



PRIOR'S FIELD SCHOOL

PREVENTION OF BULLYING POLICY

This policy has been drawn up with reference to the DFE guidance: "Preventing and Tackling Bullying", last updated July 2017 and NSPCC accessed 1 October 2025

1) Aims & Objectives

- a) The aims of our prevention of bullying policy are:
 - i) To clarify for girls and staff that bullying is always unacceptable and our response to it will always be robust and prompt.
 - ii) To indicate all to whom the anti-bullying policy applies within the Prior's Field Community, including staff. Further information specifically for staff can be found in **Appendix 3**.
 - iii) To prevent, de-escalate and or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour.
 - iv) To react speedily, reasonably and consistently to bullying incidents.
 - v) To apply clear disciplinary sanctions and support to the bullies to ensure their behaviour stops and is not repeated.
 - vi) To provide support, security and reassurance to the pupil who has experienced bullying.
- b) Any complaint of bullying will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly. This includes cyber-bullying (see definition) even if taken place outside of school.
- c) However, the school cannot be held responsible for bullying which takes place outside of school's jurisdiction. Some bullying incidents may need to be handled according to Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures and Child on Child Abuse Policy. If appropriate, Children's Services and/or the police will be contacted.
- d) It is the school's fundamental belief that every student has the right to feel safe, happy and protected and pursue her education free from adverse interference from others. We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all pupils in which each pupil can reach her potential in all areas, so gaining self-esteem and being uniquely valued by others. This means respecting each other's space, privacy and differences, treating everyone with kindness and sensitivity and offering support and encouragement to each other.
- e) This policy also reflects the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools and has regard to the Equality Act 2010, The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations

2023 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006. It should be read in conjunction with the school's Behaviour and Exclusions policies, the Pupil Acceptable Use of ICT Code, the Safeguarding (Child Protection) policy and the Equal Opportunities policy. The school recognises that some behaviour may fall under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, The Public Order Act 1986, KCSIE 2025. The school will involve the police if it believes this is the most appropriate action.

2) Definition of Bullying

- a) As per NSPCC published definition "Bullying can take different forms. It could include:
- i) physical bullying: hitting, slapping or pushing someone
 - ii) verbal bullying: name calling, gossiping or threatening someone
 - iii) non-verbal abuse: hand signs or text messages
 - iv) emotional abuse: threatening, intimidating or humiliating someone
 - v) exclusion: ignoring or isolating someone
 - vi) undermining, constant criticism or spreading rumours
 - vii) controlling or manipulative behaviour
 - viii) making silent, hoax or abusive calls.

The following types of bullying are also hate crimes:

- ix) racial, sexual, transphobic or homophobic bullying
 - x) bullying someone because they have a disability".
- b) "Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place online. Unlike bullying offline, online bullying can follow the child wherever they go, via social networks, gaming and mobile phone. A person can be bullied online and offline at the same time.

Cyberbullying can include:

- i) sending threatening or abusive text messages
- ii) creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
- iii) trolling – the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- iv) excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups
- v) shaming someone online
- vi) setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- vii) encouraging young people to self-harm
- viii) voting for or against someone in an abusive poll

- ix) creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name
- x) sending explicit messages, also known as sexting
- xi) pressuring children into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual conversations.”

3) Who's at risk

Any child can be bullied for any reason. If a child is seen as different in some way or seen as an easy target they can be more at risk. This might be because of their:

- a) race or ethnic background
- b) gender
- c) sexual orientation.

Or it could be because they:

- d) appear anxious or have low self-esteem
- e) lack assertiveness
- f) are shy or introverted.
- g) Popular or successful children are also bullied, sometimes because others are jealous of them. Sometimes a child's family circumstance or home life can be a reason for someone bullying them.
- h) Disabled children can experience bullying because they seem an easy target and less able to defend themselves.
- i) Adopted and Young Carers are students about whom all should also be aware are susceptible to bullying.
- j) Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour such as (but not limited to):
 - i) Displaying a change in behaviour, e.g. becoming shy, nervous or withdrawn, or showing uncharacteristic outbursts of emotion
 - ii) Feigning illness and/or taking unusual absences
 - iii) Changing their work pattern and/or having a lack of concentration
 - iv) Displaying a change in eating habits (such as under- or over-eating)
 - v) Clinging to adults
 - vi) Arriving home with possessions missing or damaged
 - vii) Refusing to say what is wrong
 - viii) Demonstrating anxiety about checking computer messages, emails or texts
 - ix) Self-harming

- x) Giving improbable excuses for any of the above situations

4) Preemptive/ Proactive Measures

- a) Centrally, our approach to combat bullying in Prior's Field is to be pre-emptive. By fostering an atmosphere of mutual trust, support and ongoing encouragement and of full and open communication at all levels, we aim to anticipate possible problem areas and prevent bullying before it starts. This is at the heart of our approach to pastoral care.
- b) To ensure that we all recognise that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under Child Protection procedures.
- c) The Prevention of Bullying Policy will work to achieve the above aims through the promotion of:
 - i) positive attitudes towards individuals
 - ii) an understanding of the sensitivities of others in the community
 - iii) a sense of personal safety in school
 - iv) assertiveness, self-esteem and self confidence
 - v) self-discipline
 - vi) an appreciation of the abilities and limitations of all
 - vii) respectful attitudes and relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils
- d) Prior's Field is committed to promoting high standards of behaviour in all areas of pupils' lives, including their use of internet technology, social networking sites and texting and emailing. [See the Pupil Acceptable Use of ICT Code and Misuse of ICT guidelines both contained in the Behaviour Policy]. All pupils read and sign the Pupil Acceptable Use Policy using FROG once a year (currently in September)
- e) Anti-bullying in all its forms, including cyber-bullying, forms a robust part of our PSHEE education for every year group and in assemblies, form times and in other areas of the curriculum.
- f) All staff have a duty to be vigilant regarding E-safety and the prevention of bullying of any kind. This is addressed during staff INSET days, Heads of Year meetings, Care Meetings, Boarding meetings and tutor team discussions.
- g) Prior's Field engages with Parents, including signposting on Parental PaW pages. It is the responsibility of every member of the community to report any instances of cyber bullying, abuse and suspicious or dangerous behaviour by other pupils, staff, volunteers or those members of the teaching, pastoral or other staff outside the school. Reports can be made to any member of the teaching, pastoral or boarding staff, who will endeavour to follow up

