



Merchant Taylors'
School

Anti-bullying Policy and Procedure (MTGS)

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Linked Policies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MTGS School Parents Handbook• Code of Conduct (Pupils)• ICT Acceptable User Policy• E-Safety Policy• Pastoral Care Policy• Mental Health Policy• PSHE Policy• RSE Policy• Behaviour Policy• Equal Opportunities Policy (Pupils)• Transgender and Questioning gender Policy• DfE Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017) and Cyberbullying Advice for headteachers and school staff (2014)• KCSIE 2023



Merchant Taylors' School

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff
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1. Why do we need an Anti-Bullying Policy?

Persistent bullying can severely inhibit a child's ability to learn effectively or a member of staff's ability to do their job. The negative effects of bullying can have a serious impact on a person for their entire life and can cause psychological harm. The School wishes to promote a secure and happy environment free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behaviour, including racist and homophobic bullying. Therefore, this policy promotes practices within the School to reinforce our vision, and to remove or discourage practices that negate them.

All schools have a duty to draw up procedures to prevent bullying and to bring these procedures to the attention of staff, parents and pupils under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The school's policy and procedures also take into account the guidance given in the DFE's Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2017 and Behaviour and Discipline in Schools 2016 and the guidance given in the ISSR handbook September 2017.

1. The School's Position

The School's Behaviour Policy promotes an explicitly anti-discriminatory position. Specifically, the School holds positions that are anti-racist, anti-sexist – including misogyny – and, explicitly, anti-HBT. The School seeks through its policies and lived experienced to provide an environment which is inclusive for any and all minority groups.



Merchant Taylors' School

We believe that all students have the right to be educated in an environment where there is mutual respect and co-operation. Bullying is contrary to this approach and will not be tolerated; we do everything possible to discourage it. We aim to create an environment in which bullying is minimised. If bullying does occur, we aim to ensure that the person being bullied is safe, we work to stop the bullying happening again and we provide support to the person being bullied. Parents, pupils teaching and support staff must be alert to signs of bullying and all members of the school community must report any bullying they experience or witness to the victim's Form Tutor or Head of House. All forms of bullying are recorded centrally using the secure CPOMS platform.

Senior members of staff will always take reports of bullying seriously and will always ensure they are thoroughly investigated. Bullying is regarded as safeguarding issues and as such will be reported to the designated staff safeguarding leads and dealt with under the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. In some instances, and where a criminal offence may have been committed it will be appropriate to liaise with the Police.

2. Aims of the Anti-Bullying Policy

The School aims:

- to create an atmosphere in which all pupils feel secure and valued
- to increase awareness and to encourage pupils to report concerns regarding bullying
- to provide protection, support and reassurance for victims
- to develop the self-confidence and self-esteem of all pupils
- To cultivate to the full all of their talents, free from the envy of their peers
- to develop an effective range of emotional 'self-defence' skills for all pupils
- to promote an anti-bullying ethos amongst the whole School community
- to promote appreciation of diversity – all pupils are accepted for who they are, no matter how different they are to peers
- to respond appropriately and effectively to instances of bullying
- to ensure that parents, pupils and members of staff understand what bullying is and understand the school's policy on bullying and follow it, including by reporting any instances of bullying they come across
- Have a consistent approach to any bullying incidents that occur
- to work with those students who engage in bullying activities to ensure that they recognise and learn different ways of behaving
- to keep governors updated about serious instances of bullying and for governors to review the policy annually and to check on its effective implementation

2. Definitions of Bullying



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Bullying is aggressive or insulting behaviour by an individual or group, often repeated over time, which intentionally hurts or harms another pupil or group physically or emotionally. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability or because the child is adopted, is looked after by the Local Authority or is a carer. The School has adopted the definition of racism, as defined in the MacPherson report : 'Conduct or words which advantage or disadvantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. In its subtle form it is as damaging as its more overt form.'

