

THE SCHOOL'S POLICY ON BULLYING



POLICY STATEMENT (AIMS AND OBJECTIVES)

At Pennthorpe we believe that considerate behaviour is essential if we are to create a good social and learning environment. It is our conviction that everyone has a right to be treated with respect and we expect members of our community from the youngest pupils in the Early Years to our staff themselves, to show concern for one another and treat each other with consideration for feelings, individuality and personality. The actions of a bully within our community would destroy this harmony and so it is our firm resolve to provide a policy which will swiftly and effectively deal with the problem should it arise.

DEFINITION

Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to embarrass, hurt, threaten or frighten someone else. All bullying is aggressive, whether it be physical, verbal or psychological, although the aggression may be subtle (for example in bullying by exclusion). Staff should also be alert to possible instances of: **racial, cultural, religious, sexual, sexist, homophobic** and **cyber bullying** or any discriminatory behaviour exhibited in respect of **disability** or **special educational needs**. In deciding whether or not an action can be termed bullying, one needs to judge the effect on the "victim". Should a person feel threatened or frightened to such an extent that the quality of life has suffered, then bullying has taken place. It should always be recognised that extreme cases of bullying can lead to psychological damage and that criminal laws exist against harassment and threatening behaviour. Bullying is a very serious issue and has no place in the Pennthorpe community.

CHILD INVOLVEMENT

The policy of the School involves the instruction of all pupils in the codes of Christian, moral and ethical behaviour, this being achieved through our Chapel Services, Form Tutor periods, Circle Time and PSHE curriculum. Other occasional talks and lectures, based on the experiences of older members of the community or our local police liaison officer also serve this purpose. Within the context of this instruction children are made aware that such anti-social behaviour cannot be tolerated and is not normal in a happy, well-balanced community.

When children encounter behaviour which they find uncomfortable, either involving themselves, their friends or others, they are encouraged to take the following action rather than feeling unhappy or frightened. They are reassured that the taking of such action will result in a swift improvement and eventual solution to their situation, not in a worsening of the bullying as is so often feared:

- 🕒 **Tell any member of staff.** There is no need to feel guilty. Sharing a confidence sometimes takes courage, but will often save great unhappiness. It doesn't matter who they choose to tell but they might typically choose to tell their form tutor,

- 🕒 assistant tutor, class teacher or classroom assistant, a designated mentor or Head of Year. Pupils should also feel able to approach the Deputy Headmaster or Head of Pre Prep or Middle School directly.
- 🕒 **Tell their parents.**
- 🕒 **Tell a friend** and discuss strategies.
- 🕒 In the Prep School, if they feel they cannot talk about the problem, they are encouraged to write down their thoughts and pass them to an adult or drop them in the *"Tissues and Issues"* box in the Clock Block foyer.
- 🕒 If they want to talk about the problem to someone outside the school to ask to see the **local clergy** who visit the school regularly or to contact **Childline** (08001111).

Pupils are also encouraged to do the following things to help foster a culture that discourages bullying:

- 🕒 **Celebrate the efforts and achievements of others**
- 🕒 **Hold and promote positive attitudes**
- 🕒 **Share problems and air complaints**
- 🕒 **Understand it is a shared responsibility to make playtimes, meals and shared spaces pleasant and sociable.**
- 🕒 **Stand up for each other and report situations or behaviours that they feel are hurtful or negative.**

Prefects and other senior pupils hold a special responsibility to support others and keep an eye out for bullying or unpleasant behaviour. Training will be provided to all our Year 8 pupils at the start of the school year to help them to recognise, report and monitor incidences of bullying and support victims or dissuade aggressors.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

It is the School's policy to work closely with parents to ensure the happiness and development of all our children. Should a parent feel anxiety concerning the happiness or well being of their child or other children, we suggest that they:-

- 🕒 **Notify the Form Tutor or Head of Year. The Head of the Pre Prep or Middle Schools, the Deputy Headmaster, the Headmaster or Headmaster's wife, or any other member of staff.**
- 🕒 **Encourage their child to talk to someone they trust in school.**
- 🕒 **Reassure their child that talking about the problem and working with the School will improve the situation.**

We encourage parents to make their contact with the school at an early stage, as this is so much better for both the victim and the aggressor, thus often preventing a more serious situation.

STAFF INVOLVEMENT

Intrinsic in the life of Pennthorpe is the assumption that staff should by their example of care and concern for others, provide a positive role model to pupils and colleagues.