5) Methodology

- a) Identifying "roles" in bullying - The Head of Boarding and The Director of Pastoral Care and

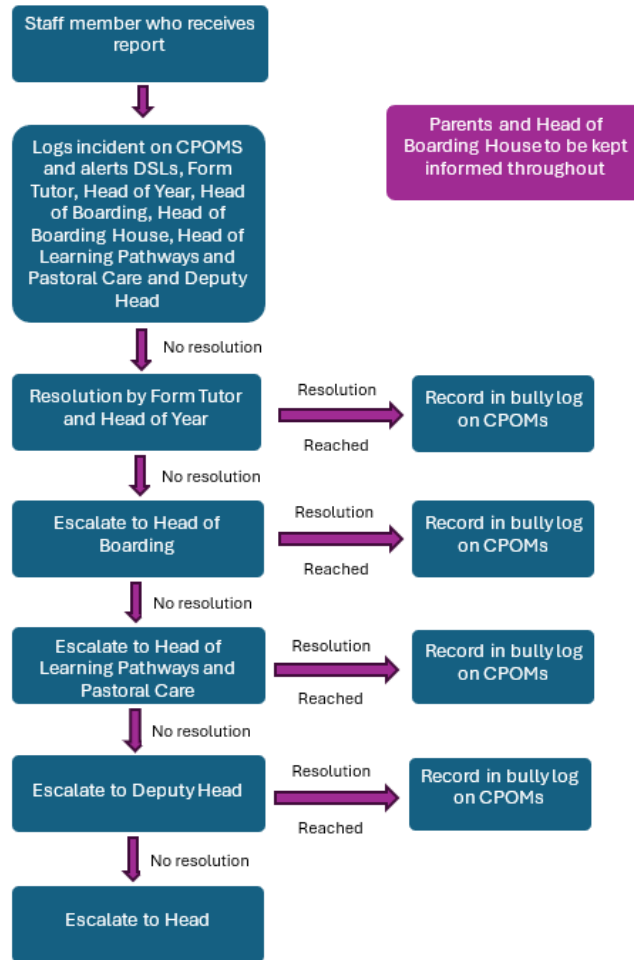
Learning Pathways is responsible for the implementation of the policy by liaising with members of staff to prevent bullying in the following areas:

- b) The Director of Pastoral Care and Learning Pathways, Head of Boarding, Heads of Boarding House, Head of Sixth Form, Heads of Year and Tutors are responsible for aspects of prevention of bullying education through the PSHEE programme. The PSHEE Programme will address friendship, peer pressure, self-confidence, rights and responsibilities, identity, self-confidence, self-esteem, conflict, assertiveness, relationships, bullying and interactive behaviour, e bullying.
- c) Within lessons, teaching staff are encouraged to address anti-bullying issues through specific subject content to reinforce the delivery of the anti-bullying programme. Please see appendix for examples.
 - i) English – using works of literature dealing with various aspects of bullying, conflict and intimidation;
 - ii) Drama – experience of situations in which conflict arises are dealt with through role-play, extempore and formal drama;
 - iii) Religious Studies – opportunities for discussion and debate on many personal and moral issues, including bullying;
 - iv) PE – group dynamics within team and individual sports allow pupils to develop their awareness of others that may not be amongst their friends;
 - v) History – exploration of historical models of aggressive or bullying behaviour to develop awareness of conflict and intimidation;
 - vi) Assembly – Whole School, Year and House assemblies are all opportunities to reinforce the school ethos of understanding and tolerance;
 - vii) School Council – provides an important forum for the discussion of issues raised by girls;
 - viii) Boarding - boarding meetings and informal discussion and chat amongst mixed age boarders provides an important, cross year group forum for discussion;
 - ix) Co-curricular activities – these can engender an understanding of others and involve girls and staff in differing, supportive situations.
 - x) All teaching staff, support staff, prefects and pupil mentors will work to create an atmosphere where girls who feel bullied will be listened to and taken seriously. The Prior’s Field “Whole Hearted Listening” [See Behaviour Policy] is published throughout the school and makes clear the support structures available to all girls.
 - xi) All staff will be aware of the Behaviour Policy which makes clear the sanctions available to address poor behaviour including bullying. Although the particular sanction imposed for bullying will vary depending on the circumstances, the sanction will always reflect the seriousness of the charge. And all proved examples of bullying will incur a sanction.

Sanctions specific to bullying may include: detention, Head's detention, letters home to parents, meetings between parents and senior staff, police involvement, suspension and, in the cases of severe and persistent bullying, exclusion.

xii) All staff will be clear about the chain of communication should bullying occur:

Bullying Report Process Flowchart



- d) All incidents of alleged bullying should be recorded on CPOMS. The Deputy Head will hold a separate log of all bullying related incidents. This record is kept in the SLT OneDrive folder. This will be reviewed and monitored on a termly basis by the Deputy Head to enable patterns to be identified and progress noted. Heads of Year will also discuss incidents to look for patterns. Records will be kept on CPOMS.
- e) Details of SLT review and monitoring strategies will be logged on CPOMS and/or in the SLT monitoring file on OneDrive.
- f) All pupils will be aware, through the Whole Hearted Listening poster of the range of support available to them and will be regularly reminded by Form Tutors, prefects and through

PSHEE and Assembly, of the people they can talk to.

