

ANTI-BULLYING

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Tonbridge School supports the right of all members of the school community to be free from all forms of bullying, harassment and discrimination. We wish to create and maintain a caring and supportive school environment by making clear that bullying will not be tolerated and that positive steps will be taken to eradicate it. We aim to create an atmosphere in which staff, parents and pupils are encouraged to bring out into the open any incident of bullying, knowing that measures to deal with it will have the support of the whole school community. This anti-bullying policy is based in large part on the views of the boys themselves, who are encouraged to feel that they are the owners of it. It represents the School's promise to address problems of bullying and do all that it can to prevent them. This policy also takes into account DCSF guidance given in 'Safe to Learn – Embedding anti-bullying work in schools' and KCC Schools e-Safety policy (2007). This policy is made available to parents and boys and is posted on House noticeboards. All staff and Praeposters are given this policy as part of their induction.

Reference To Other School Policies

- This anti-bullying policy should be read in conjunction with the policies listed below:
- Safeguarding;
- E-Safety;
- Expected Behaviour Code;
- Rewards and Sanctions policy;
- PSHE programme.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is behaviour which is meant to be deliberately hurtful to another person. Such behaviour is likely to be persistent, and difficult for victims to defend themselves against. It can take the form of physical, verbal or emotional abuse, but it can also involve the marginalisation and exclusion of individuals from specific groups. It can happen in houses, but is just as likely in a classroom or wider school setting. Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time. It can cause serious and lasting psychological damage and even suicide. Harassment and threatening behaviour are criminal offences. We always treat bullying very seriously as bullying conflicts sharply with the School's policy on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles. Cyberbullying is the use of new and emerging technologies to cause harm or distress to another person.

Some examples of behaviour which would count as bullying include:

- Actual physical violence such as kicking, hitting, pushing, or the threat of violence.
- Stealing or hiding someone else's property.
- Name-calling and hurtful remarks, including those which focus on race, sexual orientation, religion, culture, gender, special educational needs or disability, or said with the intention of undermining someone's self-esteem. Some bullying also has a specific sexual dimension or dynamic and might involve sexual innuendo or comments, or using sexual language to humiliate or intimidate.
- Open and repetitive 'teasing' in a classroom or group situation; the difference between "banter" and "bullying" is one we are careful to monitor.
- Attempting to humiliate or isolate someone by exclusion from a social or sporting group.

Bullying includes:

Cyber-Bullying. The internet and social networking sites (such as Facebook or Bebo) must not be used to intentionally or deliberately hurt, humiliate, slander or defame another person. Boys are made aware that actions in this regard undertaken outside of School may also contravene School policy and be subject to School sanction (in the first instance). The same sanctions will apply to incidents of cyber-bullying as would apply to any other form of bullying.

Mobile Communications and Emerging Technologies. Boys and staff are made aware that the guidelines which apply to the use of the School network also apply to any handheld communication device which is brought onto the School site. Nothing which is inappropriate or potentially illegal should be downloaded or saved onto these devices and all should be aware of the possible criminality of transmitting such material.

Our expectations of how boys and staff should use new technologies are made clear in our Acceptable Use Policy, our E-Safety Policy, and in the Common Room Handbook.

WHAT WILL BE DONE BY TONBRIDGE TO PREVENT BULLYING?

We (staff and boys) do all we can to create a climate in which bullying is not tolerated, and in which pupils can report bullying incidents without feeling that they are 'telling tales'. Staff, pupils and parents are all involved in this process of creating and supporting a whole School anti-bullying culture.

We will encourage boys to talk openly and regularly about the issue within tutorial groups in their houses, in the appropriate School and House councils, in direct meetings with the School's Anti-Bullying Coordinator, or conversations with other appropriate members of staff (chaplain, counsellor, trusted teacher). We also ensure that School and House praes are thoroughly conversant with this policy and play an important role in its successful implementation.

There are regular meetings with an Anti-Bullying Council from every year in the School. In the Novis this council is made up of one boy from each set, chosen by other boys (and supported by housemasters and Lead Teachers) as being a suitable candidate. Feedback on these meetings is given where appropriate.

