

# Presfield High School & Specialist College



## Anti-Bullying Policy

Date ratified: **24th March 2023**

Date for review: **24th March 2024**

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Cooper', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

**Chair of Governors**

## **Presfield High School Anti-Bullying Policy**

### **Statement of Intent**

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a *TELLING* school. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

Children with autistic spectrum conditions are vulnerable to bullying because while they look neurotypical, they act differently and it can be difficult for them to speak up or seek help. Many have unique or specific interests on certain topics and may not realise that others don't share their enthusiasm. Some may also have difficulties with eye contact and physical coordination, or have sensory difficulties, such as an under or over sensitivity to certain smells or noises. All this can greatly affect their ability to be accepted by their peer groups and can make them more at risk of being bullied.

Many children with autism may not have a circle of friends around them or may prefer solitary time during breaks, making them easier targets for bullies.

It is therefore vital that staff and pupils working in school are able to identify and support children with the disorder, especially when the child themselves may not realise they are being bullied.

### **What is Bullying?**

There is no legal definition of bullying.

However, it is defined by GOV.UK (March 2016) as behaviour that is:

- repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally
- often aimed at certain groups, eg because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation

Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- Verbal – such as name calling, spreading rumours about someone, using derogatory or offensive language or threatening someone
- Psychological – such as deliberately excluding or ignoring people
- Cyber – such as using text, email or other social media to write or say hurtful things about someone

Bullying can be based on any of the following things:

- Race (racist bullying)
- Religion or belief
- Culture or class
- Gender (sexist bullying)
- Sexual orientation (homophobic or biphobic bullying)
- Gender identity (transphobic bullying)
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) or disability
- Appearance or health conditions
- Related to home or other personal situation

- Related to another vulnerable group of people – [E.G. young carers]

No form of bullying will be tolerated and all incidents will be taken seriously.

Students at Presfield fall into two categories where either they understand how to behave appropriately but choose not to, or demonstrate behaviours that may be socially inappropriate and could be seen as bullying.

We recognise that a lack of social understanding associated with their diagnosis can lead students to fail to properly understand 'socially appropriate' behaviour or properly interpret other people's intentions. This means that our students can get it wrong and act in a way that could be perceived as bullying. Students with ASC may not understand that their behaviour is inappropriate and from their viewpoint may be reasonable. Their lack of empathy and theory of mind may mean that explicit teaching about the feelings and reactions of others is required in order for them to understand and modify their own behaviour.

To support our students understanding between poor social interaction choices and bullying we have adopted the mnemonic **STOP** (Several Times On Purpose) to define actions which constitute bullying.

At Presfield High School we believe that the pupil is paramount in all respects. Approaches to behaviour are entirely dependent on the prevailing ethos of the school and it is therefore critical that the pupil is placed at the centre of all considerations related to behaviour. Because of this, we believe that behaviour support represents an ethically compatible approach to addressing student behaviour within the context of our school.

Our practice in supporting pupil behaviour is governed by the maxim

'Positive approaches to promote positive behaviour'

### **Why is it important to respond to Bullying?**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. Bullying behaviour may occur in an SEN environment, as a result of difficulties in social communication, theory of mind or empathy. Whilst all bullying will be dealt with and considered important we will also work to develop all pupils' skills in these areas.

### **Objectives of this Policy**

All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.

- All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

### **Signs and Symptoms**

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Is frightened of walking to or from school.
- Doesn't want to go on the school / public bus
- Begs to be driven to school.
- Changes their usual routine.
- Is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)

- Begins to truant.
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence.
- Starts stammering.
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away.
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares.
- Feels ill in the morning.
- Begins to do poorly in school work.
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged.
- Has possessions which are damaged or “go missing”.
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully).
- Has dinner or other monies continually “lost”.
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises.
- Comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen).
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable.
- Is bullying other children or siblings.
- Stops eating.
- Is frightened to say what’s wrong.
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above.
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone.
- Is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received.

The signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

### **Bullying outside of school**

Bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated, whether it takes place inside or outside of school. Bullying can take place on the way to and from school, before or after school hours, at the weekends or during the holidays, or in the wider community. The nature of cyber bullying in particular means that it can impact on students’ well-being beyond the school day. Staff, parents and carers, and students must be vigilant to bullying outside of school and report and respond according to their responsibilities as outlined in this policy.

### **Derogatory language**

Derogatory or offensive language is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. This type of language can take any of the forms of bullying listed in our definition of bullying. It will be challenged by staff and recorded and monitored on Arbor and follow up actions and sanctions, if appropriate, will be taken for students and staff found using any such language. Staff are also encouraged to record the casual use of derogatory language on Arbor should restoration work not prevent further use of such throughout the school day.

### **Prejudice-based incidents**

A prejudice-based incident is a one-off incident of unkind or hurtful behaviour that is motivated by a prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views towards a protected characteristic or minority group. It can be targeted towards an individual or group of people and have a significant impact on those targeted. All prejudice-based incidents are taken seriously and recorded and monitored in school, with the Assistant Headteacher reporting incidents to the governing body. This not only ensures that all incidents are dealt with accordingly, but also helps to prevent bullying as it enables targeted anti-bullying interventions.

### **Procedures**

1. Report bullying incidents to staff.
2. In cases of all bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff on Arbor.
3. In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come into a meeting to discuss the problem.

4. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted.
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.

### **Outcomes**

1. The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place.
2. In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered.
3. If possible, the pupils will be reconciled.
4. After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

### **Prevention**

We will use methods for helping children to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- Writing a set of school rules.
- Signing a behaviour contract.
- writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying
- Reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly making up role-plays.
- Having discussions about bullying and why it matters.
- SEAL
- Social skills summaries.

### **HELP ORGANISATIONS:**

Childline	0800 1111
Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)	0808 800 5793
Children's Legal Centre	0845 345 4345
KIDSCAPE Parents Helpline	0845 1 205 204
Parentline Plus	0808 800 2222
Youth Access	020 8772 9900
Bullying Online	<a href="http://www.bullying.co.uk">www.bullying.co.uk</a>
Bullybusters	0800 169 6928
Anti-bullying alliance	<a href="http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/">http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/</a>
Pupilline	<a href="http://www.pupilline.org.uk">www.pupilline.org.uk</a>
NSPCC	<a href="http://www.nspcc.org.uk">www.nspcc.org.uk</a>
NDCS	<a href="http://www.ndcs.org.uk">www.ndcs.org.uk</a>

## **Cyberbullying**

Pupilnet International

[www.pupilnet.com](http://www.pupilnet.com)

Think U Know

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

UK Safer Internet Centre

[www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk)

SEND

DfE: SEND code of practice:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

## **Supporting Documents**

DfE: “Preventing and Tackling Bullying. Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies”, and “Supporting pupil and young people who are bullied: advice for schools” March 2014:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>

DfE: “No health without mental health”:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/no-health-without-mental-health-a-cross-government-outcomes-strategy>