- g) The school will recognise that both the bully and the student being bullied will need support and will offer counselling, advice or guidance as appropriate through the various “Whole Hearted Listening” avenues.
- h) Staff will be prompt and professional in fulfilling their staff duties – for example in the Dining Hall, to ensure high standards of behaviour amongst all the girls and across all year groups, during break and lunchtime where bullying might be more likely to occur.
- i) Boarding staff will be a constant, but unobtrusive presence in boarding areas, will log any concerns meticulously and be quick to raise them and deal with them under the standard anti-bullying methods – raised above.
- j) Boarding staff are aware that children in a residential setting can be more vulnerable and are alert to pupil relationships and the potential for peer abuse.
- k) The prevention of bullying will be specifically covered by the school prefects in their training and will be a regular item on their prefect meeting agendas – providing opportunities for them to feedback on concerns they might have and agree strategies for addressing these.
- l) Regular inset will be available to all staff on prevention of bullying.
- m) Attention will be given to the topic at regular times throughout the year – particularly at “National Anti-bullying week” and so on.

6) Monitoring

The Director of Pastoral Care and Learning Pathways is responsible for monitoring the policy by:

- a) Circulating this policy and ensuring that all staff are clear about it and have assimilated it.
- b) Ensuring that all staff are aware of what sort of behaviour might cause someone to feel bullied.
- c) Monitoring the behaviour of the girls with Heads of Year, Head of Boarding, Head of Sixth Form, Head of School House/Huxley House Boarding and Form Tutors.
- d) Devising strategies for monitoring the handling of individual cases with the Head of Boarding, Heads of Year and Head of Sixth Form in accordance with the specific needs of those involved.
- e) Discussing with the Head of Boarding reviews and revising the PSHEE programme to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the girls.
- f) Setting up appropriate INSET. (Prevention of bullying inset will be available to all staff at regular intervals.)
- g) Observing the programme of co-curricular activities to ensure sound group dynamics.
- h) Setting up ongoing feed-back sessions with prefects, peer mentors, House Captains and the School Council to assess their perception of the success of the policy.

7) Evaluation

The Head of Boarding and Director of Pastoral Care and Learning Pathways will be responsible for assessing the effectiveness of this policy by:

- a) Evaluating the PSHEE Programme
- b) Discussion in relation to feedback from pupil voice groups such as discussion with the School Council, Boarding committee, Heads of Year focus groups to identify areas of concern to the girls
- c) Reviewing the procedures after any specific incidents during the year.
- d) Monitoring the number and type of bullying cases recorded in the log on a termly basis.

8) Success Criteria

The policy will be deemed to be successful if:

- a) There is a decrease in bullying
- b) Incidents are dealt with effectively, consistently and speedily
- c) Good, focused learning is in evidence throughout the school
- d) Everyone is aware at all times of actions that can cause someone to feel bullied

9) Review

- a) The Director of Pastoral Care and Learning Pathways will review this policy annually
- b) This policy should be read in conjunction with:
 - i) Behaviour Policy
 - ii) Complaints Policy
 - iii) Equal Opportunities Policy
 - iv) Exclusions Policy
 - v) PSHEE Policy
 - vi) Safeguarding Policy
 - vii) Pupil Acceptable Use of ICT Policy
 - viii) Boarding Policy

Reviewed by:	Director of Pastoral Care and Learning Pathways
Date of next review:	March 2027
Governor's review:	E & W Summer 2026
Location:	Website/isi/portal

Appendix 1 - Advice and Guidance for Staff

- 1) The most effective approach to bullying is to be pre-emptive. We want, as much as possible, to prevent bullying before it starts. To this end, all staff should:
 - a) Know the girls they teach or tutor well
 - b) Have a sense of the relationships operating within their classes
 - c) Ensure that they are punctual to lessons (much bullying occurs in the unstructured times between classes),
 - d) Take the personalities of girls into account when planning lessons (this should be an integral part of lesson planning)
 - e) Encourage open communication with the girls at all times
 - f) Be swift to raise concerns, no matter how slight they seem, either with the Form Tutor, the Head of Year or the Director of Pastoral Care and Learning Pathways/Head of Sixth Form
 - g) All staff but particularly pastoral staff should also encourage and welcome frank, open dialogue with parents.

- 2) Staff must be aware at all times of behaviour which causes distress to others, not only in lessons, but also particularly the informal areas of school life. Staff should watch for early signs of distress in pupils. For example:
 - a) deterioration in work
 - b) spurious illness
 - c) isolation
 - d) the desire to remain with adults
 - e) erratic attendance
 - f) becoming shy or nervous
 - g) lack of concentration

Such behaviour may be symptomatic of other problems but it might also be the earliest signs of bullying. When staff suspect someone is being bullied or is in distress, take action quickly. Never assume that it is someone else's responsibility. It is important to create an atmosphere in school where pupils feel that those bullied can find a sympathetic ear and that action will be taken swiftly. Those bullied should understand that to remain secretive, gives bullies the message that they can continue. Others may be put at risk. Use all your pupils as a positive resource in countering bullying; for example, ask reliable pupils to help shy pupils or newcomers feel welcome and accepted.

