



## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

**Policy Custodian:** *Second Master*

**Approving Governors Committee:** *Full Governing Body*

**Approved:** *March 2018*

**Next Review:** *March 2019*

### Statement of Intent

Merchant Taylors' School respects and upholds the right of every pupil to enjoy all aspects of their education free from interference by other pupils. Every pupil has a responsibility to help create a happy atmosphere and a well-ordered way of life at School for all to enjoy. All pupils are expected to base their behaviour on respect for others regardless of differences in age, status, race, religion or gender. Bullying, whether mental or physical, has no place in the School and all members of the School must do all in their power to prevent it; when bullying occurs it must be reported to a member of the teaching staff or an appropriate member of the support staff e.g. the School Nurse or the Second Master's Secretary. Allegations of bullying will always be investigated thoroughly. Everyone in the School is expected to work together to create an atmosphere in which bullying is seen as weak and despicable, and in which any boy who suffers from such behaviour can feel safe in reporting it, without feelings of guilt or inadequacy.

### Policy aims

**N.B.** This policy should be read in conjunction with the separate Anti Cyber-Bullying Policy.

- To ensure that the School's measures designed to prevent bullying have regard to the DfE document "Preventing and Tackling Bullying" (July 2017) and the DCSF document "Guidance Safe to Learn: Embedding Anti-Bullying Work in Schools" (2007);
- To emphasise the seriousness of bullying whether physical or emotional and to recognize that bullying may result in serious psychological harm;
- To maintain and drive a positive, supportive and caring culture among all pupils and staff throughout the School;
- To deter bullying behaviour, to detect it when it occurs, and to deal with it by counselling and/or disciplinary sanctions. If necessary, this will mean the permanent exclusion (expulsion) of those found guilty of bullying others.

### Definition of bullying

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over a period of time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group physically or emotionally. Bullying 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 a child is adopted or is a carer. Bullying can take a number of forms:

Emotional	being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, making threatening gestures
Physical	pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
Racist/racial	racial taunts, graffiti, gestures

Sexist/sexual	sexual harassment in any form is bullying
Homophobic	reference to, or focusing on, the issue of sexual orientation
Verbal	name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, 'banter'
Cyber	involving the internet, email, text messaging and mobile phone calls; misuse of camera and video facilities; sexting.
Disability	reference to, or focusing on, the issue of disability
Cultural	Bullying behaviour centred on racism, religion and culture

## Signs and symptoms

A boy may indicate by signs or behaviour that he is being bullied. Staff should be alerted to the possibility of bullying if a boy:

- is frightened of other pupils, or of staff
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to come to school (school phobic)
- begins to miss commitments
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- has clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or 'go missing'
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has money continually 'lost'
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- cuts meal times or is reluctant to sit with peers at meals
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- bullies others
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- begs staff members to do nothing about what they have seen or been told
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous and jittery when a text or email message is received

These behaviours and signs might indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

## Procedures

1. All incidents of bullying must be taken seriously. They should be investigated by the member(s) of staff who first become aware of an incident. Pupils and parents should report any suspected incidents of bullying to the appropriate tutor or Head of School. Cases of bullying will be handled sensitively and it is recognised that these are difficult and complex situations which need to be dealt with in a thoughtful manner. In all cases the details of the incident and any action taken by a member of staff should be reported to the Head of School as appropriate.

