

No: 04

THE THOMAS AVELING SCHOOL

POLICY

for

ANTI-BULLYING

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Introduction

It is the intention of The Thomas Aveling School to be a place where bullying in any form is not tolerated. This Policy seeks to establish a framework in which everyone within the school community actively cultivate a climate in which bullying is unlikely to occur and seeks fast and appropriate intervention where needed. It seeks to promote the ideas that everyone has the right to feel safe and free from bullying, so that they have every opportunity to fulfil their potential and that they can lead a healthy, socially and economically productive life.

Aims

This Policy sets out to:

- a) Demonstrate that the school takes bullying seriously and that it will not be tolerated;
- b) Take measures to prevent all forms of bullying in the school, including using Social Media;
- c) Support everyone in the actions to identify and protect those who might be bullied;
- d) Demonstrate to all that the safety and happiness of students is enhanced by dealing positively with bullying;
- e) Have structured and clearly understood procedures for reporting incidents of bullying;
- f) Develop strategies to deal with bullying, inside and outside the classroom, whenever it arises;
- g) Enable students to become more self-confident and to enhance their development of coping strategies to help them deal with the aspects of bullying;
- h) Have the confidence to report it, secure in the knowledge that the matter will be taken seriously and dealt with as promptly as possible.

Definition of Bullying and Procedures

- Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour, whether physical or psychological, repeated over a period of time where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.
- Bullying can be: physical, verbal, social or psychological, cyber-bullying and inter-relationship between classes/groups.

Signs of bullying:

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour: becoming withdrawn and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be changes in work patterns, a lack of concentration or truancy.

All staff should be aware of these possibilities and report promptly any suspicions of bullying to the appropriate Director of Learning who will instigate an investigation as soon as possible, reassure parents or carers and, most importantly, the student.

Incidents found to be bullying will necessitate parents or carers being informed and may result in disciplinary action in line with the school's Discipline and Behaviour policy. Restorative Justice may be undertaken, with the 'bullied' student's consent, and the Assistant Director of Learning and Tutor continue to monitor the students.

Methodology

Underlying principle: Any action taken should perpetuate the school ethos that bullying will not be tolerated. It is essential that all staff, students, parents and carers are committed to the Policy and the ideals that underpin it. Students will be encouraged in the belief that reporting incidents of bullying constitutes responsible behaviour and that everyone has a role to play in the School community by ensuring that the school works towards the elimination of bullying. At the heart of this ethos is the Vertical Tutor group structure and peer mentoring and support within it.

Staff should be aware that bullying can take place anywhere and at any time. Supervision arrangements should take account of these possibilities and special attention must be paid to the less accessible areas of the school. Students should not normally be left unattended in classrooms.

Reporting and Recording

Students are, from their Year 6 interviews onwards, made aware of the multiplicity of ways to report bullying and this is actively reinforced through assemblies and form time. The school website has clear guidance for parents and carers on how to report on-line bullying out of school hours – this should be through the link to CEOPs.

Responsibilities

Governing Body:

The Chair of the Student Welfare Committee will liaise with the Chair of Governors, the Headteacher, and the teacher in school responsible for anti-bullying strategies, and individual cases where appropriate. The Governors' Student Welfare committee will discuss, review and endorse agreed strategies in an annual report from the lead teacher designated by the Head.

The Headteacher:

The Headteacher has a legal duty under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to draw up procedures to prevent bullying among students and will:

- Ensure that all staff have an opportunity to discuss and review strategies.
- Determine the strategies and procedures.
- Discuss development of the strategies with the Leadership Team.
- Ensure appropriate training is available.
- Ensure that the procedures are brought to the attention of all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensure that all students have access to a trained independent counsellor via the Director of Learning.
- Promote and endorse a system of peer mediation through peer mentoring and designate a senior member of staff to organise the scheme through Vertical Tutor groups.
- Report annually to the Governing Body.

The designated person responsible for anti-bullying strategies:

- Will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the policy and systems.
- Will ensure that there are positive strategies and procedures in place to help both the bullied and bullies.
- Will keep the Headteacher and Deputies informed of incidents.
- Will liaise with the CPD Co-ordinator in respect of relevant staff training.
- Will determine how best to involve parents or carers in the solution of individual problems
- Will report routinely to Governors.