3) Procedures For Dealing With Bullying

If staff have to deal with a bullying incident, the following actions should be taken:

- a) The girls should be separated before being spoken to by staff, who should speak first to the pupil(s) who has/have reported the incident. (It is ideal if the Form Tutor(s) of the girls concerned can be involved in this discussion too.)
- b) The account of the incident by the bullied pupil(s) should be recorded in writing. Re- assure them, offer them immediate support and don't make them feel inadequate or foolish. Help them to understand that revenge is not appropriate.
- c) The account of the incident by the girl(s) accused of bullying should also be recorded in writing. At this stage, do not apportion blame, but encourage her/them to see the other person's point of view and acknowledge the impact of this behaviour on others.
- d) If staff feel able to deal with the incident, they should do so, using one or a combination of the strategies listed below. All written records, including action taken, should be sent to the relevant Form Tutor(s) and the Head(s) of Year. Sanction the bully only if it is appropriate, but avoid reacting emotionally, aggressively or punitively as this gives the message of power to the bully. Always explain the sanction and why it is being given. Counselling for the bully should continue even if sanctions are used.
- e) Always inform the Director of Pastoral Care and Learning Pathways/Head of Sixth Form, the Head of Boarding (if the girls are boarders) and the Deputy Head as soon as possible of any incidents that you have dealt with and any actions you have taken. The Director Pastoral Care and Learning Pathways/Head of Sixth Form will consider further action and counselling for the victim and bully.
- f) If the incident is serious, staff should see the Director of Pastoral Care and Learning Pathways/Head of Sixth Form, Head of Boarding or the Deputy Head as soon as possible to discuss the most appropriate action to be taken in the circumstances. It is likely that significant sanctions will be put in place, as stated in the Behaviour Policy.
- g) The Head of Year will ensure that a summary of the incident is placed on file in CPOMS in both the victim(s)' and the perpetrator(s)' files.
- h) Parents on both sides will generally be informed as soon as an allegation has been made. This will generally come from the Head of Year or Head of Boarding.
- i) All serious bullying incidences are logged separately by the Deputy Head who monitors this log, on a regular basis. It is vital that all details are passed through to her as soon as possible.
- j) In serious cases, the Head will be informed of what is happening and it is vital that everything that has happened is recorded in a clear factual way. If the bullying behaviour continues and counselling and other strategies do not work, appropriate sanctions will be used. These could include Head's detention or in serious and persistent cases temporary or permanent exclusion. Counselling will be maintained for both parties.
- k) The Preventing and Tackling Bullying guidance may be used to provide further guidance and specifically details of organisations that can provide specialist support in some areas, for

example The Anti-Bullying Alliance, childnet, CEOP, beatbullying, Stonewall.

4) Strategies and Sanctions to Respond to Bullying

- i) Prior's Field employs a range of strategies to prevent or reduce bullying. These include:
- b) detailed discussion between the girls concerned
- c) co-operative group work
- d) circles of friends
- e) working cooperatively on a joint project – e.g.: setting up a webpage, producing a year group newsletter, working on a House event
- f) mentoring – through prefects or peers
- g) mediation by adults or peers
- h) active listening/counselling
- i) deterrent through a range of sanctions [see the Behaviour Policy]

Appendix 2 - Advice and Guidance for Pupils

*"All it takes for **evil to flourish** is for good men to **do nothing**" – Edmund Burke*

Bullying is repeated behaviour intended to hurt – either physically or emotionally.

Bullying is unacceptable in any form and will not be tolerated at Prior's Field.

If you are being bullied, or you suspect bullying YOU MUST ACT.

Don't be intimidated.

Don't let the bully win

Don't suffer in silence

IF YOU ARE BEING BULLIED:

- Be firm and clear – look them in the eye and tell them to stop;
- Get away from the situation as quickly as possible;
- Tell an adult what has happened straight away;
- Do not be intimidated.

AFTER YOU HAVE BEEN BULLIED:

- Tell a teacher or another adult in your school as quickly as possible;
- Tell your family;
- If you are scared to tell a teacher or an adult on your own, ask a friend to go with you, or tell your prefect or mentor;
- Keep on speaking up until someone listens;
- Don't blame yourself for what has happened;

