

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY-MTGS/MTPS (INCLUDING EYFS)

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Merchant Taylors' Girls' School aims to provide a safe and caring environment in which each of its pupils feels secure; an environment where pupils can express themselves freely, form relationships and learn at their own pace.

We see it as the responsibility of the Governors, all staff, whether teaching or support, as well as parents to ensure that our school has an ethos which encourages pupils to achieve their maximum potential both academically and socially.

In addition, all staff will be aware of and take into consideration the different needs of pupils challenged by issues such as visual or auditory impairment, mobility, mental health and/or dyslexia.

DEFINITIONS

Any behaviour which is threatening or makes an individual feel unhappy, uncomfortable or intimidated in school is clearly not acceptable and will be treated seriously.

Such behaviour may be regarded as bullying. There are many definitions of bullying, but most have 3 things in common:

It is deliberately hurtful behaviour

It is repeated often over a long period of time

It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves

Bullying can be:

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| 1. Emotional/ Psychological | being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (for example. hiding books, threatening gestures) |
| 2. Physical violence | pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence |
| 3. Verbal | name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing |

And be in the form of:

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| 1. Racial | religious or cultural taunts, graffiti, gestures, insulting remarks on racial, religious or cultural grounds |
| 2. Sexual | unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments |
| 3. Sexist | focussing on an individual's gender |
| 4. Homophobic | focussing on the grounds of sexuality |
| 5. Disability related/SEN | focussing on an individual's disability or educational difficulty |
| 6. Verbal | name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing |
| 7. Cyber misuse | all areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room
Mobile threats by text messaging & calls |
| 8. Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & Video facilities | |
| 9. Family | Relating to Adoption/Caring |

EFFECTS

It should be recognised that bullying can cause psychological damage and in some cases, suicidal thoughts. Bullying is not a specific criminal offence, but there are criminal laws which may be invoked when applied to harassment and threatening behaviour.

Victims of bullying may experience many immediate mental or physical health-related consequences and suffer from anxiety disorders and depression which can continue into adulthood. Pupils who bully others also experience many short term and long term consequences of their bullying behaviour and may also become depressed as a result of their actions.

We are aware that bullying is prevalent in all aspects of life not only in schools and that no school can claim with absolute confidence that 'there is no bullying here'.

Every school has some degree of bullying, however slight or infrequent. We believe that there is not a great problem at MTGS/MTPS, but we aim through policy and action to respond positively and effectively to any incidents, however trivial they may seem. The consequences of bullying may be very serious:

Criminal laws:

The Public Order Act 1986 made it an offence to use towards another person threatening, abusive, or insulting words or behaviour, and it is a similar offence to distribute or display anything that is threatening, abusive, or insulting.

A further offence of intentionally causing harassment was introduced by the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994.

SIGNS OF BULLYING

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

1. Unwillingness to return to school
2. Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
3. Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
4. Books, bags, belongings go missing or are damaged
5. Change to established habits (for example giving up extra-curricular activities, changing accent/vocabulary)
6. Diminished levels of self confidence
7. Frequent visits to School Nurse
8. Unexplained cuts/ bruises
9. Absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
10. Choosing company of adults
11. Repressed body language, poor eye contact
12. Difficult sleep patterns
13. Talk of suicide/running away

Guidelines for students:

If you feel bullied by another person:

1. Tell the person that you do not like what she/he is doing
2. Never allow the bullying to carry on – it is not your fault
3. Try to remain calm and clear when talking to the bully
4. Always tell your Form Tutor, Class teacher or another teacher as soon as you can
5. Tell your parent or the person who looks after you what happened
6. Try to get witnesses and make a note of what, where and when it happened
7. Use helplines/online advice

CHILDLINE: 0800 1111 www.ChildLine.org.uk

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) www.ceop.police.uk

If you see another person being bullied:

1. Stop the bullying if you can or find an adult - a teacher or a Sixth Former
2. If you see it happening out of school (for example. cyber bullying) tell your Form Tutor or another teacher as soon as possible
3. If it is happening on the school bus tell a Sixth Former, Mrs Bush or your Form Tutor; Mrs Jones, Mrs Wadsworth or Mr Lawell.
4. MTPS pupils should tell Miss Yardley, Miss Lynan, Mrs Taylor or Mrs Saunders.