It may occur directly or through cyber-technology (social websites and apps, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email). Bullying on the basis of protected characteristics is taken particularly seriously. Research confirms that bullying can have a lasting destructive effect on people's lives. Bullying can produce long lasting feelings of powerlessness, loss of self-esteem and isolation. Victims can sometimes become convinced that they are somehow at fault and can suffer serious long-term distress as a result. Their school work and social and emotional development can be seriously adversely affected. Bullying has the potential to cause serious psychological and physical damage and, in the most extreme cases, suicide.

2.1. Examples and types of Bullying

Please note this is not an exhaustive list but a summary of some common types of bullying behaviour:

- Physical assault including playfighting
- Derogatory name calling of an insulting and / or personal nature
- Verbal abuse and threats
- Abusive or threatening emails, texts, instant messages or calls on mobile phones
- Hijacking or cloning email or social networking accounts, or using email or social networking to impersonate a person
- The use of mobile phone camera images to cause distress, fear or humiliation
- Demanding money, material goods or favours by means of threat or force
- Ridiculing an individual because of physical, economic, sexual, intellectual, cultural or racial difference or religious belief
- Graffiti designed to intimidate or embarrass
- Posting threatening, abusive, offensive or humiliating material or comments on websites (including blogs, personal websites and social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat or YouTube)
- Incitement of others to commit acts of bullying
- Prejudice based: Racist, sexist, misogynistic, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic behaviour



Merchant Taylors' School

- Deliberate exclusion or isolation of an individual or a group

Bullying typically demonstrates the following characteristics:

- **Repetition** - not one-off incidents but frequent and over a prolonged period of time
- **Intent** - behaviour is deemed purposeful, not accidental
- **Clear victim** - behaviour is targeted at specific individual or group
- **Power imbalance** - unequal power, causing stress to one party

2.2. Relational Aggression

Relational aggression is described as behaviours that harm others through damage to relationships or feelings of acceptance, friendship or group inclusion (Crick and Grotpeter 1995). It refers to deliberate actions that intend to negatively affect an individual's friendships or reputation. Such actions, if ignored, can lead to social exclusion. The school takes relational aggression seriously and addresses the issues associated with it through our PSHE and assembly programmes. Examples include:

- Deliberately excluding someone
- Spreading rumours and gossip
- Breaking secrets
- Imitating or mocking a pupil
- Teasing or embarrassing a pupil

2.3. Forms of bullying

The nature of bullying can be:

- Emotional – excluding, tormenting, threatening, hiding possessions
- **Indirect** - for example, spreading malicious rumours, excluding individuals from a social group
- Physical – pushing, punching, hair pulling, other violence
- Verbal – name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, banter
- Cyber – misuse of the internet, social media, mobile phone and associated equipment

Bullying can be based on any of the following things:

- Race (racist bullying)
- Religion or beliefs



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- Culture or class
- Gender (sexist bullying)
- Sexual orientation (homophobic or biphobic bullying)
- Gender identity (transphobic bullying)
- Special Education needs or disability
- Appearance or health conditions

3. Signs that someone might be a victim of bullying

Please note, this is not an exhaustive list but a summary of some common indications that someone is being bullied. They could also be signs of other difficulties, but should give rise to investigating the possibility of bullying. Parents and teachers should look out for a pupil:

- Seeming afraid of the journey to or from school, asking to be taken to school when they have previously been happy to walk or take public transport unaccompanied
- Making unexplained changes to their routine
- Trying to get out of going to school e.g. by claiming to be ill when nothing really seems wrong with them, playing truant
- Becoming anxious and withdrawn, appearing to have lost confidence
- Changes to behaviour such as stammering, easily becoming tearful, having a disturbed sleep pattern
- Possessions or clothes being frequently lost or damaged, asking for money without explaining why they need it
- Doing badly in school work
- Becoming aggressive towards siblings
- Unwilling to use mobile phone or computer or using them obsessively
- Unexplained cuts or bruises, self-harming, preoccupied by suicide