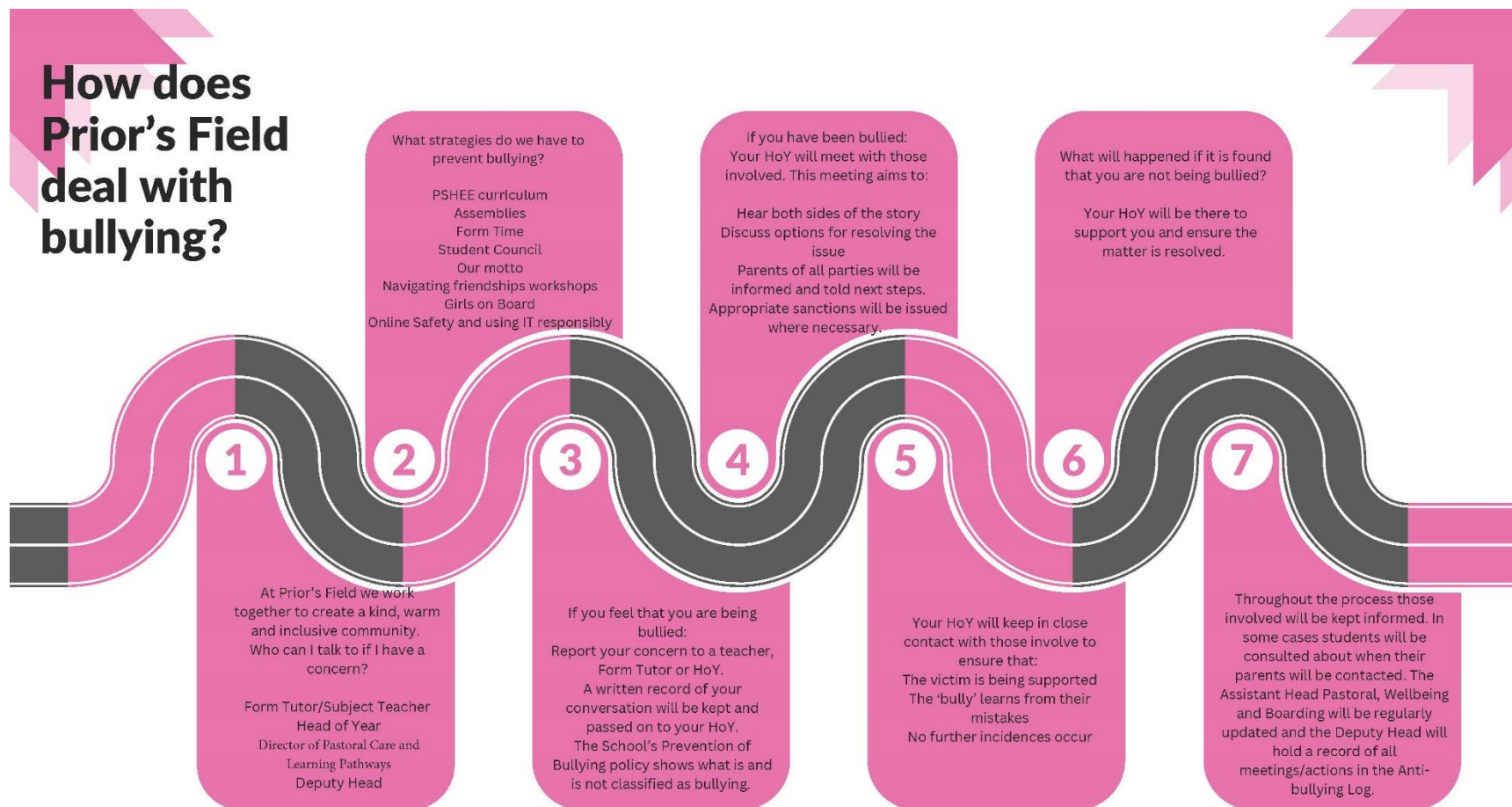
WHEN YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT BULLYING WITH AN ADULT, BE CLEAR ABOUT:

- What has happened to you;
- How often it has happened;
- Who was involved;
- Who saw what was happening;
- Where it happened;
- What you have done about it already.

Appendix 3 - Acceptable Behaviour Between Staff

- 1) Prevention of bullying is not just focused on pupil relationships. It is equally important to ensure harmonious and mutually respectful relationships between and towards staff. However, if it should be the case that a member of staff does feel bullied by a colleague, a parent or a pupil, they should not keep it to themselves or suffer in silence.
- 2) The following guidelines should be followed if a member of staff does feel harassed or bullied by another staff member, a parent or a pupil.
- 3) If a member of staff feels bullied by a member of staff or a parent:
 - a) Careful records of all alleged issues must be kept.
 - b) In general, an informal approach is always better in the first instance to try to resolve the concern, which may be more to do with communication problems or misunderstandings than any desire to intimidate. So, talking through the problem with the member of staff or parent concerned is the best first approach.
 - c) If this does not work, they should refer their concerns as soon as possible to their line manager.
 - d) If this is unsuccessful, or inappropriate for any reason – eg: they feel their line manager is responsible for the intimidating behaviour, then they should refer the problem to a member of the SLT.
 - e) If this does not resolve the matter, they should have recourse to the school's grievance procedures which will be put into action following this. [See school's Grievance Procedure for further information.]
- 4) If a member of staff feels persecuted by a pupil:
 - a) They should be meticulous in keeping records of all instances.
 - b) They should refer their concerns as soon as possible to their line manager.
 - c) If this is unsuccessful, or if the problem continues, they should refer it to a member of the SLT – generally, the Director of Pastoral Care and Learning Pathways should be the next port of call.

Appendix 4 - Prior's Field Anti-Bullying Roadmap



Appendix 5 - Useful Links and Supporting Organisations

- Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Childline: www.childline.org.uk
- Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk
- Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk
- MindEd: www.minded.org.uk
- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- The BIG Award: www.bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk/index.php
- PSHE Association: www.pshe-association.org.uk
- Restorative Justice Council: www.restorativejustice.org.uk
- The Diana Award: www.diana-award.org.uk
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
- Young Carers: www.youngcarers.net
- The Restorative Justice Council: www.restorativejustice.org.uk/restorative-practice-schools
- SEND
- Changing Faces: www.changingfaces.org.uk
- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk
- Anti-Bullying Alliance Cyberbullying and children and young people with SEN and disabilities:
www.cafamily.org.uk/media/750755/cyberbullying_and_send_-_module_final.pdf
- DfE: SEND code of practice: www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-
- 0-to-25 Cyberbullying
- Childnet International: www.childnet.com
- Digizen: www.digizen.org
- Internet Watch Foundation: www.iwf.org.uk
- Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk

- Equality Act 2010
- The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS)
www.gov.uk/government/groups/ukcouncil-forchild-internet-safety-ukccis September 2017, Education Safeguarding Team,
- Kent County Council 10 Race, religion and nationality
- Anne Frank Trust: www.annefrank.org.uk
- Kick it Out: www.kickitout.org
- Report it: www.report-it.org.uk
- Stop Hate: www.stophateuk.org
- Tell Mama: www.tellmamauk.org
- Educate against Hate: www.educateagainsthate.com/
- Show Racism the Red Card: www.srrc.org/educational
- Barnardos LGBT Hub: www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_work/lgbtq.htm
- Metro Charity: www.metrocentreonline.org
- EACH: www.eachaction.org.uk
- Proud Trust: www.theproudtrust.org
- Schools Out: www.schools-out.org.uk
- Stonewall: www.stonewall.org.uk Sexual harassment and sexual bullying
- Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAW) www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk
- A Guide for Schools:
www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/data/files/resources/71/EVAWCoalition-Schools-Guide.pdf
- Disrespect No Body:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/disrespect-nobody-campaignposters
- Anti-bullying Alliance: advice for school staff and professionals about developing effective
- anti-bullying practice in relation to sexual bullying: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-aboutbullying/sexual-and-genderrelated
- Note: Additional links can be found in 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (July 2017)

Government guidance:

- Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies (DfE,


- July 2017) www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying;
- Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff (DfE, November 2014);
- Working together to safeguard children (DfE, July 2019);
- Keeping children safe in education (DfE, September 2024);
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and Schools (DfE, May 2018);
- Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for schools (DfE, January 2018).

