

# **TALBOT HEATH SCHOOL**

## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY AND PROCEDURE (PUPILS)**

*Date last adopted: 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022*

*Date of next adoption: Autumn Term 2025*

**This is a whole school policy and includes Early Years Foundation Stage.**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

Safeguarding

Curriculum

Behaviour

Exclusions

Supervision

At Talbot Heath the school ethos is to foster mutual respect and understanding. Young people have a right to feel safe in school. Our policy extends beyond the campus. Any reported bullying outside the school premises will be investigated and if bullying is found to have occurred, the bully may be disciplined when she is on school premises under the lawful control of the staff. This includes cyber bullying. Within the curriculum, pupils throughout the school are taught about the seriousness of bullying and understand the nature of it, the process to be followed should it occur (including support measures) and the fact that the school is a 'telling school' with a 'zero tolerance' approach to bullying.

Staff are trained with regard to the school's anti-bullying policies and procedures as part of the annual safeguarding training. Staff record all reports of bullying and incidents, and immediately inform the Assistant Head Pastoral (of Junior or Senior School where relevant) who instigates the school's procedure and informs the Head of School. The Head of School may meet with pupils and parents if the investigation brings to light incidences of bullying that will result in serious sanctions, including temporary or permanent exclusion.

Our E-safety lead is responsible for ensuring that the school's e-safety curriculum includes cyber-bullying. External agencies, such as the Community Police Safer School's team also deliver sessions on cyber-bullying as part of the school's PSRE programme. Pupils are taught to develop resilience with regard to e-safety. Filters are in place (see ICT, Mobile Equipment and e-Safety Policy) to prevent pupils accessing inappropriate sites.

### **Statement of intent**

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Any behaviour which could be termed as "bullying" is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a *TELLING* school. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff. At Talbot Heath our policy aims to prevent bullying.

It is therefore important that we create a culture and communication network where children and young people are easily able to confide to staff if they are being bullied.

It is our belief that the bully needs help just as much as the child being bullied and we endeavour to help both children with the co-operation of parents. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

## What is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person that recurs over a period of time. Bullying is behaviour which results in pain, distress or fear to the victim. Bullying can be motivated by prejudice, race, gender, religion, disability or sexual orientation.

Bullying can be:

- **Emotional**: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- **Physical**: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- **Racial**: racist taunts, graffiti, gestures
- **Religious**
- **Cultural**
- **Special Education**: negative or abusive comments towards anyone who has special needs or a disability and appears to be 'different' either physically or mentally
- **Sexual**: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- **Homophobic**: because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- **Verbal**: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- **Cyber**: use of texts/ internet email or social networks/ telephone calls to send unpleasant messages/ images

## Signs and Symptoms

**We recognise the seriousness of bullying in causing psychological damage and even suicide.**

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Feels unwell in the morning
- Cries him/herself to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- Begins truanting
- Reluctant to make the journey to school - Is frightened of walking to or from school, doesn't want to go on the school/public bus, begs to be driven to school
- Changes his/her usual routine
- Unhappiness
- Unexplained behavioural changes e.g. moody, bad tempered, aggressive or withdrawn, anxious, lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions or money going "missing"
- Wanting extra pocket money for no particular reason (to pay bully)
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous and jumpy when a cyber-message is received
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above

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

At Talbot Heath all interested parties sign home-school agreements when a pupil starts the school. These make it clear that bullying is not tolerated.

The school will therefore

- ensure that all staff have access to the anti-bullying policy and procedures
- ensure that ample opportunity is given for pupils to express their viewpoints, be it in a classroom situation or in a social situation. This is evident in the curriculum, where all subjects now incorporate such skills, and also in the general social situation within the school. They are encouraged to develop empathy and apply it in every aspect of their lives and to develop self-discipline in their behaviour towards others.
- address anti-bullying issues via the curriculum particularly within PSRE/PSE lessons, in form time and in assemblies during the year
- take very seriously the need to adopt anti-bullying strategies ensuring that it protects the child or young person being bullied.
- have a clear rota of supervision at break, lunch and after school activities (often opportunities for bullying occur in 'social' time)
- Make it clear what sanctions there are for bullying.

Sanctions that may be used include an after-school detention, an exclusion for a fixed period and ultimately permanent exclusion.

Other sources of written advice that staff may find useful in this area include:

- The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Guidelines on how staff can report concerns or allegations of risk of harm to pupils
- Policy on Behaviour and Discipline
- E-Safety Policy

This policy has been written with reference to the DFE Preventing and Tackling Bullying March 2014 and supporting document.

## **Broad Guidelines**

**It is the responsibility of the school to raise awareness of bullying through staff discussions at staff meetings and reduce the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely to occur. It is the responsibility of all members of the school community - Staff, Pupils, Parents and Governors to create an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat each other and the school staff with respect because they know it is the right way to behave.**

### **1. Individual Staff Responsibility**

- To be aware of children who seem unhappy
- To listen to, believe and support children who say they have been bullied
- To offer support strategies or advise students where they can get further advice and support
- To take reports of bullying seriously and make an investigation (with sensitivity) into Such incidents, reporting findings to form teacher and Deputy Head Pastoral/Assistant Head Pastoral of Junior School
- To record bullying to enable patterns to be identified and file in the individual pupil's file in the school office
- To liaise with form teacher and/or Deputy Head Pastoral/Assistant Head Pastoral of Junior School
- To act as positive role models in terms of communication, showing respect, listening, problem solving
- To teach students skills of negotiation, conflict resolution, assertion and listening
- To give support to students who use bullying; teach and praise alternative ways of behaviour

