



# Anti-Bullying Strategy and Statement

Toot Hill School



**Approved by:** TILT

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## **Introduction and aims**

Bullying in any form will not be tolerated in any schools within our Trust.

Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 states that schools need to prevent all forms of bullying. Our school should be seen as a place of belonging where all students and staff feel safe in their identities.

## **Purpose**

Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. It also affects those other children who watch (bystanders), and less aggressive students can be drawn in by group pressure. Bullying is not an inevitable part of school life or a necessary part of growing up. It is clear that certain jokes, insults, threatening behaviour, written abuse and violence are to be found in our society. Bullying can have long-lasting impacts on mental health and no one person or group, whether staff or student, should have to accept this type of behaviour. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed, will a child be best able to benefit from the opportunities available at the school. Indeed, a safe environment where a preventative approach to bullying is taken, will ensure that all students can fulfil their true potential.

The Trust is completely opposed to bullying and will not tolerate it. Bullying is entirely contrary to the values and principles we work and live by. All members of the school community have a right to work in a secure and caring environment. They also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment. As such, everyone has a responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the well-being of all students and all staff have a duty of care to ensure our students are protected from harm, and this includes bullying. No incident at Toot Hill School will be left unchallenged and we will respond to incidents swiftly via our rigorous systems.

## **Principles We**

will:

- Adopt a definition of bullying that is agreed across the Trust.
- Have a consistent approach to any bullying incidents that occur.
- Operate using an anti-bullying ethos and with the expectation of shared responsibility of all stakeholders to challenge bullying.
- Raise awareness of bullying and promote positive relationships based on mutual respect.
- Seek to involve all stakeholders in the implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- Promote positive action to prevent bullying through our Personal Development and pastoral programme, related activities and through curriculum opportunities.
- Provide support for all members of the school community that may be involved in dealing with an incident of bullying.
- Provide appropriate training for both staff and students to support the implementation of the policy across the school.
- Ensure fair treatment for all, regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, religion or sexuality, and encourage understanding and tolerance of different social, religious and cultural backgrounds.
- Pay due regard for those students with SEND who may be at higher risk of peer group isolation and can suffer a disproportionate impact of bullying. Students with SEND may have difficulties with communication and it is important that staff are aware of changes to behaviour or mood. Injuries may not be consistent with their SEND but could be related to incidents of abuse or bullying.

- Pay due regard to the legal obligations of the Equality Act 2010 and raise awareness amongst all stakeholders of the protected characteristics.
- Encourage all stakeholders to report incidents of bullying in a safe environment.
- Actively build the self-esteem and self-confidence of our students.

## Definition of bullying

There may sometimes be misunderstanding about the meaning of the term 'bullying'. One-off incidents, whilst they may be very serious and must always be dealt with, do not fall within the definition of 'bullying'.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance define bullying as "Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online."

We define bullying as persistent or repeated, deliberate attempt to hurt or humiliate someone.

There are various types of bullying, but most have three things in common:

- It is deliberately hurtful behaviour.
- It is repeated over time or persistent behaviours.
- There is an imbalance of power, which makes it hard for those being bullied to defend themselves.

Bullying can occur through several types of anti-social behaviour.

It can be:

**Verbal:** Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, harassment

**Emotional:** Being unfriendly, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures or actions). Inappropriate 'looks' or body language designed to intimidate or exclude from groups, games or activities.

**Physical:** Pushing, kicking, shaking, biting, hitting, punching or any use of violence that may cause physical harm. Unwanted physical contact including an 'invasion of personal space', This includes the threat of violence or the encouragement of physical harm towards another.

**Prejudiced:** Racial / sexual / homophobic taunts, graffiti, gestures, comments on identity / culture / beliefs. Unwanted physical contact or threats / harassment. It also includes any prejudiced or discriminatory comments about any Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

**Sexual:** Unwanted physical contact, sexual harassment or sexual comments, remarks, jokes. Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent including forcing someone to strip or touch themselves sexually. Rating appearance and derogatory remarks. Upskirting designed to obtain images of buttocks or genitalia which can cause distress, alarm or humiliation. In extreme cases, rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault / violence.