GUIDELINES TO STAFF WHEN DEALING WITH BULLYING

1. Listen to the pupils
2. Encourage them to speak freely
3. Assure them that their allegations will be dealt with in confidence initially but that you will need to consult the appropriate member of staff, for example, Head, Deputy, Assistant Head, and Pastoral Counsellor.
4. Assure them that we will consult with them at all stages of the investigation
5. Assure them that appropriate action will be taken
6. Encourage them to involve their parents.
7. The appropriate member of staff should undertake a full investigation of the allegations to verify what has been going on.
8. The school will embark upon the following action, where appropriate.
9. Interview the pupils involved and get written reports.
10. In many cases a conciliatory approach may be useful, in which the person dealing with the incident attempts to improve the situation by encouraging those involved in bullying to empathise with the victim, (see the Pastoral Staff for advice on this 'no-blame' approach).
11. The pupils should be seen a week later (informally) to discuss how things are going, so that they can realise that the situation is still being monitored.

If the problem is more serious, it may be necessary to involve the parents and keep accurate records of how the school has responded if the family should decide to take legal action.

It may be appropriate to break up the group dynamics of a gang of pupils known to be bullying for example, by keeping them in at lunchtime and break times if that is when they are a threat to others. This may also apply to a single pupil.

Exclusion as a response to bullying should be used sparingly and as a last resort.

Once a plan of action has been worked out and the matter dealt with it is essential to monitor progress over the following weeks and months. This may also involve supporting the victim and counselling the bully.

In all incidents of bullying the school will offer support to both the victim and the bully. The pupils who are known to be bullying may have a low self-esteem and may be having problems in their life that are making them feel bad as well. **It must be recognised that a bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.**

PREVENTION

This policy should be used in conjunction with the anti-bullying notices prominently displayed throughout the school, where advice and guidance is given to the girls on identifying and then responding to incidents of bullying.

Staff and Students should be vigilant for the signs of possible bullying:

1. Items of clothing, School property etc. damaged or lost more often than once would be considered normal.
2. Frequent injuries to a student, consistent with hitting, punching, kicking etc.
3. The student becomes withdrawn and is reluctant to say why. Evidence of a girl being called names, being the subject of rumours or being excluded from group activities at break.
4. Frequent visits to the School Nurse with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches.
5. Regular absenteeism, unaccustomed excuses.
6. Falling off in work, effort and performance.
7. Taken individually none of the above may be due to bullying but a combination of some of these signs could be a reason to suspect it.

Proactive prevention:

Staff are on duty at all times when pupils are not in class and patrol the site, particularly the areas where bullying might occur. They are reminded regularly at staff meetings about the need for vigilance **and** receive awareness training at INSET.

The School's Behaviour Policy aims to promote good behaviour within the School community and sets out the Code of Conduct which pupils are obliged to honour. It also indicates a range of **sanctions** which may be imposed in the event of pupils' misbehaviour. Cases of severe and persistent bullying may lead to serious sanctions.

PSHEE lessons have an important part to play in preventing bullying.

Bullying is one of the topics listed in the PSHEE programme for both Year 7, and Year 8 and each form has one period PSHEE per week with their form tutor / PSHEE tutor.

There are also opportunities for Year 9 and above to address bullying in their PSHEE periods, by arrangement with their PSHEE tutors.

The PSHEE year files, PSHEE library contain numerous exercises and programmes on the following: friendship, self-esteem, decision-making and assertiveness.

Assemblies address bullying issues during the year, particularly during Anti Bullying Week.

Staff Training/CPD: A record is kept of all whole school training, allowing for reviews and updates relating to pastoral matters to be addressed

There will be an anti-bullying survey conducted in Autumn Term 2016. The School Council work to produce appropriate questions.

MONITORING:

- All student/parent interactions are recorded on a parental interview/meeting notes form. They are copied to the relevant Assistant Headteacher; the First Deputy Headmistress and the Headmistress (this copy is placed on file).
- All bullying incidents are recorded in the Anti-bullying log, which is monitored by the Assistant Headteachers.
- The Anti-Bullying Log is reviewed termly by SMT.
- During Progress meetings, any incident of bullying will be discussed.

Reviewed April 2016 Miss J Tyndall