## **2 Form Teacher/Tutor Responsibility**

- To be aware of children who seem unhappy
- To take reports of bullying seriously and make an investigation into these, reporting findings to Deputy Head Pastoral/Assistant Head Pastoral of Junior School
- To speak and listen to ALL children concerned individually but with a witness
- To record all details of interviews in writing and file in all files of parties involved
- To decide on and implement a course of action in consultation with Deputy Head Pastoral/Assistant Head Pastoral of Junior School
- To support students who say they have been bullied and encourage the development of appropriate assertive behaviour
- To support students who use bullying and teach and encourage more sociable behaviour

## **3 Head of Faculty Responsibility (Senior School only)**

- To support members of the faculty investigating allegations of bullying
- Wherever appropriate to discuss issues of bullying within the curriculum by literature, drama, history, PSE, RS

## **4 Deputy Head Pastoral and Assistant Head Pastoral of Junior School Responsibility**

- To support form tutors and individual staff
- To decide, implement and oversee an appropriate course of action in association with the Head/Head of Junior School
- To liaise with Subject Staff, the Head/Head of Junior School and Parents and outside agencies as appropriate
- To complete an incident report form and ensure this is logged in central incident book.
- To oversee anti-bullying initiatives

## **5 Pupil Responsibility**

- To talk to a responsible adult about any incident which makes her unhappy or which she sees making another pupil unhappy
- To treat no-one in a way which could be interpreted as unkind or as "bullying"

## **6 Parent Responsibility**

- To inform the school if they have reason to suspect bullying is taking place
- To co-operate with the school in investigating allegations of bullying
- To support any strategies the school may instigate to help effect more sociable behaviour
- To support any sanctions the school may impose as a result of investigations

## **7 Day and Boarding**

- Staff need to take seriously the concerns of our young people and to liaise with each other to support students accordingly.
- Staff need to be vigilant to act upon reports of bullying and harassment.

## **8 Head**

- To ensure the School's anti-bullying policies and procedures are fully implemented.
- To ensure that all members of the school community feel safe and secure and are aware that there is a zero-tolerance approach in the School.

## **Conclusion**

Implementation of the above policy should ensure that any cases of alleged "bullying" are dealt with swiftly and effectively.

## PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING

Bullying by its very nature is insidious because children and young people are likely to feel that “telling” will only make matters worse for themselves and leave them even more at the mercy of the bully/bullies. The “victim” must be offered immediate support and must be made to feel that they have done the right thing in coming forward. It should be remembered that by telling someone, they have undertaken something which is very difficult.

Any strategy for dealing with bullying must ensure that it protects the child or young person being bullied. For example, it is more appropriate for a member of staff to approach the bully on the basis “We know what is going on” rather than to say that it was the victim who brought the matter to their notice.

When it comes to our attention that there may be bullying in school we start investigations as follows:

1. See the pupils involved individually and record their “statement” about the incident(s) being investigated. **If appropriate and possible, two staff should be present at any such interview where bullying is being investigated.**
2. If there is reason for us to believe that bullying is taking place, we then contact the parents of both parties and put our findings to them.
3. It is our belief that a child who bullies needs help just as much as the “victim” of bullying.  
We endeavour to help both pupils with the co-operation of the parents.
4. During investigations there may well be speculation among the children’s peers and their parents. It is important that we are aware of this and take appropriate action to ensure that rumours are scotched and the investigation is satisfactorily concluded.
5. Careful monitoring will be undertaken by all staff of the pupils involved, discreet or overt, whichever is deemed appropriate to any given situation.

When staff confront a bully or bullies, it is important that they try to include the following key features into their work:

- Be absolutely certain about the known facts. Confront the “bully” with the allegations.
- Make it clear that the behaviour is unacceptable. See bully separately if appropriate.
- Be specific about sanctions if bullying does not stop.
- Follow-up to check that behaviour has ceased.

When staff complete incident forms, they will be requested to state whether or not a particular incident was due to bullying. This will allow school managers to monitor the issue very closely and to respond to parental and staff concerns.

## Dealing with Cyberbullying

The school has a robust programme of education with regard to e-safety and cyberbullying which is delivered to pupils throughout the school. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe online and how to respond in the event of cyberbullying. (See ICT, Mobile Equipment and e-Safety Policy)

- The person being bullied will usually have examples of texts or emails received and should be encouraged to keep these to aid in any investigation. There are also additional reporting routes available through mobile phone companies, internet service providers and social networking sites.
- Some forms of cyberbullying involve the distribution of content or links to content, which can exacerbate, extend and prolong the bullying. There are advantages in trying to contain the spread of these by contacting the service provider, confiscating phones and contacting the police if the content is illegal.

- Take steps to identify the person responsible for the bullying. Steps can include:
  - Looking at the school system and computer logs;
  - Identifying and interviewing possible witnesses;
  - Obtaining user information from the service provider (with police involvement).

In the event that a situation is not resolved, a further meeting between pupils, staff and parents will be arranged. The Head/ Deputy Head Pastoral/ Head of Junior School will work with the parents, pupils and staff to support the victim and bully to bring about full resolution of the situation.

### **Monitoring and recording of bullying incidents**

All incidents of bullying are logged and recorded. All conversations or meetings relating to bullying are documented and kept. An annual evaluation of all incidents takes place so that the effectiveness of the school's policy can be evaluated and trends identified.