.

Please find Anti-Bullying Policy Guidance for Pupils and Parents for more information.

Author: Headmaster

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