



Merchant Taylors'
School

Ambition | Character | Excellence

Anti-Bullying Policy

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ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

(i) AIMS

Merchant Taylors' Boys' 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 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'. We believe that there are few bullies at MTBS, but we aim through policy and action to respond positively and effectively to any incidents, however trivial they may seem.

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, reduced mobility, poor mental health, dyslexia and other SEND considerations.

(ii) DEFINITIONS

Any behaviour which is threatening or makes an individual or group feel unhappy, uncomfortable or intimidated in school is clearly not acceptable.

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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| • Emotional/
Psychological | Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures) |
| • Physical | pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence |
| • Verbal | name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing |

And be in the form of:

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| • Racial, religious
or cultural | taunts, graffiti, gestures, insulting remarks on racial, religious or cultural grounds |
| • Sexual | unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments |
| • Sexist | focussing on an individual's gender |
| • Homophobic | focussing on an individual's sexuality |
| • Disability related/SEN | focussing on an individual's disability or educational difficulty |
| • Familial | because a child is adopted or is a carer |
| • Cyber | all areas of internet, such as email, internet chat room and social network/messaging sites misuse
mobile phone threats by messaging, calls and email
misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities. |

Please refer to ICT Acceptable Use Policy which sets out clearly both users' obligations in using these facilities, and the ICT departments' responsibility and authority in taking action to safeguard them.

Prejudice-based bullying is bullying because of a protected characteristic. Bullying which is based on or directed towards a person's:

- Age
- Religion or belief
- Race
- Gender or gender reassignment
- Sexual orientation
- Disability
- Marriage or civil partnership status
- Pregnancy or maternity

is taken particularly seriously by the School.

(iii) THE CONSEQUENCES OF BULLYING MAY BE VERY SERIOUS:

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.

Criminal law:

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986 and the school will seek assistance from the police if they feel an offence has been committed.

Safeguarding children and young people:

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, the school will report their concerns to their local authority children's social care. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, the school may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

(iv) PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW: (see the “What to do if” pages of Firefly).

For boys:

If you feel bullied by another person either inside or outside the classroom (e.g. by cyber-bullying)

- Tell the person that you do not like what he/she is doing
- Never allow the bullying to carry on – it is not your fault
- Try to remain calm and clear when talking to the bully
- Always tell your Form Tutor or another teacher as soon as you can
- Tell your parent or the person who looks after you what happened
- Try to get witnesses and make a note of what, where and when it happened, or keep a copy of texts, emails or images, if appropriate

If you see another person being bullied:

- Stop the bullying if you can or find an adult - a teacher or a Sixth Former
- If you see it happening out of school (e.g. cyber-bullying) tell your Form Tutor or another teacher as soon as possible
- Tell your parent or the person who looks after you what happened
- If it is happening on the school bus tell the appropriate Group Tutor: Mr. Hunt, Mr. Yates or Mr. Bonfante.

GUIDELINES TO STAFF WHEN DEALING WITH BULLYING

1. Listen to the pupils

Encourage them to speak freely

Assure them that their allegations will be dealt with in confidence initially but that you may need to consult the appropriate member of staff, eg. Form Tutor, Head of Year, Group Tutor or Deputy Head.

Assure them that we will consult with them at all stages of the investigation and that it is not their fault that they are being bullied.

Assure them that the school takes any allegation about bullying seriously and that appropriate action will be taken

Encourage them to involve their parents

2. The appropriate member of staff should undertake a full investigation of the allegations to verify what has been going on.

3. **Procedures to follow:** The school will embark upon the following action, where appropriate.

- i. Interview the pupils involved and get written reports.
- ii Record the incident by completing a Pastoral Record in the School database
- iii. Contact the parents of the pupils involved to discuss the school's action plan and keep accurate records of how the school has responded.
- iv. 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.
- v. The pupils should be seen on a regular basis to discuss how things are going, so that they can realise that the situation is still being monitored.
- vi It may be appropriate to break up the group dynamics of a gang of pupils known to be bullying e.g. 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.
- vii Sanctions such as Main School or Group Tutor's detention may be applied but exclusion as a response to severe and persistent bullying should only be used sparingly and as a last resort.

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 have more complex pastoral issues that are contributing to their bullying behaviour.

PREVENTION

This policy should be used in conjunction with the information on Firefly, where advice and guidance is given to the boys on identifying and then responding to incidents of bullying.

- (i) Staff, and monitors should be vigilant for the signs of possible bullying:
- Items of clothing, School property etc. damaged or lost more often than one would consider normal.
 - Frequent injuries to the boy, consistent with hitting, punching, kicking etc.
 - The boy becomes withdrawn and is reluctant to say why. Evidence of a boy being called names, being the subject of rumours or being excluded from group activities at break.
 - Frequent visits to the School Nurse with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches.
 - Regular absenteeism, unaccustomed excuses.
 - Falling off in work, effort and performance.

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.

- (ii) 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 about the need for vigilance at SIMs and receive awareness training at INSET
- (iii) 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.
- (iv) The School Council holds regular meetings chaired by the member of staff in charge of the student body and attended by a member of the SMT. Here, form representatives have the opportunity to voice any concerns on behalf of their fellow pupils.
- (v) Bullying is one of the topics listed in our Cornerstone CUrriculum for Year 7, Year 8 and year 9. Whole School and Year Group assemblies are used to raise awareness on the issue, including cyber-bullying and the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL). There are also opportunities for Year 10 and above to address bullying in their Cornerstone periods, by arrangement with their Form Tutors and Heads of Year.
- (vi) The School has an Acceptable Use Policy for pupils and staff, where information can be found about safe online practices, advice about protecting oneself from online bullying and guidance on what to do if a pupil or a member of staff is the victim of cyberbullying.

The School refers to the non-statutory DfE advice *Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017)* and *Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff (2014)* when dealing with and preventing bullying.

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