**Online:** All areas of internet use such as email, social media and internet misuse. Mobile threats by text messaging and calls, sharing of consensual or non-consensual nude or semi-nude images (sexting or youth produced sexual imagery) Misuse of associated technology; i.e. camera and video facilities.

**Hazing or initiation rituals:** These may involve harassment, abuse or humiliation, this can be online or in person.

**Banter:** Sometimes bullying can be disguised as 'banter'. When investigating an incident of bullying it needs to be taken into consideration whether the 'banter' has been made in a malicious way, a friendly way or out of being ill-educated about the comment.

**Baiting:** Comments or behaviours made to purposefully get a rise out of someone which can be done openly or secretly.

### **Cyber-bullying**

Cyberbullying can be defined as hacking, prejudice comments, hate comments, impersonation, exclusion from conversations/social media and stalking/harassment.

To help prevent cyber-bullying, we will ensure that pupils understand what it is and what to do if they become aware of it happening to them or others. We will ensure that pupils know how they can report any incidents and are encouraged to do so, including where they are a witness rather than the victim.

The school will actively discuss cyber-bullying with pupils, explaining the reasons why it occurs, the forms it may take and what the consequences can be.

Teaching staff are also encouraged to find opportunities to use aspects of the curriculum to cover cyber-bullying. This includes personal, social, health and economic (PSCHE) education, and other subjects where appropriate.

All staff, governors and volunteers (where appropriate) receive training on cyber-bullying, its impact and ways to support pupils, as part of safeguarding training.

The school also sends information on cyber-bullying to parents/carers so that they are aware of the signs, how to report it and how they can support children who may be affected.

In relation to a specific incident of cyber-bullying, all schools will follow the processes set out in their anti-bullying strategy and the school behaviour policy. Where illegal, inappropriate or harmful material has been spread among pupils, the school will use all reasonable endeavours to ensure the incident is contained.

The DSL will report the incident and provide the relevant material to the police as soon as is reasonably practicable, if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that possessing that material is illegal. They will also work with external services if it is deemed necessary to do so.

### **Whole school roles and responsibilities:**

It is the responsibility of every member of the school community to work together to combat and, hopefully in time, to eradicate bullying. The Head Teacher is ultimately responsible for the well-being of all students and staff. All staff have a commitment prevent bullying and support victims, bystanders, staff and parents/carers.

All staff, students and parents/carers should be made aware of the individual schools anti-bullying strategy and policy alongside awareness being raised of the issues associated with bullying. They also have a responsibility to communicate with staff and parents/carers around incidents of bullying.

### **Anti-bullying Co-ordinator:**

The anti-bullying Co-ordinator will:

- Review and develop the anti-bullying policy
- Quality Assure systems of reporting and subsequent actions
- Be responsible for overseeing the recording and reporting of incidents of bullying
- Provide regular CPL for staff and students on bullying
- Work with staff to develop and review effective preventative measures for bullying. **Staff**

All staff will:

- Treat each other respectfully
- Foster in our students' self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our students.

- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying.
- Challenge any incidents of bullying that they witness.
- Listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them.
- Log incidents of bullying on Bromcom using the appropriate categories and CPOMS the incident (where appropriate)
- Report suspected cases of bullying to appropriate class teacher or Head of Year, tutor and the Attitudes to Learning Team.

## **Students**

We expect our students to:

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- Intervene to protect the student who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- Be positive bystanders and report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances. Witnessing bullying without acting or reporting it will be regarded as offering tacit support for the bully and effectively joining in with the bullying. Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should:
- Not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.
- Not use bullying tactics themselves as retaliation.

## **Parents/carers**

We ask our parents/carers to support their children and the school by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying
- Taking appropriate responsibility for the use and misuse of technology, including social media
- Advising their children to report any bullying to a member of staff and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other students
- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any forms of bullying
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken; whilst helping to foster confidence, assertiveness and negotiation skills to deal with unkind behaviour
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved
- Co-operating with the school, if their children are accused of bullying, trying to ascertain the truth.
- Speaking respectfully when talking to all members of college staff

All schools will have their own anti-Bullying Charter /strategy, these include but are not limited to:

- ☐ How pupils, parents/carers and staff can report incidents of bullying
- ☐ How the school investigates allegations of bullying
- ☐ Whole-school proactive strategies to prevent bullying

- How the school trains staff and governors in preventing and handling bullying
- At Toot Hill School these include:

### **School Specific Procedures**

Toot Hill School celebrates diversity and operates a zero tolerance to any bullying incidents and has the following systems in place.

