

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals. It can be a barrier to their learning and have serious consequences for their mental health. Bullying which takes place at school does not only affect an individual during childhood but can have a lasting effect on their lives well into adulthood

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 boys 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 the following legislation and guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- The Equality Act 2010;
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
- Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for School Leaders, staff and Governing Bodies (July 2017);
- No Place for Bullying (June 2012);
- Bullying at School; KCC guidance available via www.kelsi.org.uk

This policy is made available to parents and boys and is published in the Memoranda. Praeposters are given this policy as part of their induction.

Reference to Other School Policies and Guidance

This anti-bullying policy should be read in conjunction with the policies and documents listed below:

- Cyberbullying Policy;
- Safeguarding Policy ;
- Tonbridge School Ethos and Aims Policy;
- Online-Safety Policy;
- Discrimination and Equal Opportunities (For Boys);
- Pastoral Care Policy;
- Philosophy of Care Policy;
- The Memoranda;
- Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy;
- Pastoral Education Policy and Departmental Handbook;
- Relationship and Sex Education Policy;
- Spiritual Moral Social and Cultural Development of Pupils;
- Acceptable Use of Computers Policy;
- Mobile Phone Use Policy;
- Emerging Technologies and Use of New Media Policy;
- Statement of Boarding Principles;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Whistleblowing Policy;

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, which can range from a one-off incident to that repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. It might be motivated by actual differences, or perceived differences, between children and is often underpinned by an imbalance of power between individuals. 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, wider School setting or outside of School. It can also happen via mobile technology and the internet. Bullying can take place within the School community but also off the School premises. Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time, but this policy will apply to all members of the School community wherever they are. Emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical as 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. A bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

Boarding

Boarding schools have additional risk factors to consider that comes from the unique nature of boarding accommodation, the risk from boys sharing overnight accommodation and the reduced ability for boys to remove themselves from another boy, or boys, in bullying incidents.

Staff need to be aware that boarding accommodation, and dormitories in particular, where boys are sleeping overnight, can lead to an environment where bullying is hard to detect. Staff should, therefore, be particularly vigilant, looking for changes in boys' appearance and behaviour; knowing and talking to the boys is particularly important. Staff should not hesitate to move boys between rooms if there is either suspicion, or evidence, that bullying is taking place.

Unlike day boys, boarders who are being bullied cannot necessarily escape their bullies for long periods of time as they are not going home as often, especially when they are in the same house. In serious cases boys can also spend time in the Medical Centre whilst an investigation takes place. The School reserves the right to move a boy or boys to a different house at the conclusion of an investigation, to prevent further bullying.

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. It can also happen because a child is adopted, is in care or has caring responsibilities. 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 and we will always challenge these behaviours and recognise the possibility that they can cause significant distress and harm.
- Attempting to humiliate or isolate someone by exclusion from a social or sporting group, including exclusion from an online or messaging platform.

Bullying includes:

- **Cyberbullying.** Cyberbullying is the use of new and emerging technologies to cause harm or distress to another person. The internet, gaming sites, social networking sites, social media and apps 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 cyberbullying as would apply to any other form of bullying. For more detail refer to the separate Cyberbullying Policy.
- **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 policies on Acceptable Use of Computers, Online-Safety, Mobile Phone Use, Emerging Technologies and Use of New Media and in the Tonbridge School 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, boys 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, Matron, School 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 (ABC) from every year group in the School. In the Novi the ABC is made up of one boy from each set and every house, chosen by other boys (and supported by Housemasters and Lead Teachers) as being a suitable candidate. Each house will typically have a member of the ABC from each year group. Feedback on these meetings is given to staff (Housemasters, Matrons, Tutors as well as senior staff) where appropriate.

We ensure that the School curriculum addresses issues of bullying and encourages boys and staff to share ideas on preventing it. There is a strong anti-bullying presence within the Pastoral Education curriculum and a desire to encourage boys to openly discuss and celebrate difference and diversity.

We will entrust members of staff, known as the ‘Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator(s)’ with the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of this anti-bullying policy, chairing meetings of the ABC, training ABC representatives, encouraging anti-bullying initiatives amongst boys (e.g. poster campaigns, chapel talks, assemblies and an intranet page) and evaluating the policy’s overall success. The Anti-Bullying Coordinator(s) meet regularly with the Lower Master and the Deputy Head Pastoral to discuss any incidents and to consider proactive strategies to educate the boys. The Anti-Bullying Coordinator(s) will log incidents of bullying and work on the ABC Log with the Lower Master to identify and respond to any trends or patterns.