Reading :


- `Bullying; Wise Guide' by Michele Elliott
- `Don't Pick on Me: How to Handle Bullying' by Rosemary Stone
- `Your child bullying' by J Alexander
- `101 Ways to deal with bullying' - a guide for parents, by M Elliott
- `Keeping Safe: A practical guide to talking with children, by Kidscape
- `Helping children cope with bullying' by S Lawson
- `Confident children: a parents' guide to helping children feel good', G Lindenfield
- `Bullying and how to fight it: A Guide for families', by A Mellor
- `Fighting, teasing and bullying: Simple and effective ways to help your child', by J Pearce
- `The bullying problem: How to deal with difficult children, by A Train

Appendix 6 - Support and Advice about Cyber-Bullying

At National Online Safety we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information they need to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one platform of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.



The Diana Award definition of bullying is “repeated negative behaviour that is intended to make others feel upset, uncomfortable or unsafe.” Cyberbullying is bullying which takes place online. It can involve anything from sending messages to posting offensive comments to uploading and sharing private or embarrassing photos. It is classed as an indirect form of bullying when compared to verbal or physical bullying, given it usually takes place through a digital device. However, for those experiencing bullying behaviour, the consequences can be just as serious and have far reaching effects.



What schools need to know about

CYBERBULLYING

3 KEY ASPECTS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

There are three key aspects of bullying behaviour, namely that it is repetitive, negative and intentional. These behaviours apply both offline and online. Cyberbullying can almost heighten these behaviours, particularly with access to the internet available 24/7 and the different ways in which those displaying bullying behaviour online can target others. The fact that they can also easily hide their identity online can make cyberbullying much more difficult to stop.

DIFFERENT DEVICES & CHANNELS


Cyberbullying can take place over any device connected to the internet which allows for two-way communication. This includes mobile phones, tablets, computers and even games consoles as it becomes more and more common for players to chat to other players whilst playing online. From a snapshot of 1,400 students surveyed by the Diana Award in 2018, 33% of young people admitted to have experienced bullying on social media, 11% via text message and 12% whilst online gaming.

WHAT LEADS TO CYBERBULLYING

There is never any justification for cyberbullying and those who display bullying behaviour need to be held to account for their actions. Nonetheless, it can be useful to try and understand some of the factors that may lead young people into bullying behaviour. For example, family issues, personal difficulties and a lack of positive reinforcement may push some young children into bullying others as a form of coping mechanism. Similarly, those exhibiting bullying behaviour may blame their targets for provoking their behaviour in the first place or engage in bullying behaviour as a call for attention if they lack social skills or understanding. Others may view their position as dominant which makes themselves less vulnerable to being bullied or they replicate behaviour they have experienced themselves in the past.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Cyberbullying can affect anyone, at any time, at any place. The impacts of cyberbullying can be long-lasting and leave people feeling scared, anxious and lonely. Some of the more obvious signs that those experiencing bullying behaviour might show include weight loss, crying, mood changes, depression and regularly avoiding school. Other symptoms, which might be less obvious to spot and would be difficult to pick up on in isolation, may include changes in body language like hunched shoulders, walking slower or an inability to make eye-contact. In extreme cases, those experiencing bullying behaviour may have unexplained marks or scars which could be evidence of self-harm.



National Online Safety

#WakeUpWednesday

Tips for School Staff

TAKE A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

In taking a whole approach towards cyberbullying, schools can cultivate a culture that relies on positivity and behaviour that is emulated by ALL members of the school community including staff, support staff, senior leaders, governors and parents and carers.

BUILD CONFIDENCE IN DEALING WITH INCIDENTS

This can be achieved by having clear knowledge of what constitutes bullying behaviour, having clear sanctions and courses of action and continually updating your knowledge of safety procedures regarding online and offline incidents.

USE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AS A RESOURCE

Ensure you understand what is influencing the behaviour of young people in your community. If schools know what their students are engaging with, it can be easier to develop and implement relevant and effective tactics/strategies to counter cyberbullying issues.

UNDERSTAND THE CAUSES OF BULLYING

As previously mentioned, sometimes those who are behind the bullying are in need of support just as much as those who being targeted. In better understanding the cause of the issue, schools can better position themselves to tackle the problem and also adequately support both those displaying and experiencing the bullying behaviour. Taking a proactive approach means that schools can gear themselves to tackle issues specific to their school environment, rather than treating each case the same.

ENSURE ALL STAFF KNOW THEIR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff have a role to play in educating and supporting children who are affected by cyberbullying, not just those responsible for safeguarding or online safety. Regular training, continuous professional development and clear school policies can help to empower staff in effectively managing any cyberbullying issues and in providing a united staff front on zero tolerance to all bullying behaviour.

#HATE

#BULLY

Ask For Help

For further support, advice or guidance to support you students at school, or to sign up to our FREE Anti-Bullying Ambassadors training events, head to www.antibullyingpro.com

www.nationalonlinesafety.com Twitter - @natonlinesafety Facebook - /NationalOnlineSafety

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What children need to know about

ONLINE BULLYING



What is online bullying?

