



TAVERHAM HALL

Preparatory School

Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure

Statement of Intent

At Taverham Hall School, our community is based upon respect, good manners and fair play. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can develop his/her full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed; but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other.

Taverham Hall School prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Ours is a relatively diverse community, with pupils from a variety of cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds. Some pupils require additional support and help. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting the school in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions.

Bullying, harassment and victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable. Where necessary, we will apply the sanctions described in our Behaviour Policy for behaviour that constitutes bullying or harassment of any kind.

What is bullying?

Bullying is difficult to define, but broadly, it is repeated, antisocial behaviour on the part of an individual (or occasionally a small group) directed at another individual. It falls into two main categories: physical or psychological. It could involve (including sexual) intimidation, verbal, racial, disability and cyber (including chat room, email, e-photos and SMS messages), and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory.

The intended effect of bullying is generally one or more of the following: intimidation, isolation, subjugation and exploitation. It always has at its root the misuse of power and the exploitation of a (perceived) weakness.

It is worth remembering that not all acts of aggression, name calling, and other kinds of nasty behaviour are necessarily bullying. Although such actions may be deplorable and should result in punishment, as long as they do not form part of a pattern, they are not bullying.

It is also worth noting that whilst many parents and staff will be familiar with the terms verbal, physical and emotional bullying, the term cyber bullying may not be quite so familiar. Cyber bullying is bullying which occurs through the use of computers and mobile phones, often in the form of texting. Nationally this form of bullying is on the increase and as a result, it is dealt with specifically in our PSHE programme with further reference and explanation later in this policy.

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 it very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the school's policy on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles.

In addition, the school recognises that the effects of bullying can be so serious it can lead to psychological damage and even suicide. Hence the need for a robust and carefully prepared policy.

Bullying and Taverham Hall School

Among our aims at Taverham Hall School are the following:

- *Promote high standards of achievement ensuring that all children are working to the best of their ability at all times in an atmosphere that is amicable and happy.*
- *Nurture confidence in young people developing self-esteem and a positive approach to learning.*
- *Provide a pastoral care system that instils the values of care and consideration for others...*

It is clear that there is no place for bullying and bullies in such an environment. Although bullying is rare at Taverham Hall School, it would be wrong to assume that bullying does not exist here; such complacency would be not only inappropriate, but could lead to unnecessary suffering on the part of the children in our care. Pupils and their parents have the right to expect us to do what is in our power in order to achieve our aims.

We adopt a 'no blame' policy at the initial stage preferring to focus on identifying causes and altering the problematic behaviour, in the hope that all children will 'tell on bullies' whenever they perceive such behaviour to be taking place. In this way, staff tend to be informed however minor the incident may appear to be.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH REPORTED BULLYING

If an incident of bullying is reported, the following general procedures are adopted:

- The member of staff to whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the pupils involved.
- He/she will inform an appropriate member of the pastoral team as soon as possible.
- The member of staff will calmly explain the range of disciplinary measures that are potentially involved.
- The victim will be interviewed on his/her own and asked to write an account of events.
- The bully, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events.
- The incident should be recorded.

- All tutors should be informed. In very serious incidents, the Head should be informed.
- The victim will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the alleged perpetrator. It will be made clear to him/her why revenge is inappropriate. He/she will be offered support to develop a strategy to help him or herself.
- The alleged bully will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why his/her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. He/she will be offered guidance on modifying his or her behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions.
- The parents/guardians of all parties should be informed and invited into school to discuss the matter. Their support should be sought.
- A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling, should be agreed. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures.
- A meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode.
- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place.
- In very serious and persistent cases, and only after the Head Master/Mistress has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to the Social Services. However, it is the policy of Taverham Hall School to attempt to resolve such issues internally under the school's own disciplinary procedures, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely.

This procedure is outlined in greater detail later in this policy.

TRAINING:

All Staff attended the SAFEchild Child Protection Training INSET in September 2009
Mrs V Foulkes-Arnold the Child Protection Officer

GUIDANCE

What follows is a guide for staff to help identify and deal with bullying.

Identifying the Victim:

Investigation: A teacher is suspicious and makes direct enquiries leading to disclosure.

Most teachers develop a "sixth sense" when it comes to the well being of their pupils and can spot problems easily. However, as a general guide, the victim of bullying may display all or some of the following:

- Unwillingness to return to school
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoiled by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Psychological damage and diminished levels of self confidence

- Frequent visits to the Medical Centre with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiences nightmares
- Talking of suicide or running away

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers.