2. Guidelines for staff on how to investigate suspected incidents of bullying are to be found in the Staff Handbook.
3. The Heads of School will, in more serious bullying cases, investigate the matter themselves in consultation with the Second Master. The Second Master, who is the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, will carry out any investigation that relates to suspected, alleged or actual child abuse. A bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, from significant harm'. In such circumstances the Second Master will follow the usual processes of consultation and, if necessary, referral to the relevant external agencies.
4. Any reports to staff of bullying must be followed up, and with care. Staff receiving such a report should immediately establish the facts: What sort of bullying is alleged? When did it take place? Where? Who is involved? What happened? Were there witnesses?
5. Where appropriate, statements should be taken from everyone involved in or who witnessed the bullying. Boys may be asked to make written statements – in this case steps should be taken to prevent collusion in the writing of these statements.
6. Independent witnesses must be afforded protection. The information in their statements must be treated confidentially and steps should always be taken to prevent evidence being traced back to the independent witness.
7. Victim(s) of bullying should be given support and made safe from further bullying.
8. For future reference, the Heads of Section should enter details of all instances of bullying or of alleged or suspected bullying in the Anti-Bullying Database; in cases where severe bullying has been proved and the bully disciplined details will also need to be entered in the Serious Disciplinary Offences Database. Copies of notes referring to the incident should also be passed to/emailed to the Head Master's Secretary for inclusion in the boy's file
9. The victim(s) may benefit from counselling - referral to the School Counsellor should be considered.
10. The bully needs help to change his behaviour and to understand the victim's point of view. Referral to the School Counsellor, if not already involved, should be considered.

### **Advice for pupils**

Pupils are issued with the following advice (based on the DCSF anti-bullying pack - *Don't Suffer in Silence*)

### **Bullying - information for pupils**

#### **If you are being bullied**

- *try to stay calm* and look as confident as you can
- *get away* from the situation as quickly as possible
- *tell your tutor or a teacher* what has happened straight away

#### **After you have been bullied**

- *tell your tutor, a teacher or another adult* in the school
- *tell your family*
- *if you are scared* to tell an adult by yourself, ask a friend to come with you

- *keep speaking up* until someone listens and does something to stop the bullying
- *don't blame yourself* for what has happened

### **When you are talking to an adult about bullying, 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

It is best if you can talk to someone at school or home but, if not, then you can ring **ChildLine**, Freephone 0800 1111, or go to the website [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk), or write, Freepost 1111, London N1 0BR.

The phone call or letter is *free*. It is a *confidential* helpline.

### **Prevention**

A number of strategies are used at Merchant Taylors' School including:

- Effective supervision of pupils.
- Engendering a culture in which bullying is seen to be unacceptable.
- Tutors remind boys at the start of each academic year that they all have a responsibility to create a community in which they all feel free to live happily and to express themselves, without fear of being bullied.
- Tutors should remind boys that any boy who becomes aware of bullying, or suspects that it is happening, has a duty to speak to someone in authority. To withhold such information is to aid and abet bullying, and may be treated as such.
- Bullying is covered through the School's PSHE programme.
- The level of bullying is monitored through the keeping of records of incidents and alleged incidents, and through confidential questionnaires to parents and pupils
- Bullying is an item on the agenda of Senior Leadership Team Meetings and Pastoral Committee Meetings when issues arise. It is also discussed at School Council Meetings.
- Periodically Whole School Assemblies and Year Group Assemblies focus on the problem of bullying to raise awareness of the issue.
- Childline posters are on display at various points around the school.
- Counselling is available through the School Counsellor.
- Staff receive regular training on the school's Anti-Bullying procedures and it is a regular item for discussion in staff meetings and various pastoral committees.
- The school recognises that LGBT+ pupils and SEN pupils may require specific and extra support. This is available through the usual pastoral channels, but also through LGBT+ House reps and the Learning Support department.

### **Sanctions**

Bullying is a serious offence and as such is likely to lead to either a Saturday Detention or an Exclusion; in cases of severe and persistent bullying the Exclusion may be permanent. Incidents of bullying will be dealt with seriously but without overreaction (which can make matters worse). The guiding principle behind the school's response will be to bring the bullying to a halt and to help the bully understand the inappropriate nature of his actions.

## **References:**

Safe to Learn – Embedding anti-bullying work in schools (DCSF, 2007)

Preventing and tackling bullying - Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies (DfE July 2017)

## **Other useful sources of information about bullying:**

anti-bullying alliance  
Kidscape  
Childnet International

<http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>  
<http://www.kidscape.org.uk/>  
<http://childnet-int.org/>

Second Master  
March 2018  
Review date March 2019