We ensure that the School curriculum addresses issues of bullying and encourages pupils and staff to share ideas on preventing it. There is a strong anti-Bullying presence within the PSHE curriculum.

We will entrust a member of staff, known as the 'Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator' (ABC) with the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of this anti-bullying policy, chairing meetings of the ABC councils, encouraging anti-bullying initiatives amongst boys (e.g. poster campaigns, chapel talks, assemblies and an intranet page) and evaluating the policy's overall success. This person will meet with the Second Master every month to review incidents of bullying. In addition, there will be a formal annual review of the Anti-Bullying policy and its implementation.

We ensure that all members of staff are aware of their responsibility to watch out for and respond appropriately to any possible bullying behaviour through Induction and CPD. They should refrain from any words or actions in the classroom which might be seen as an encouragement to bullying or as bullying behaviour in itself.

We encourage housemasters to establish a formal or informal system of peer support in each house – boys to whom victims or witnesses of bullying can turn and ask for help, especially if they feel unable to talk to an adult.

We do all that we can to resolve issues of bullying through mediation, discussion and making bullies aware of the effects of their actions, but we will use sanctions against them when this is deemed necessary. These sanctions will be in line with School policy. We will often use boys to encourage other boys not to continue with their behaviour.

We encourage bullies willingly to seek help themselves in changing their behaviour. This will be catalysed by educating boys as to why they and their peers may find themselves bullying others.

We will give protection and support to any victims of bullying, and to anyone who brings such issues to our attention.

We will publicise details of the School Counsellor and organisations (e.g. Childline) outside the School community who can be contacted if victims of bullies prefer to talk to someone who is independent.

Boys are made aware that issues of racism, religion, sexism, homophobia, gender, special educational needs, disability and sexual bullying will be treated with equal severity.

The School seeks to promote safe use of new technologies through an E-Safety Policy and seeks to prevent the occurrence of cyber-bullying through the restricted use of social networking sites. Boys and staff will be made aware of the School's Acceptable Use Policy on the use of digital media.

WHAT PROCEDURES SHOULD BE FOLLOWED IF BULLYING OCCURS?

Firstly, the matter and all the circumstances must be brought into the open by bringing it to the attention of someone who will do something about it. In some cases this will be another boy, but it might also be a parent or a member of staff - whoever the victim or witness of the bullying feels comfortable in talking to.

The next stage is to report the incident in writing or by email to the appropriate housemaster(s) **and** to the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator. Housemasters should also report to the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator any significant incident of bullying within their own houses. They will talk to all involved, discover what occurred and explore the feelings of both the victim and the bully. If it is judged appropriate, all parties will be brought together to explore ways of resolving the situation, particularly in making the bully come to terms with the effect of his behaviour. Sanctions against the bully will be considered, especially if the bullying is severe. The Second Master must be informed in writing of any significant incidents of bullying.

The situation must then be followed up regularly by those dealing with it. If the bullying is repeated or severe, sanctions or the clear threat of sanctions should be applied. This should range from a formal warning given by the Second Master or Headmaster to suspension from School, either temporary or permanent. The written records will be monitored periodically by the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator and the Second Master, who will be responsible for regular review of this policy.

Job Description for ANTI-BULLYING CO-ORDINATOR

GENERAL

He/she will be responsible to the Second Master for co-ordinating a whole School approach to the issue of bullying.

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

- Inspire boys to take responsibility for and create ways of sustaining the Anti-Bullying culture of Tonbridge School and promote positive behaviour.
- Keep at the top of boys minds the anti-bullying language that has been established so far. Develop it further as new challenges arise.
- Cultivate a network of effective peer support systems in the School.
- Motivate and manage the various year group Anti-Bullying councils.
- Keep up-to-date with developments and initiatives outside the School and be responsible for introducing new ideas to improve our policy.
- Monitor, evaluate, and regularly review the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying policy.
- Arrange staff training in anti-bullying measures, and encourage staff to be alert for, and respond appropriately to, any indications of bullying in the classroom and elsewhere.
- Maintain and improve the recording and reporting of bullying incidents.