ONLINE BULLYING – ALSO KNOWN AS CYBERBULLYING – IS BULLYING THAT TAKES PLACE ON THE INTERNET OR VIA ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND MOBILE PHONES. IT CAN INCLUDE:

1. SENDING SOMEONE MEAN OR THREATENING EMAILS, DIRECT MESSAGES OR TEXT MESSAGES
2. HACKING INTO SOMEONE'S ONLINE ACCOUNT
3. BEING RUDE OR MEAN TO SOMEONE WHEN PLAYING ONLINE GAMES
4. POSTING PRIVATE OR EMBARRASSING PHOTOS ONLINE OR SENDING THEM TO OTHERS
5. CREATING FAKE SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS THAT MOCK SOMEONE OR TRICK THEM
6. EXCLUDING SOMEONE FROM AN ONLINE CONVERSATION OR BLOCKING THEM FOR NO REASON



BE KIND ONLINE

BEFORE PRESSING 'SEND' ON COMMENTS, ASK YOURSELF THESE 3 QUESTIONS...

1. WHY AM I POSTING THIS?
2. WOULD I SAY THIS IN REAL LIFE?
3. HOW WOULD I FEEL IF SOMEBODY SAID THIS TO ME?



National Online Safety

#WakeUpWednesday



Why does it happen?

GOING ONLINE MAKES IT EASIER FOR PEOPLE TO SAY AND DO THINGS THEY PROBABLY WOULDN'T DO FACE TO FACE. ONLINE BULLIES DON'T GET TO SEE THEIR VICTIMS' REACTIONS IN REAL LIFE, SO THIS CAN COOON THEM FROM THE REAL DAMAGE THAT THEY ARE DOING. QUITE OFTEN, PEOPLE BULLY BECAUSE THEY ARE GOING THROUGH SOMETHING DIFFICULT THEMSELVES AND TAKING IT OUT ON OTHERS IS THE ONLY WAY THEY KNOW HOW TO GET CONTROL OF THEIR OWN EMOTIONS.

How does it feel to be bullied?

BEING BULLIED CAN IMPACT ON YOUR SELF-ESTEEM, CONFIDENCE AND SOCIAL SKILLS. BECAUSE IT HAPPENS ON YOUR PHONE, TABLET OR COMPUTER, IT CAN FEEL LIKE YOU ARE UNDER THREAT EVEN WHEN YOU'RE IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT, SUCH AS YOUR BEDROOM. DON'T FORGET...IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT IF YOU'RE BEING BULLIED.



Am I an online bully?

SOMETIMES IT ISN'T OBVIOUS THAT WHAT YOU ARE DOING IS WRONG, BUT IF YOU USE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY TO UPSET, ANGER OR EMBARRASS SOMEONE ON PURPOSE, THIS MEANS YOU'RE INVOLVED IN ONLINE BULLYING. IT MIGHT BE AS SIMPLE AS 'LIKING' A MEAN POST, LAUGHING AT AN ONLINE VIDEO, OR SPREADING A RUMOUR, BUT THE PERSON BEING BULLIED COULD FEEL LIKE THEY ARE BEING GANGED UP ON. THINK ABOUT HOW IT WOULD MAKE YOU FEEL IF IT HAPPENED TO YOU. EVERYONE CAN MAKE MISTAKES, BUT IT'S IMPORTANT TO LEARN FROM THEM – GO BACK AND DELETE ANY UPSETTING OR NASTY POSTS, TWEETS OR COMMENTS YOU'VE WRITTEN.

Who do I tell?

YOU DON'T HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE BULLYING ON YOUR OWN. TALK TO AN ADULT THAT YOU TRUST – A PARENT, GUARDIAN, OR TEACHER. MOST WEBSITES, SOCIAL MEDIA WEBSITES AND ONLINE GAMES OR MOBILE APPS LET YOU REPORT AND BLOCK PEOPLE WHO ARE BOTHERING YOU. YOU COULD ALSO CONTACT CHILDLINE (WWW.CHILDLINE.ORG.UK), WHERE A TRAINED COUNSELLOR WILL LISTEN TO ANYTHING THAT'S WORRYING YOU – YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE TO GIVE YOUR NAME.



How do I prove it?

WHEN CYBERBULLYING HAPPENS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO DOCUMENT AND REPORT THE BEHAVIOUR, SO IT CAN BE ADDRESSED – RECORD THE DATES AND TIMES WHEN CYBERBULLYING HAS OCCURRED, AND SAVE AND PRINT SCREENSHOTS, EMAILS, AND TEXT MESSAGES.

How can I stay safe?

MAKE SURE YOUR PRIVACY SETTINGS ARE SET SO THAT ONLY PEOPLE YOU KNOW AND TRUST CAN SEE WHAT YOU POST. NEVER GIVE OUT PERSONAL INFORMATION ONLINE, SUCH AS IN PUBLIC PROFILES, CHAT ROOMS OR BLOGS, AND AVOID FURTHER COMMUNICATION WITH THOSE SENDING THE MESSAGES. KEEP AWARE OF FAKE PROFILES AND INTERNET USERS PRETENDING TO BE SOMEONE THAT THEY ARE NOT.



AT NATIONAL ONLINE SAFETY WE BELIEVE IN EMPOWERING PARENTS, CAREERS AND TRUSTED ADULTS WITH THE INFORMATION THEY NEED TO HOLD AN INFORMED CONVERSATION ABOUT ONLINE SAFETY WITH THEIR CHILDREN. SHOULD THEY FEEL IT IS NEEDED. THIS GUIDE FOCUSES ON THE PLATFORMS OF MANY WHICH WE BELIEVE TRUSTED ADULTS SHOULD BE AWARE OF. PLEASE VISIT WWW.NATIONALONLINE SAFETY.COM FOR FURTHER GUIDES, HINTS AND TIPS FOR ADULTS.

