

# Portland School

## Anti-Bullying Policy – 23/24



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## **Portland School Anti-bullying Policy**

### **Policy Statement**

At Portland School we believe that all students have the right to the best possible education to enable them to reach their potential. We aim to create an environment where all students and staff feel safe, valued and are free from any form of harm. We believe that bullying is wrong. As a school community we will do all we can to prevent bullying through effective teaching and learning and through the development of a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.

Bullying is regarded as “the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or a group by another person or a group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face to face or online”. (Anti-bullying alliance – bullying definition).

Bullying behaviour can be:

- Physical – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc.
- Verbal - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumors, threats, teasing, belittling.
- Emotional – isolating others, tormenting, hiding books, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation and coercion.
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc.
- Online /cyber – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion
- Indirect - Can include the exploitation of individuals.

It is commonly believed that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online. This is a view shared by the Portland School community.

## **Aims and Objectives.**

At Portland school we believe that:

Bullying is wrong and damages individual pupils. We therefore do all we can to prevent it, by developing a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.

We aim, as a school, to produce a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety.

This policy aims to produce a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur, including cyber-bullying.

We aim to make all those connected with the school aware of our opposition to bullying, and we make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the eradication of bullying in our school.

Every member of the school community is entitled to expect equality of protection from bullying as well as protection and support from school policies and procedures designed to ensure that the school remains a safe environment to teach and learn.

### **Portland School will:**

Support pupils with managing relationship conflict.

Promote a positive, supportive, behaviour approach and behaviour strategies.

Discuss responses to bullying with staff and students including how they can respond to verbal, physical and online attacks.

Ensure that the expectations on pupils, staff and parents, if they witness bullying behaviour, are clear and that the school protocols are followed.

Support will be given to help the pupil/s displaying bullying behaviour to stop and change in the long term.

Support will be given to those experiencing bullying with attention to the mental health impact of bullying.

Staff support and training will be given as necessary to ensure that all understand what bullying is and what this can look like.

PSHE sessions will be used to raise awareness of what constitutes bullying and the impact it can have on those involved. Reasons for bullying and the impact of this will be explored. Through PSHE lessons, discussions relating to the differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference will be explored. Students will be taught that that using any prejudice-based language is unacceptable.

In school we use the acronym TIIP - Targeted, Intentional, Imbalance of power and Persistent. This enables us to clearly establish if bullying has occurred and what level of support is required. Creating a strong culture and awareness for both staff and students.

Success will be celebrated, and praise given to develop a positive and supportive ethos. Staff and students will experience and be part of this culture.

## **Procedures**

Students must be empowered to be able to tell an adult or a peer that they are being bullied. It is very important that this disclosure is acted upon and dealt with quickly and in an appropriate manner.

- The incident must be recorded using the school MyConcern system – this must happen the same school day as the incident being reported/discovered.
- SLT must be informed of the incident on the same day as the incident is discovered/reported.
- The victim of the bullying, as well as the student reporting the incident if this is different, will always be listened to, their concerns acted upon and support put in place.
- This support may take the form of a key person to talk to, referral to the Family Support team, restorative justice.
- There should be a follow up session with the student who has experienced bullying after a short period of time and then the half term following the incident to see if the bullying has restarted.

Those reported to have bullied will –

- Be spoken to by the Head teacher or SLT to help gain an understanding as to what has happened.
- Witness statements may need to be taken.
- Have appropriate action taken if bullying is proved.
- Parent/Carer will be contacted.

Action should take the form of one or more of the following –

- Discussions with Head teacher/SLT or other significant adult about the incident.
- Parents of all parties will be contacted and discussions will take place related to the incident.
- Restorative Justice
- Work with the peer support/mediation group.
- Referral to the Family Support team
- Intervention by appropriate outside agency.
- Exclusion or sanction applied on an individual basis at the discretion of the Head teacher.

Data will be monitored, and the records used to report levels of bullying annually in accordance with Stoke-on-Trent LA practice and The Shaw Education Trust.

## **Response to bullying.**

Pupils who experience bullying will be supported in a way that is suitable to their needs, understanding and personal circumstances. Support may be given by the class team, Family support team, the Designated Safeguarding lead or members of SLT. Parents will always be engaged in the whole process including

support required. Formal counselling, or referring to local authority children's services, completing a Common Assessment Framework or referring to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) may be required. Schools will ensure they make appropriate provision for a child's short term needs, including setting out what actions they are taking when bullying has had a serious impact on a child's ability to learn.

Any person considered to be demonstrating bullying behaviour will be dealt with seriously. It is the responsibility of the school to demonstrate clearly that their behaviour is wrong. It is also important to consider the motivations behind bullying behaviour and whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is the case the child engaging in bullying may need support themselves.

It is important that schools take measures to prevent and tackle bullying among pupils but it is equally important that schools make it clear that bullying of staff, whether by pupils, parents or colleagues, is unacceptable. Bullying shown towards staff should be responded to in the same way as incidents of bullying towards students. This must be reported, recorded and acted upon.

### **Legislation links.**

All offensive, threatening, violent and abusive language and behaviour is always unacceptable, whatever your role. This includes any negative language or behavior in relation to / referring to a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender), sexual orientation.

Although bullying in itself 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 Communications Act 1988, any person who sends 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, is guilty of an offence.

School staff members have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises. Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 say that a school's disciplinary powers can be used to address pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff, but only if it would be reasonable for the school to regulate pupils' behaviour in those circumstances. This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village center. Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The head teacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour

coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehavior could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

This Policy is written with due regard to fulfilling our statutory responsibilities as laid out in the: Education Act 2002, Education Inspections Act 2006, Education Act 2011, Equality Act 2010 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 and subsequent updates.