



Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Introduction

All minors and young people have the right to go about their daily lives without the fear of being threatened, assaulted or harassed. No one should underestimate the impact that bullying can have on a person's life. It can cause high levels of distress, affecting young people's well-being, behaviour, academic and social development right through into adulthood.

At PLUS Junior Centres, we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere free from oppression and abuse.

Bullying is an anti-social behaviour and affects everyone. All types of bullying are unacceptable at PLUS Junior Centres and **will not** be tolerated. When bullying behaviour is brought to our attention, prompt and effective action will be taken.

2. What Is Bullying?

"Bullying behaviour abuses an imbalance of power to repeatedly and intentionally cause emotional or physical harm to another person or group of people. Isolated instances of hurtful behaviour, teasing or arguments between individuals would not be seen as bullying" (Torfaen definition 2008).

Bullying generally takes one of four forms:

- **Indirect** being unfriendly, spreading rumours, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding bags or books).
- **Physical** pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, slapping or any form of violence.
- **Verbal** name-calling, teasing, threats, sarcasm.
- **Cyber** All areas of internet misuse, such as nasty and/or threatening emails, misuse of blogs, gaming websites, internet chat rooms and instant messaging. Mobile threats by text messaging & calls. Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities.

Although not an exhaustive list, common examples of bullying include:

- Racial bullying
- Homophobic bullying
- Bullying based on disability, ability, gender, appearance or circumstance

3. Purpose of this Policy

All staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff, students, group leaders, residential accommodation staff and host families need to understand what bullying is and what the policy details as well as the procedure to report such incidents. Students should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported and bullying will not be tolerated at PLUS Centres. The purpose of the Anti-bullying policy is to highlight PLUS' aims to adopt the highest possible standards and to take all reasonable steps in relation to the safety and welfare of all students.

4. Signs and Symptoms

Many minors do not speak out when being bullied and may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Staff and Adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a child:

- doesn't want to go on excursions;
- doesn't want to participate in any social activity;
- is unwilling to go to lessons (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;
- uses excuses to miss school (headache, stomach ache etc);
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing;"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully);
- has unexplained cuts or bruises or shows signs of being in a fight;
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable;
- is bullying other minors or students;
- changes their eating habits (stops eating or over eats);
- goes to bed earlier than usual;
- is unable to sleep;
- is frightened to say what's wrong;
- gives unlikely excuses for any of the above;
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone;
- is nervous and jumpy when a text message or email is received;

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

5. Procedure

5.1 What to look for:

5.1.1 Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in study patterns, lacking concentration.

5.1.2 Members of staff, host families and residential accommodation staff must be alert to the signs of bullying; legal responsibilities are known and should act promptly and firmly against it, in accordance with the policy. Surveys have shown that in the vast majority of bullying incidents, most people knew that what was going on was wrong. Sometimes

people, either through lethargy, peer group pressure, or tacit support for what is going on fail to take action.

5.2 If you are the victim of bullying you should do the following:

- I. If you feel able to, confront the bully by verbally making him/her aware that you think that what he/she is doing is wrong.
- II. Share your feelings with someone else
- III. If possible talk to a member of Staff, your teacher or the Campus Manager about the incident.

5.3 If a Student witnesses bullying behaviour the following should be done:

- I. Support the victim by offering your friendship and make it clear that in your opinion what is happening to them is wrong.
- II. Encourage them to speak out by confronting the bully, or with their permission, confront the bully yourself.
- III. Accompany the victim to a trusted adult or Campus Manager (usually the Safeguarding Lead).

5.4 If a Staff member witnesses bullying or an incident is reported the following steps should be taken when dealing with incidents:

- Reassure and support the minor(s) involved.
- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached.
- A clear and precise account of the incident will be recorded and given to the Campus Manager.
- The Campus Manager will interview all concerned and will record the incident.
- Teachers will be kept informed.
- Parents, host families, residential accommodation staff will be kept informed.
- Punitive measures will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned and the Senior Management Team at HO
- If considered necessary and appropriate by the Senior Management Team, police will be consulted.

6. Support

6.1 Minors who have been bullied must be supported by the School and staff will be expected to offer the following:

- An immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a teacher or a member of staff of their choice.
- Reassurance to the minor.
- Continuous support.
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence.

6.2 Minors who have bullied will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened.
- Discovering why the student became involved.
- Establishing the wrong doing and the need to change.
- Informing parents or guardians to help change the attitude and behaviour of the child.

7. Appropriate Action

If the Campus Manager decides it is appropriate, the following sanctions may be applied:

7.1 Official warnings to cease offending- the School may deem following review of the case incident and the fact that there has been no previous offending that an official warning is sufficient with a formal warning to cease offending. The Campus Manager will speak to the students involved and may contact the parents (through their Group Leader), host families or legal guardians giving details of the offence.

7.2 Suspension- this is at the Campus Managers' discretion.

7.3 Exclusion- this is at the Campus Managers' discretion.

Within the curriculum the School will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying through induction, subject areas, as appropriate, in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour.

8. Prevention

At PLUS Centres we use a variety of methods to support minors in preventing and understanding the consequences of bullying through induction, curriculum and on-going activities. The ethos and working philosophy of PLUS Centres means that all staff actively encourage minors to have respect for each other and for other people's property. Good and kind/polite behaviour is regularly acknowledged.

Staff will discuss bullying, this will inform minors that we are serious about dealing with bullying and leads to open conversations and increased confidence in minors to want to discuss bullying and report any incidents and concerns about other students' behaviour.

Staff will reinforce expectations of behaviour; supporting every child in our schools. Staff must be careful not to highlight differences of minors or an individual student, even if this is done in jest. This gives other children advocacy to use this difference to begin calling names or teasing.

Staff must be vigilant regarding groups of friends together. Friendship groups may bring about the imbalance of power and must be led towards welcoming others to join them and not excluding others from their group.

Staff must reinforce a general message that minors do not have to be friends with everyone else, but they must be respectful of everyone else's feelings and be kind to each other.

In addition to this we will use some or all of the following to help raise awareness of and prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- Writing and implementing a set of school rules
- Signing a behaviour contract
- Having regular discussions about bullying and why it matters
- Setting up and sustaining a Student Support Scheme

9. Monitoring, evaluation and review

9.1 The Designated Safeguarding Panel for PLUS and the Senior Management Team are responsible for reviewing the Anti-Bullying Policy on an annual basis in light of new recommendations and guidance in the area. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout all our centres.

10. Further Information

The Anti- bullying Policy should be read in conjunction with the following School policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- E- Safety Policy