4. Pupils who engage in bullying

Pupils have to learn that bullying is unacceptable. Those who engage in bullying and fail to show through their actions that they have learnt that bullying is unacceptable risk forfeiting their right to be at the School and can face permanent exclusion. Pupils will be given opportunities to:

- Face up to the harm they have done Learn to behave in ways which will not cause harm in future
- Develop their understanding of how others think and feel
- Learn how to take steps to repair the harm they have caused



Merchant Taylors' School

- Pay a penalty for the harm they have done and thus be held accountable for their actions Pupils who are guilty of bullying will be given sanctions according to the severity of the offence: see the Behaviour Policy for an explanation of the different kinds of sanctions, which can include warnings.

5. Parents and bullying

All parents of pupils at the School will be expected to recognise and eschew any behaviour towards staff, or any other members of the School community, that is bullying. In addition, the School expects that parents will reinforce and espouse the School's aims and ethos and insist upon the value of good behaviour, and a rejection of bullying, to their children.

Parents are encouraged to report instances of bullying to the School that they may witness as bystanders. Staff will inform the Headmistress if they are subject to behaviour from parents that they regard as unacceptable and that may constitute a form of bullying. The matter will be investigated by the Senior Deputy Head, or another senior member of staff nominated by the Head. The Senior Deputy Head will meet with the parent(s), member of staff and, if appropriate, the pupil to decide if

- parents have engaged in bullying behaviour
- parents have acted unreasonably
- the behaviour of parents has adversely affected, or is likely to affect, the progress of their son or another pupil at School
- the behaviour of parents has impacted on the well-being of a member of staff
- the behaviour of parents has brought or is / was likely to bring the School into disrepute

At the conclusion of the investigation the Senior Deputy Head will communicate the findings to the parents and may propose a formal meeting with the Headmistress to decide on an appropriate way forward.

In more serious cases, where the relationship between the School and home has irretrievably broken down, the Headmistress may require the pupil to be removed from the School on a permanent basis (as per the Terms and Conditions of the parental contract). In common with the procedure for the permanent exclusion of a pupil for disciplinary matters, a requirement to remove a pupil from the School would be subject to a review if requested by parents, in line with the School's Procedure for the review of a pupil's required removal.

6. Staff who engage in bullying

It is expected that all staff employed by the School will recognise and eschew any behaviour which is bullying. Conduct that constitutes the bullying of pupils, colleagues or any other members of the School community will be treated as a disciplinary offence, in accordance with the School's policies and procedures.



Merchant Taylors' School

7. Preventing bullying

Firstly, the School acknowledges that bullying happens in all schools, including this school. It is distressing to the victims and represents a problem that has to be addressed seriously.

The school takes proactive measures to foster positive relationships and mutual respect through:

- It will be made clear to all pupils that bullying is not acceptable. Pupils are encouraged to report any incidents to their Form Tutor or any member of staff and these are investigated promptly. Such reports are recorded by school staff. The School aims to create a climate of trust in which reporting to an adult is the normal response to bullying rather than passive acceptance or violent reaction. Pupils with learning difficulties may be particularly at risk of bullying and, therefore, staff should be particularly aware of potential problems with these pupils
- A statement on bullying appears in every classroom (see Appendix 1).
- The question of bullying and cyber-bullying is also dealt with in assemblies (for example in National Anti-bullying week), vertical tutor periods, PSHE, Drama, and Religious Education.
- Anti-Bullying mentors have been selected and trained to support their peers
- The school's programme of extracurricular activities enables pupils to achieve and to develop self-esteem and good relationships beyond the classroom.
- The school has a clearly defined pastoral system based around Vertical Tutoring Form Tutors, Heads of Houses and the Assistant Head, Pastoral. Pupils may seek support from the School Medical Team and the School Counsellors. The House System fosters vertical integration allowing younger pupils to be supported by older students.
- Professional training is available to promote staff understanding of the problems of bullying and cyber-bullying, including the specific needs pupils with protected characteristics, for example BAME and LGBTQ+ pupils, and taking action to reduce the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely. Training courses are made available to all Staff. The issue is also discussed at Pastoral Team meetings.
- Parents are able to discuss bullying at Parents' Forum Events and at Parents' Evenings, whilst Governors annually review the school's anti bullying policy and scrutinise the school's records of serious bullying incidents.
- Incidents of bullying are recorded and stored securely by staff and monitored by the Assistant Head (Pastoral) in order to track patterns of behaviour and to monitor types of bullying so that the School can address specific incidents in a timely manner and ensure that any patterns are identified swiftly and managed decisively. Incidents of homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic Bullying (HBT) are logged and reviewed.