Directors of Learning and Leadership Team:

- Will be responsible for ensuring that the school's positive strategies are put into practice
- Will know the school's procedure and deal with any incidents that are reported.

Form Tutors and Assistant Directors of Learning:

- Will be responsible for liaising with Directors of Learning over all incidents involving students in their form.
- Be involved in any agreed strategy to achieve a solution, including peer mentoring, Restorative Justice and counselling.

Staff:

- Will know the policy and procedures.
- Will be observant and ask students what is happening to them.
- Will deal with incidents according to the policy.
- Will never let any incidence of bullying pass by unreported, whether on-site or during an off-site activity.
- Designated staff to participate in PSHE/Citizenship/SEAL programmes.

Parents:

- To communicate with the school when they are concerned their child might be being bullied
- Work with the school to ensure their child is resilient and understands the difference between being bullied and normal adolescent teasing
- Meet with the school and agree strategies to prevent bullying taking place (for example blocking websites and apps, monitoring social media activities and deleting accounts)

Please note the most effective way of tackling bullying is as a partnership. If parents fail to follow through on agreed actions or themselves act aggressively to the alleged perpetrators, situations may worsen and the school will not take further action at that point.

Ethos

The school buildings, and each teacher's classroom, should be welcoming and show evidence of care. It is vital that teachers and students can develop relationships, which place emphasis on trust and mutual respect. Teachers should model non-bullying behaviour by ensuring that teaching styles used do not endorse bullying as a means of control. Teachers should recognise the opportunities to praise good behaviour and they should encourage the notion that there is an expectation of good conduct.

Strategies for dealing with incidents

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be investigated and dealt with initially and immediately by the teacher approached.
- If racist or homophobic bullying is suspected, this warrants immediate Level 3 intervention at Leadership level;
- The teacher will log the details of the incident and inform the Director of Learning.
- The Director of Learning will interview all parties and make a record, assisted by Assistant DoL as appropriate.
- Staff teaching the bullied student and the form tutor will be informed if necessary.
- The Director of Learning will determine, in consultation with the designated person responsible for the anti-bullying strategy/policy, the appropriate strategy and plan of action to combat the bullying.
- The form tutor or Assistant Director of Learning will oversee the implementation of the strategy.
- Parents or carers will be kept informed by the Director of Learning. Groups of parents will not be met with together.
- Any sanctions against the bullies will be determined by the school's Behaviour for Learning policy and parents or carers informed accordingly.

Bullied Students

Staff who deal with students who have been bullied must always offer reassurance. Students who have been bullied will be given support determined by the Director of Learning on consultation with the student.

Bullies

Changing the attitude and behaviour of bullies will be part of the responsibility of the positive procedures used by the school. However, the school recognises that sanctions may also have to be used against bullies.

Sanctions

Any of the school's formal sanctions can be used against bullies as appropriate. For persistent offenders or incidents considered as gross acts of aggression, a permanent exclusion may be imposed.

Involvement of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers, as well as staff and students, should know that the school will not tolerate bullying and takes a positive approach to educating students to combat it.

Parents or carers of students who are being bullied and parents or carers of the bullies will be involved in the solution to the problem as appropriate. These meetings will be on a 1:1 basis, no group or parents will be met with collectively.

Involvement of Students

Students will be involved in the positive strategies through the School Council, mentoring and in tutor groups. Part of the PSHE programme will consist of educating students in how to deal with and combat bullying and this is reiterated to some students through small group interventions such as Horizon and Lilac Learners.

The Curriculum

Issues of bullying form part of the school's curriculum PSHE Programme. Students have the opportunity to discuss their feelings about bullying and to have their awareness raised about its consequences. Students have every opportunity to explore the roles of bullies, victims and witnesses and be able to practice coping strategies in a secure and non-threatening environment.

Training and Induction

The induction of new teachers to the schools should include guidance on the policy, its contents and methods. All staff receive training regarding anti-bullying strategies.