Staff are encouraged never to trivialise or overlook possible bullying incidents. Staff at Pennthorpe should aim to apply the **5 Rs** below in the case of any bullying incident:

REASSURE: Any incident of bullying should be acted upon immediately in the first instance to protect the victim from any repetition. Pupils should feel supported and reassured that their problem is being dealt with.

REPORT: Incidents should then be recorded on an incident form and handed to the Head of Year (or Head of Pre Prep or Middle School) who will then notify the Deputy Headmaster or Headmaster and other appropriate members of staff who are pastorally involved with aggressor or victim.

RECORD: Records of all incidents should be kept in the Head of Year or Head of Middle School's incident file or in the Head of Pre Prep's records so that patterns can be established. Any more serious incidents in the Prep School, especially those with disciplinary implications, will be kept in the Deputy Headmaster's incident book.

REACT: All problems should be addressed at the earliest possible opportunity

Therefore every effort is made to supervise areas where bullying could take place and at times when it is most likely to occur.

REVIEW: It is the responsibility of the Head of Year in the Prep School and Class teachers in the Pre Prep to ensure that all cases are followed up and that progress is monitored. Ongoing situations should be discussed at Moot meetings in the Prep School and staff meeting in the Pre Prep or referred to the Head of Pre Prep, Deputy Headmaster or Headmaster.

Staff also have a responsibility to be a part of the ongoing development of a whole school response to bullying. Relevant **training** will be provided as part of the school's programme of INSET. Every effort should be made to ensure **supervision** in vulnerable areas where bullying may be more likely to occur:

- 🕒 **Playground duties should be proactive rather than reactive**
- 🕒 **Changing rooms should never be unsupervised**
- 🕒 **Meals should be well supervised and in the Prep School staff should aim to sit with the pupils whenever possible**
- 🕒 **Vigilance should be shown while pupils are using school transport**
- 🕒 **Behaviour in corridors and queues should be closely monitored**

STRATEGIES

Strategies planned for dealing with serious individual cases of bullying must be discussed and agreed with the Headmaster and the Head of the Pre Prep School or the Deputy Head or Head of Middle School as appropriate. Strategies can and will vary according to circumstances and those involved. At Pennthorpe we do not believe that a single 'off the shelf' strategy can effectively address all cases of bullying in its varied forms.

SANCTIONS

It should be clear that our primary aim is to end the bullying and not simply to punish the perpetrator however usually some sanction will be needed. Most sanctions will be aligned to the school's standard "Behaviour Policy":

- 🕒 Minutes and warnings might be used in minor cases
- 🕒 A minus would be the standard first response to a clearer cut bullying incident.
- 🕒 In severe cases suspension or exclusion may be an unfortunate but necessary sanction.

MONITORING

All strategies must include provision for long-term monitoring of the situation to ensure that the 'cure' is permanent, must include parental involvement and must involve working with both the victim(s) and the aggressor(s) who needs our love and care, as much as the victim. We would wish to involve parents at an early stage, thus enabling some counselling to be provided. This can be undertaken within the school or, with the parents' approval, it is sometimes necessary to involve further professional specialist help.

THE ROLE OF GOVERNORS

The Governing body's role is to support the Headmaster and staff in the administering of this policy. They will ensure that all aspects of the policy are being enforced and that all incidences of bullying are taken seriously and dealt with appropriately. The governing body will respond rapidly to any parental complaint and will liaise with the Headmaster wherever issues arise.

CONCLUSION

It is expected that children, parents and staff will combine to make this policy work. Its successful implementation will ensure a happy and productive environment in which to work and play and the school will be recognised as a caring community where everybody strives to give positive esteem to all.

APPENDIX: STAFF HANDBOOK:

CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is a new and potentially insidious new trend in bullying.

WHAT IS IT?

Cyberbullying is when one person or a group of people aim to threaten, tease or embarrass someone else by using a mobile phone, the internet or other technologies. It can take the following forms:

- 📧 Text messaging
- 📷 Mobile phone pictures/video clips
- 📞 Mobile phone calls
- ✉ Emails
- 💬 Chat rooms
- 💬 Instant messaging
- 🌐 Websites (blogs, personal websites, social networking sites etc)

If any member of staff becomes aware of what they suspect to be a case of cyberbullying, it should be treated just as seriously as any of the other more established forms of bullying. Victims should be encouraged to save messages that they are concerned about and to show them to a member of staff. Parents of the victim(s) and perpetrator(s) may well need to be notified. If such bullying has been carried out by one or more pupils on a persistent basis, it needs to be dealt with very firmly.