Merchant Taylors' School

Incidents of racist bullying which includes anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, are logged and reviewed.

- Patterns of bullying are discussed within the weekly pastoral meeting and overseen by the Assistant Head of School and are reported to the Head of School
- Cases of bullying including HBT and racist bullying are reported to the Board of Governors on a termly basis.
- Vertical Form Tutors, duty staff and prefects involved in the supervision of pupils are all briefed to watch out for signs of bullying. Sixth Formers affiliated to vertical tutor groups are instructed to respond quickly to any sign of bullying and given guidance on how to do so.
- Parents and pupils are given guidance about the part they can play to prevent bullying and cyber-bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders. Information is provided in the Anti-bullying Handbook, which enables the School's Policy and legal responsibilities to be understood and makes available sources of support. Further opportunities for this to occur include Transitions and Induction events for new pupils, Parents' talks, and during Assemblies, Vertical Tutor time and PSHE.
- Resources relating to anti bullying are available from the Assistant Head, Pastoral, Counselling Team and Head of PSHE.

8. Follow up on Incidents of Bullying

As stated in the aims above, the School aims to create an atmosphere in which all pupils feel secure and valued. When bullying arises, bullies are confronted with their behaviour in a way that enables them to see the inappropriateness of their actions and the hurtful consequences that ensue. The bullied are supported and, subsequently, monitored.

When bullying is suspected, adults are required to comply with the following:

- Listen carefully to what you are being told. Alleged victims must feel listened to.
- Clarify what you are told – where, when, who how etc.
- Take immediate action to safeguard the victim in line with the School's Safeguarding Policy
- Do not offer confidentiality. Make it clear that you may have to report it elsewhere. Ensure that the student knows who else will be told.
- Reassure the alleged victim that they will be taken seriously and believed.
- As soon as possible write down what you have been told – using the pupil's own words. It may be appropriate for the child to write down their own version of events.
- Report this matter as soon as possible to the student's Head of House and Assistant Head Pastoral via CPOMS and provide them with copies of any pupil statements you



Merchant Taylors' School

have taken . All middle and senior leaders have a responsibility to support colleagues to eradicate bullying.

All Heads of House must:

- Use CPOMS for recording investigation progress and contact with parents and external agencies
- Keep the senior leadership team informed of progress either via CPOMS or where necessary verbally or via email.
- Ensure appropriate support has been given to victims of bullying and their parents/ carers
- Ensure that each case is monitored after it has been investigated and managed to ensure that repeated bullying does not take place.
- Involve the parents/carers in disciplinary measures against those responsible for/involved in bullying, in order to emphasise that bullying is contrary to the school's code of conduct and therefore unacceptable.