LITTLE REMINDERS OF HOW TO BE KIND ONLINE

ONLINE ABUSE CAN HAVE A SEVERE IMPACT ON PEOPLE'S LIVES AND IS OFTEN TARGETED AT THE MOST VULNERABLE. CYBERBULLYING HAS BEEN SHOWN TO HAVE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL IMPACT. IN ORDER FOR US TO DEVELOP EMPATHY FOR OTHERS WE SOMETIMES NEED TO MOVE AWAY FROM FULFILLING OUR OWN NEEDS AND THINK ABOUT THE NEEDS OF OTHERS. THIS IS SOMETIMES MORE CHALLENGING ONLINE BECAUSE WE CANNOT SEE THE PERSON, CONNECT WITH HOW THEY FEEL NOR INTERACT FACE TO FACE.

THIS GUIDE WILL HELP YOU TO BE MORE CAREFUL ONLINE AND IS SUITABLE FOR ANY ENVIRONMENT I.E. GAMING, MESSAGING AND SOCIAL MEDIA. IT WILL HELP YOU TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF SHOWING KINDNESS AND HOW TO DEVELOP EMPATHY ONLINE.

TOP TIPS FOR EVERYBODY

#WAKEUPWEDNESDAY

UNDERSTAND WHAT 'EMPATHY' IS

EMPATHY IS THE SKILL OF RECOGNISING, UNDERSTANDING AND CARING ABOUT ANOTHER PERSON'S FEELINGS AND TAKING ACTION TO HELP. THIS IS TRICKIER ONLINE BECAUSE RECOGNISING AND IMAGINING HOW ANOTHER PERSON FEELS IS HARD WHEN WE ARE NOT WITH THEM FACE TO FACE. WHEN WE TRY AND UNDERSTAND HOW SOMEONE FEELS THROUGH WORDS ALONE, IT CAN LEAD TO CONFUSION OR A MISUNDERSTANDING.



FEEL, SEE AND UNDERSTAND

IF WE IMAGINE OURSELVES IN THE SITUATION OF ANOTHER PERSON, WE TAKE ANOTHER STEP DOWN THE PATH OF EMPATHY. IT DOESN'T MEAN AGREEING WITH THE OTHER PERSON, BUT IT MEANS UNDERSTANDING HOW THEY FEEL. IF YOU FEEL YOURSELF BECOMING DETACHED AND UNCARING PERHAPS DEVELOP A MENTAL PICTURE OF THEM. SO YOU CAN IMAGINE THEM AS REAL PERSON AND NOT JUST A BUNCH OF WORDS. IF YOU KNOW THE PERSON, CONSIDER A VIDEO CHAT OR VIDEO CALL.

DEVELOP SELF EMPATHY

ALTHOUGH WE TEND TO SHOW THE BEST OF OUR LIVES THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA, THE REALITY IS WE ARE NOT ALL PERFECT. HAVING EMPATHY FOR OTHERS MEANS WE NEED TO ALSO HAVE SELF EMPATHY. IF WE UNDERSTAND THAT WE ARE NOT ALL PERFECT, INCLUDING OURSELVES, WE CAN FIND KINDNESS.

★ OFFER HELP ★

ACCORDING TO DR DAN SEIGEL, A CLINICAL PROFESSOR OF PSYCHIATRY, BEING KIND IS REALLY ABOUT RESPECTING EACH OTHER'S VULNERABILITY AND WANTING TO HELP. SO, WHEN SOMEONE IS SHARING THAT THEY ARE STRUGGLING OR FINDING LIFE HARD, OFFER HELP, EVEN IF THE HELP IS A LISTENING EAR OR SAYING, 'I CAN UNDERSTAND YOU WOULD FEEL THAT WAY. I'M HERE FOR YOU'.

TRY TO ADD VALUE

CONSIDER, BEFORE YOU COMMENT ON A POST OR IMAGE, HOW CAN I HELP THIS PERSON TO LOWER THEIR SADNESS? HOW CAN I ADD SOMETHING TO IMPROVE THEIR DISTRESS AND HAPPINESS? SHOWING OTHER PEOPLE'S PAIN AS ENTERTAINMENT AS A WAY TO GET NOTICED OR MORE LIKES DOES NOT ADD VALUE.



BE RESPONSIBLE

THINK TWICE BEFORE YOU ACT. CONSIDER, ARE YOU ACTING ON ANGER, FRUSTRATION OR IN A MOMENT OF JUDGING A SITUATION WITHOUT KNOWING THE TRUTH? ONLINE, IT IS EASY NOT TO HAVE ALL THE FACTS AND REACT TO A SITUATION WHICH IS BEING PORTRAYED.



UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT OF YOUR ACTIONS

COMMENTING ONLINE SOMETIMES MEANS THAT WE DON'T ACTUALLY 'SEE' THE IMPACT OF OUR COMMENTS AND WORDS. THIS MEANS IT CAN BE EASIER TO DETACH FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR ACTIONS. UNKIND COMMENTS DO HAVE CONSEQUENCES AND CAN ADD TO SOMEONE'S DISTRESS AND FEELING ABOUT THEMSELVES.

DISASSOCIATE FROM PACK MENTALITY

ONLINE, IT IS EASY TO GET CAUGHT UP WITH POSTING NEGATIVE COMMENTS BECAUSE EVERYONE ELSE SEEMS TO BE. GET COMFORTABLE WITH STANDING OUT, AND NOT GETTING CAUGHT UP POSTING NEGATIVELY BECAUSE EVERYONE ELSE IS. EVEN IF THIS MEANS STANDING ALONE AND REMINDING OTHER PEOPLE THAT THEIR BEHAVIOUR IS UNKIND, YOUR COURAGE COULD SAVE A LIFE.

#BEKIND