Disclosure: The victim confides in a fellow pupil, teacher, school counsellor, other adult member of the school staff or his/her parent, who then contacts the Form Teacher/Tutor.

Witness: A third party, having observed the bullying taking place reports it to a member of staff.

Dealing with Bullying

General

The most effective way of dealing with bullying is to create an atmosphere in which it cannot flourish and will wither.

Class Teachers and Form Tutors should discuss this matter with their charges on a regular basis in tutor group sessions and through school assemblies given by staff and outside agencies. Among other resources, the school library has a range of material which may be of interest to tutors/teachers; the Senior Pastoral teacher and Deputy Head will be glad to give advice on suitability and availability. An atmosphere of trust and openness will promote confidence and minimise the risk of the victim suffering in silence. If every pupil is encouraged to feel responsible for spotting and reporting bullying a good deal of bullying can be nipped in the bud.

Awareness needs to be raised of the issues involved:

- the distress and potential harm to the victim,
- the moral unfairness of victimization
- the social unacceptability of bullying.

The risks run by the bully should also be made clear.

As part of the training of, and discussion with, prefects, it is essential that they are encouraged to watch for and report any actions which may constitute bullying.

All adult members of Taverham Hall School's community need to be vigilant in order to spot the child who appears to be unhappy and/or alone without apparent cause. Taking responsibility for pupil welfare is the duty of all staff rather than those who are in named positions of pastoral responsibility. Bullying behaviour can be experienced anywhere and at any time, not just when pupils are not directly supervised, but even, on occasion, in lessons, in front of the teacher.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

We take the following preventative measures:

- We use appropriate Assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying. Our PSHE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. The programme is structured to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other. It specifically tells pupils whom they should inform if they are being bullied, or are worried that another pupil is being bullied. Pastoral pupil surveys, undertaken regularly, give pupils the opportunity to mention whether they have witnessed bullying or have, in their view been bullied in any way.
- Other lessons, particularly RS, English and Drama highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing social skills.
- All our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of the teaching or pastoral staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place. Every member of staff is trained on how to respond to such allegations as part of their induction training.
- All reported incidents are recorded in the duty log kept in the Staff Common Room and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents.
- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team of Tutors, and House Master/Mistresses who support the Deputy Head and are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and are alert to possible signs of bullying.
- Our pastoral team gives support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies.
- The local reverend, who speaks regularly in assemblies, will give support and guidance to pupils of all faiths who are able to refer themselves to him, perhaps at a time of family break-up, sickness or bereavement. The reverend will provide confidential advice and seek to encourage the development of tolerance, understanding and respect for others in a multi-faith community.
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site, particularly areas where bullying might occur. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour.
- In the boarding house, there is a strong team of tutors supporting the Head and the Matrons, who act *in loco parentis*. The informal house environment is important in reinforcing a pupil's standards and values, providing the opportunity for friendly, informal discussion of matters of concern to the individual pupil outside the formal classroom. We encourage close contact between the boarding team and parents/guardians, and would always make contact if we were worried about a pupil's well-being.
- Our Medical Centre displays advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential help lines and web sites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline, Kidscape, Get Connected, Samaritans.
- All pupils have access to a telephone helpline, enabling them to call for support in private.
- We provide leadership training to our team of prefects which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable pupils.
- We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the school, involving our pupils
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.

CYBERBULLYING – DEFINITION

Mr Bill Belsey, the creator of the web site: <http://www.cyberbullying.org/> defined this unpleasant phenomenon in the following terms:

“Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.”

Cyberbullying can involve Social Networking Sites, like Bebo and Myspace, emails and mobile phones, used for SMS messages and as cameras.

CYBERBULLYING – PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

In addition to the preventative measures described above, Taverham Hall School:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its charter for the safe use of the internet. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department monitors pupils' use. No child is allowed to use the ICT Suite unless there is an adult present.
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- Issues all pupils with their own personal school email address. Access to sites such as “hotmail” is not allowed.
- Adheres to the BECTA guidelines regarding E-teaching and the internet.
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in PSHE lessons, which covers blocking and removing contacts from buddy lists.
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- Mobile phones are not permitted in classrooms, public areas of the school, or where they may cause annoyance to others.
- The use of cameras on mobile phones is not allowed in washing and changing areas, or in the bedrooms of boarding houses.