All Parents/Carers should:

- Parents/carers should regularly remind their daughter of the School's Code of Conduct and Behaviour Policy, especially in terms of expected behaviour as found in the school's behaviour policy. This will reinforce the aims of the school and minimise the chance of their child's involvement in bullying.
- Parents/carers should be alert to signs that their child may be a victim of bullying. Such signs may include: problems with attendance, illness, any unusual money requests, missing or damaged equipment and physical injuries.
- Should be aware of, monitor and control their child's use of social media
- If any parent / carer suspects that their child is being bullied they are recommended to encourage their child to inform a member of staff. Alternatively, parents/carers can contact the school directly if they feel that their child is subject to bullying. In the first instance they should contact the appropriate Head of Section / Assistant Head of Section.
- If parents/carers feel that their concerns have not been fully dealt with they should report the matter, in writing, to the Head of School.
- If this does not prove to be conclusive, parents/carers have the right to contact the Chair of Governors.



Merchant Taylors' School

9. Sanctions for Bullying

Appropriate sanctions are imposed on those who bully in line with the School's Behaviour Policy. Sanctions will match the severity of the offence. Where pupils are given a detention or some period of temporary or permanent exclusion, these details will be recorded.

It maybe appropriate, after discussion with parents and pupils, to carry out some form of restorative meeting between the victim and perpetrator.

Pupils are informed that it is one of the few issues on which the School is prepared to permanently exclude pupils.

In cases where a group or Form are found to be bullying a pupil, not only may punishments be imposed but tactful efforts will be made to identify underlying causes to enable those involved to move towards a better quality of School life.

In certain cases, recourse may be had to the services of an appropriate professional to help the victim or the bully. This may include referral to one of the School Counsellors.

10. Social Networking sites, Internet risks and Cyber-bullying

The advent of Social Networking websites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Discord and TikTok, has made the internet more interactive, creative and attractive, yet there are a host of associated risks which present problems for pupils, parents and teachers alike.

Most pupils at the School have smartphones with internet access as well as a digital camera and filming capability. Teenagers possessing such equipment now have on-the-go access to very empowering but also endangering worlds.

10.1. Potential Benefits

Provided that the website content is age-appropriate and interactions are non-harmful, users of such websites derive a sense of inclusion and a social freedom which perhaps feel different to the hierarchies and power-dynamics of groups formed at School. Another benefit is that they develop skills of discernment and managing risk when using such sites. It is inevitable that all internet-users need, at some stage, to discern what is safe and what is not, what is genuine and what may be fraudulent; teenagers need to know what to ignore, what to delete, and also, if a victim of cyberbullying, what to save as evidence. Such skills of discernment and saying 'no', are a crucial part of growing up to become a responsible, socially-empowered citizen in today's world.

10.2. Potential Dangers

In School, internet interactivity is supervised, filtered and monitored. The School



Merchant Taylors' School

uses web-filtering to filter and monitor agreed inappropriate content and to alert the School to safeguarding issues in email.

Out of School, there is often no supervision, filtering or monitoring with the exception of School-issued pupil devices. Pupils with broadband connections on their computers at home or with mobile phones and other portable devices enabled with 3G, 4G, 5G or Wi-Fi are vulnerable to:

- receiving harmful content, including unsolicited bulk email (SPAM), pornographic material, and non-age-appropriate advertising
- becoming complicit 'bystanders' to such content if they pass it on or watch it and post comments (e.g. as is common on YouTube) • sexual predation
- in-app buying
- cyber-bullying (sending nasty or threatening text messages, photos, movie clips about someone, or posting such material on websites)

10.3. What should parents do?

First, internet-accessible computers should be placed in an open living area. This naturally reduces the temptation to view / deal in inappropriate or harmful content. Secondly, visit www.thinkuknow.co.uk and read the advice about technical filters. It is possible to have filters on smartphones and mobile devices to protect your child.

