



Anti-Bullying Policy

Reviewed:	September 2025	Next planned review	September 2026
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School Context

The children and young people at Pield Heath House School (PHHS) have a wide-range of additional severe and complex learning needs. As a school community we understand that bullying in this context can have additional subtleties and raise issues that are in themselves complicated to resolve. Not all children and young people at PHHS will recognise bullying behaviour if they experience it or/and may be unable to express or communicate when they experience it and also be able to respond appropriately to instances of bullying behaviours. Equally not all students would recognise that certain behaviours directed towards others may be undesirable or that they might be perceived as bullying. It is vital that a timely and well-planned response to bullying is implemented as this can have a positive affect on lessening the impact of those who experience it.

PHHS is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Students are given every opportunity to express their feelings in the most appropriate form of communication. Our aim is to maximise the protective factors of school by creating an environment of safety that has strong, positive and supportive relationships at its centre.

Defining Bullying Behaviours

The Department for Children, Schools and Families publication *Safe to Learn – Bullying of Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – Embedding Anti-Bullying work in School. (2008)* describe bullying is defined as: “Behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.”

Bullying can take place between an individual or group face to face, indirectly or using a range of cyber bullying methods. It can happen in isolation or in the presence of others.

Bullying may include:

- Physical: hitting, kicking, biting, pushing, damaging property
- Verbal: name-calling, threats, teasing
- Emotional: exclusion, intimidation, coercion
- Indirect: spreading rumours, social manipulation
- Cyberbullying: use of technology (e.g. phones, apps, online platforms) to harm others)

At PHHS, due to pupils’ complex needs, behaviours may not always be intentional, but any repeated behaviour that causes distress, fear or harm will be treated as bullying and responded to accordingly.

People who are victims of bullying frequently, but not exclusively, are bullied as a result of:

- Race, religion or culture.
- Special educational needs or disability.
- Appearance or health conditions.
- Sexual orientation.
- Gender.
- Home circumstance including looked after children and young carers.

Bullying is not an acceptable form of social interaction and where it is found to be occurring, we will take all necessary measures to remove its influence from our school. The children and young people attending PHHS have a diagnosis of SLD and associated needs. Cognitive understanding and communication impairment are strong factors in how/what the children and young people communicate. The cognitive understanding and complex needs of the children and young people at PHHS can result in varying levels of understanding of bullying behaviour; the impact their behaviour may have on others and how to appropriately express their needs and emotions.

As the DfE anti-bullying guidance notes, children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities may not be able to articulate their experiences. Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy, nervous, feigning sickness, refusing to come to school, clinging to adults, refusing to remain in class. It is important that all school staff are alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against any form of bullying.

PHHS recognises that cyberbullying may occur through:

- Mobile phones
- Messaging platforms
- Online games or apps

In line with KCSIE, Cyberbullying incidents will be treated as safeguarding concerns where appropriate. The school will:

- Investigate incidents occurring both in and outside of school where they impact pupils
- Work with parents/carers to manage online safety
- Educate pupils (at an appropriate level) about safe use of technology

It is also possible that a child or young person may display undesirable behaviours towards others through high anxiety levels. These may manifest in potentially harmful behaviours such as kicking, biting, pinching, hitting or throwing objects.

Staff have a duty to be vigilant to these behaviours and the fear/anxiety that the 'target' child may have. Incidents of bullying with or without intent are recorded in the ARBOR Behaviour Recording system. Any incidents of bullying will be reported to a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). It is important that this information must be shared amongst all members of the class team and other members of staff as soon as possible.

Procedure

- If any child/young person feels 'bullied' they should be encouraged/enabled to talk about it freely. After discussion the child/young person should be informed of how and when this situation will be dealt with. The child/young person should be reminded of their right to make a complaint to the safeguarding team.
- It is important to support the child or young person who is the target of the bullying behaviour, particularly as they may have difficulty communicating about their experiences. Opportunities will be created for the student to communicate with adults how they may be feeling through the use of their preferred communication systems (PECs, Signalong, symbol books). Social stories may also support the child's understanding of the situation and associated emotions.
- Support and reassure the child or young person who has been the victim of the bullying or peer on peer incident.
- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of those involved. This includes checking the physical and emotional wellbeing of those involved.
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing interventions will provide targeted support for identified children and young people. The school has a Thrive practitioner to support children in 1:1 sessions, in class.
- Parents and Carers will be informed of the incidents and the steps that the school will be putting into place to support all children involved.
- Following an investigation into the incident detailed observations will be made of the outcomes of the behaviours and links made to establishing possible functions. This information will then be used to identify appropriate strategies to support the development of desirable behaviours for any peer on peer or bullying incidents in line with the PBS framework.
- Positive Behaviour Support strategies will be under constant informal review within class teams.

- Monitoring information will be reported to school governors twice a year.
- A debrief will be provided to all those involved and there will be an opportunity for reflection.
- Whole school monitoring will consider what the incidents have taught us, if there are any training requirements as a result of the analysis and whether the policies and procedures need refreshing