#### **Preventative procedures**

- Students are explicitly taught about anti-bullying through the Personal Development Curriculum which is fully inclusive and equips them with the mechanisms to identify bullying behaviours and, subsequently, report them.
- A whole school commitment to the Equality Act 2010 via lessons, signage and policy.
- A comprehensive assembly programme that raises students' awareness of anti-bullying, cultural diversity, LGBTQ+ and online safety.
- Consistent staff supervision before/ after school, at breaktimes/lunchtimes and in between transitions to lessons.
- A constant review of areas where bullying incidents may have occurred and increased staff supervision there.
- The inclusion in the behaviour policy of a ban on mobile phones and electronic devices on school site and in Toot Hill Sixth Form College.
- Open toilets (anti-bullying toilets) in English, Maths, Geography and Science.
- Student representatives to canvass student voice on anti-bullying procedures at Toot Hill School.
- CCTV around Toot Hill School and Sixth Form College
- CCTV on Sharpes buses
- The inclusion of protected characteristics on Bromcom to ensure that bullying incidents are recorded
- A supportive pastoral structure in place (tutor, Assistant Head of Year, Head of Year, Attitude to Learning Team, Senior Leadership Team)
- Parent information events and bulletins
- Student-led groups, such as Diversity club

#### **Reporting Procedures**

- Students/parents/carers can report incidents of bullying on the school website to trusted adults. They can also do this anonymously to remove any barriers to reporting.
- Students/parents/carers can report incidents of bullying in person or via email/telephone to a trusted adult in school.
- Students can report incidents of bullying via incident forms to the Attitude to Learning Team

All students at Toot Hill School are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying directly to the school. However, we are cognisant that some students may prefer to speak to someone external, such as Childline. Therefore, all students have been provided with national helpline numbers and these are also on display around school.

#### **Whole School Actions**

When an incident of bullying is reported to Toot Hill School, it is dealt with immediately using the below potential actions.

#### **Potential actions:**

- Sanctions in line with the behaviour policy
- Restorative justice
- Behaviour contracts
- Reporting to the police
- Parental meetings
- Educational programmes

### **Strategies for support:**

Toot Hill School is fully committed to supporting all students who have been victims or bystanders of bullying behaviour. This may take the form of:

- External agencies support
- Trusted adult support
- Small group work
- Student run clubs, such as Diversity
- Parental meetings
- Bespoke arrangements in school

### **Creating a positive learning environment**

- The Trust School Behaviour Policy explains how positive behaviour in school is used to create an environment where students take responsibility for their own and each other's well-being.
- Curriculum opportunities in class are used to raise awareness about bullying and our anti-bullying policy, create an anti-bullying ethos and encourage students to manage their relationships positively with others.
- We use the SMSC and British Values programme to develop social and emotional skills such as empathy and the management of feelings, thereby providing continuity from primary to secondary education.
- Assemblies and tutorial time are also used to promote awareness of the negative consequences of bullying.
- The Trust also believe in raising awareness through the Anti-Bullying week events, which provides a direct link to school experiences.
- Whenever possible, Trust schools will endeavour to work with feeder schools, parent/carers and students to create the best possible learning environment for every pupil.
- We aim to provide understanding and tolerance of all our differences and encourage our students to disown bullying in any form. Transitional visits by staff and peer mentors into primary schools ensure continuity and coherence in our approach to behaviour, particularly bullying.

### **Bullying Log**

All incidents of bullying will be recorded on the Bullying Log to allow tracking, monitoring and evaluation. This will in all instances include:

- Incident details
- Action taken including sanctions applied
- Resolution
- Staff involved

This information will be used by the Senior Leadership Team, Pastoral Teams and Governors for:

- Sharing of good practice
- Ensuring parity in dealing with incidents
- Identifying where bullying is a factor in non-attendance at school
- Exclusion data relating to bullying
- Informing preventative work

### **Sanctions**

Will be issued in line with the school's behaviour policy

**Complaints**

If a parent or member of staff is not satisfied with the steps taken as a result of a bullying, the complaints procedure is the same as for other complaints.