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 or in other areas of the School which might be seen as an encouragement to bullying or as bullying behaviour in itself. Staff inaction in the face of bullying behaviours must also be avoided and all staff should feel empowered to challenge such behaviour.

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. We will often engage boys to encourage other boys not to continue with their behaviour.

We encourage bullies to seek help themselves and to be proactive 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, the Independent Person and organisations (e.g. Childline and the Children’s Commissioner) 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, transphobia, special educational needs, disability and sexual bullying will be treated with comparable seriousness.

Boys are made aware of the difference between so-called ‘banter’ and derogatory or discriminatory language. Boys are taught that being a bystander who does not act is to be complicit in the act of bullying, and all boys are made aware of a range of ways in which they can act if they witness bullying behaviour.

We also seek to engage and involve parents in our anti-bullying strategy through the provision of Parents’ Pastoral events and sampling of parental opinion.

We promote safe use of new technologies through education and engagement with the boys on these issues, such as via the Tonbridge Digital Wellbeing Council run by the boys. This approach is supported by an Online-Safety Policy, a Cyberbullying Policy and Acceptable Use of Computers Policies for boys and staff.

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 in the first instance, 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, or even by using the anonymous Concern Report form

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(s) any significant incident of bullying within their own Houses. These reports should be logged on CPOMS to help record and track such incidents 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 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 as detailed below and also in the Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy. This could range from a formal warning to exclusion from School, either temporary or permanent. The written records will be monitored by the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator(s), the Lower Master and the Deputy Head Pastoral, who will be responsible for regular review of this policy.

LIKELY SANCTIONS

All incidents of bullying will be taken very seriously by the School and will depend on the nature and severity of each specific case. Repeat offenders are likely to be subject to even more stringent sanction.

Housemasters are best placed to deal with low level bullying with input from the Anti-Bullying Coordinator(s). However, anything which involves serious physical bullying or protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation) must be passed to the Lower Master, the Deputy Head Pastoral and Second Master. The nature of the sanction imposed will depend on the nature of each case, but it is likely that:

- For lower level cases, in the first instance the boy might expect a School Detention;
- If there is repetition of this type of bullying or if the first instance is more serious, the boy will be given a Headmaster's Detention, with a letter being sent home to parents;
- If there is repetition of this type of bullying, or the first instance is at a higher level, a temporary exclusion will be the likely result;
- If there is then further repetition, or in the case of the most serious incidents, it is likely that the boy will be asked to leave the School.

REVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator(s) and the Lower Master will meet every fortnight to review incidents of bullying and to assess and respond to any emerging patterns or trends.

There will be a regular review of the actions taken by the School in response to any incident of bullying and an assessment of the effectiveness of any actions taken.

There is a formal annual review of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

The Deputy Head Pastoral reports to the Governors' Pastoral Committee about significant issues relating to bullying.

STAFF TRAINING

All new staff are inducted into the Anti-Bullying Policy and a reminder is issued to all staff about the importance of the policy and procedures to follow at start of term CPD. In light of on-going review and scrutiny of the policy and incidents the School will train staff with regard to emerging trends or specialist areas, such as cyber bullying or LGBTQ+ pupils.

USEFUL LINKS

Links to organisations who offer support, advice and guidance:

- [Anti-Bullying Alliance](#)
- [National Bullying Helpline](#)
- [Childline](#)
- [The Diana Award](#)
- [Internet Matters](#)
- [Kidscape](#)
- [The UK Safer Internet Centre](#)
- [UK Council for Child Internet Safety \(UKCCIS\)](#)

JOB DESCRIPTION FOR ANTI-BULLYING CO-ORDINATOR(S)

GENERAL

He/she/they will be responsible to the Lower Master and the Deputy Head Pastoral; 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. Develop it further as new challenges arise.
- Coordinate an annual ABC campaign to raise awareness.
- Cultivate a network of effective peer-support systems in the School.
- Motivate and manage the various year group ABCs.
- 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 review the recording and reporting of bullying incidents.