Further details, including Taverham Hall School's charter on the use of the internet, are given in our Policy on Pupils' use of ICT, Mobile Phones and other electronic devices.

Specific Action

The Victim

It is important to act swiftly and decisively when bullying comes to light through any of the routes mentioned above.

When the disclosure comes from a parent, the parent should be reassured that the matter will be investigated according to this policy and that s/he will be contacted within a specified time (no longer than three working days) with an up-date. A record of the conversation with the parent should be kept. Sometimes a parent will request that his/her child should remain unaware of the parent's intervention.

It should be borne in mind that judgement as to the point at which a type of behaviour has become unacceptable and can be designated “bullying” is largely the prerogative of the victim. The victim's feelings and wishes should be respected when it comes to dealing with potentially delicate situations. S/he may ask that no action be taken for fear of reprisals. Explain that the problem rarely goes away without action on the part of a third party and point out that the bully may need some help, too. Explain what action you intend to take and satisfy yourself that this action is not going to cause him further distress. S/he should be

reassured that the bullying will stop and that there will be no repercussions. It is, in any event, not acceptable to do nothing.

The victim should be asked to write an account of the bullying incidents with details including names, places, the nature of the bullying and the dates where possible. S/he should include details of any defensive actions s/he may have taken. If this is not felt to be possible or appropriate, the Class Teacher/ Form Tutor should record the details him/herself and ask the victim to sign the document.

Corroboration should be sought, where at all possible, from other pupils who should also write a similar account.

Inform the class teacher or form tutor directly and, through discussion, try to get an impression of the extent of the problem.

The Bully

Timing is essential in dealing with the aggressor. S/he should be spoken to at the earliest opportunity. Again, it is possible to act without incriminating the victim; aggressors can easily be convinced that the information did not come from the victim and that all the victim did was to confirm reluctantly what you already knew. The aggressor should also write an account of his/her actions giving details (see above) and an explanation of his/her motives from his/her perspective.

S/he may continue to protest their innocence but should, nonetheless, be told in unequivocal terms that there is to be absolutely no attempt on his/her part further to threaten or intimidate his/her victim. Failure to comply will result in the individual being subject directly to stage 4 of the school's policy on behaviour, which could result in suspension.

A bully will automatically be subject to the Behaviour Policy, starting at Stage 2 (see Behaviour Policy) for:

- a first offence,
- an offence which is considered relatively minor by the class teacher/tutor in consultation with the Head of Pre-Prep, The Senior Pastoral teacher or Deputy Head
- or an offence which the Class Teacher/ Form Tutor in consultation with the Head of Pre-Prep, SMT (Pastoral) considers to have been satisfactorily resolved.

In spite of the unpleasant nature of their actions, bullies often need help to understand that what they have done is wrong. Bullying behaviour is also symptomatic of deep-seated, sometimes unacknowledged unhappiness. These things need to be in our minds when dealing with the bully. It should be noted that stage two of the Behaviour Policy makes clear the possibility of follow up work with the bully by The Senior Pastoral teacher or Deputy Head. This will typically involve discussion, not just of the particular details of the matter at hand, but also the related issues such as family, friends and future. An eventual rapprochement between bully and victim may be seen as a desirable outcome.

- Where, in the opinion of the Head of Pre-Prep, or SMT(Pastoral) the offence is more serious (that is, longer term, pernicious, physically dangerous or emotionally harmful) this will trigger stage 3 of the Behaviour Policy and will involve, among other things, referral to the Deputy Headmaster (See Behaviour Policy). Bearing in mind what appears above regarding treatment of the bully, it remains important to follow up.

Miscellaneous

All documentation relating to an incident of bullying, including the pupils' written accounts, should be sent to the Senior Pastoral teacher for filing. All documentation will be available in Staffshare in the very near future.

Teachers/ Form Tutors should not hesitate to seek advice from others who may have dealt with similar problems, such as the Headmaster, Senior Pastoral teacher or Deputy Headmaster.

As teachers, we should not discount the possibility that we may unwittingly be causing pupils to feel uncomfortable in the classroom and we should consider carefully the effect of our own words and actions. We may be providing useful ammunition for a potential bully. Any serious claim by a pupil that they feel bullied by a member of staff should be referred directly to the Deputy Headmaster.

Where this policy is applied in Pre-Prep, references to the Deputy Headmaster should be taken to refer to the Head of Pre-Prep who has authority to act for the Deputy Headmaster.

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