APPENDIX: STAFF HANDBOOK:

'BEATING THE BULLY' LEAFLET

In the Pre Prep, a display board in a communal area is dedicated to "Friendship Matters". Here we promote the attributes of a good friend. Emphasis is placed on making friends and how to be a good friend.

In the Prep School, a document for the children entitled 'Beating the Bully' is posted up in prominent positions around the Prep school. Pupils may also obtain a copy to keep or take home, either by asking at the school office, or by helping themselves from a supply pinned in a pocket on a noticeboard in the Sports Hall and Clock Block lobby areas.

A copy of the text for the Senior School version of this document is pasted below:

At Pennthorpe we believe that behaving considerately towards one another is essential for a happy school.

- Everyone has a right to be treated with respect by everyone else.
- We expect all members of our school to show concern for one another and treat each other with consideration, sensitivity and tolerance.

What is bullying?

Bullying is the deliberate desire to hurt, threaten, frighten or exclude someone else, not just once, but repeatedly, over a period of days or weeks.

It may be physical (e.g. kicking), verbal (e.g. teasing), or psychological (e.g. excluding someone from games). Cyber bullying is also something we are taught about in our school. Often people are bullied simply because they are different.

If a person feels threatened or frightened to such an extent that they no longer feel safe or happy at school, then bullying has taken place and it is up to all of us to stop it.

Where might bullying take place?

Absolutely anywhere, although the one thing you can be pretty certain of is that the bully won't do it when there's an adult watching.

Bullying can happen on the playground, in the changing rooms or cloakrooms, in the corridors between lessons, in the lunch queue or online. It can happen wherever bullies believe they can get away with it.

If we all keep our eyes open and report unkind behaviour we have a better chance of making our school a safer, happier place.

What do we do to stop it from happening?

As a school, we make it absolutely clear that bullying is wrong.

The Pennthorpe community is one that is guided by Christian principles of tolerance, sensitivity and fair play. The unfairness of bullying is something we talk about often, in Chapel, in Form Periods and in PS lessons.

Nobody at Pennthorpe can claim they didn't know that bullying is wrong and everyone knows they have a responsibility to stand up against it.

Stopping bullying is something everyone can play a part in.

What do I do if I'm being bullied?

TALK TO SOMEONE ABOUT IT

Sometimes, by ignoring the bully, or by refusing to show your fear or your distress, or perhaps even by confronting the bully and telling him or her what you think, you may be able to stop it yourself. But, even if you think you might be able to handle the situation yourself, it's **always** best to talk it over with someone you can trust first.

At school you can talk to your Form Tutor, Assistant Tutor, Head of Year or any other member of staff. You might talk to a prefect, or even just discuss it with a friend. At home, you could talk to your parents or to your brother or sister. Just talking about it, discussing strategies to deal with it, can be a huge help.

If you don't feel you can talk about it, you could always write your experiences down on paper and post it into the 'Tissues and Issues' box. If you wanted to talk to someone outside of school and family, you can always contact **Childline on 08001111**.

The important thing is to let someone else know what you're going through.

But won't it make things worse if I tell?

That's what victims of bullying always fear, and that's why many bullies are allowed to get away with it for far too long. Their victims are frightened to tell because they fear it will make things even worse. Of course, it's exactly what bullies want their victims to think, indeed they rely on it.

So don't let anyone, be they threatening bully or well-meaning friend, persuade you to keep quiet about being bullied. People may tell you '*You'll only make it worse if you tell*', but this might be the worst advice you could receive.

By talking to someone about it, particularly by talking to an **adult** about it, you'll be taking the first major step towards making it much better, and eventually stopping it altogether.

Be brave and speak up. Never suffer in silence.

Whose responsibility is it to stop bullying from happening at Pennthorpe?

It's everybody's responsibility: **staff, parents** and **pupils**. Whether we ourselves are being bullied or we see someone else becoming a victim, we know we must be brave enough to act.

If we all make it absolutely clear by what we say and by what we do that we won't put up with bullying, then we can stop it happening.

Remember, bullying is wrong. Don't put up with it!