As a School, we ask that you read our policy on Cyberbullying (contained within this policy), the ICT Acceptable User Policy and the E-Safety Policy so that you and your son fully understand what we deem to be the use and misuse of technology. As a general rule regarding use of computers, internet, social networking sites and all digital technology, all pupils should:

- Respect other people's privacy
- Never do online what they would not do face-to-face
- Consider how other people would feel and not communicate anything which would cause alarm or distress deliberately or 'by mistake'

10.4. Cyberbullying

All bullying can be disturbing, but cyberbullying is particularly damaging. Not only is there often the threat of anonymity, but the bullying does not stop at 'the school gate' as it might have done in the past. Cyberbullying on the internet endures and is repetitive by virtue of the fact that any further viewing and commentary (in a global audience) will proliferate the abuse. Also, owing to its remoteness, the perpetrator will not necessarily see the subsequent, ongoing effect on the victim and may deem the comment as 'just a bit of fun'. (Also see also the definition of bullying above.) Cyberbullying can include threats and intimidation, defamation, harassment, exclusion or peer rejection,



Merchant Taylors' School

impersonation and unauthorised publication of private information or images. It can also include messages or images and video intended as jokes, but which have an upsetting or harmful outcome. Any case of cyberbullying should be reported to the School, together with any supporting evidence, such as but not limited to screenshots, which will use its discretion to determine whether or not to report the case to the police. The same Procedures: follow up to Incidents will be followed as for bullying (as outlined above).

10.4.1. Preventative measures for the prevention of cyberbullying

in addition to the measures described above, the School:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its E-Safety Policy and ICT Acceptable User Policy for Pupils.
- Blocks certain sites by our filtering system, and our IT Services staff monitor pupils' use.
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in PSHE lessons, which covers blocking, removing contacts from "friend" lists and sharing personal data.
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- Restricts the pupils' use of mobile phones, as described in the School's Code of Conduct (Pupils)
- Does not allow the use of cameras or mobile phones in any area of the school campus, especially toilets, washing and changing areas.

11. Review and Evaluation

The pastoral team keep the effectiveness of this policy and the prevalence of bullying in the school under ongoing review as part of their cycle of regular meetings. This process of review includes discussion of whether any patterns of bullying behaviour have emerged. The policy and its effectiveness are reviewed annually by Governors. The School Council regularly discusses anti bullying.



Merchant Taylors'
School

Appendix 1: Statement on bullying for display in classrooms

Merchant Taylors' Girls' School Anti-Bullying Policy

Any member of the MTGS Community, pupil, staff member or volunteer, has the right to learn and work without fear of being bullied.

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullies and their victims may be of any age, size or physical strength.

Bullying can take many forms and includes such things as: name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive or humiliating comments, gossiping, spreading hurtful or untruthful rumours, laughing or sniggering at someone in an unkind way, taking or deliberately damaging a person's belongings, threats and extortion, physical violence and intimidation, using body language inappropriately (e.g. giving 'dirty' looks or 'eye-rolling'), deliberately invading someone's personal space, producing offensive graffiti or writing unkind notes about someone, and cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying ... includes any of the above perpetrated via electronic or mobile devices, or when using social media. This also includes sending or displaying offensive or degrading images by phone or via email / the internet, and isolating or excluding people either socially or online.

Main points:

- When bullying has taken place, those who know of it, besides the bully and the pupil, will probably include other pupils and, possibly, parents
- It is vital that all who know of bullying should report it to a Tutor or any other member of staff who will, if they think fit, pass the information on to Heads House or, in serious cases, to the Head.
- The reporting of bullying, even anonymously, is by no means to be regarded as 'grassing' or 'snitching': it is absolutely and always the right thing to do. Indeed, it is a duty for every member of the School.



Merchant Taylors' School

- Bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at the School. This means that a bully can expect, as appropriate, advice, reprimand or punishment. Serious or persistent offence may incur suspension or expulsion.
- A concern for others lies at the heart of the School. Each and every one of us can help to create an atmosphere of friendly co-operation, respect and tolerance by refraining from bullying behaviours and by speaking out if we see it happening.

Please report any form of bullying to Your Form Tutor, Head of House, Assistant Head Pastoral or ANY member of staff.