

Last reviewed: October 2017

Tackling Bullying Policy



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1. Student Welfare Ambassadors

We believe that bullying is behaviour by an individual or group over a period of time that hurts another either physically or emotionally.

All members of our community are responsible for challenging bullying and reporting it when we see it.

The Marches' Tolerance and Wellbeing Committee 2017

Our school anti-bullying definition was determined in the Spring term of 2013. Our Welfare Ambassadors produced three alternatives for debate in all tutor groups, using the Virtual Learning Environment Discussion board to track thoughts, votes and suggested alterations.

The Welfare Ambassadors then produced the final definition which all members of the community share.

This policy, updated in June 2013, has been reviewed and approved by the Tolerance and Wellbeing Student Committee – June 2017

2. Bullying outside school premises

Head teachers have a specific statutory power to discipline students for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives head teachers the power to regulate students' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff.

This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted on.

Students are encouraged to take screen prints of cyber bullying incidents. The school responds to incidents of bullying and cyber bullying through the school's Behaviour for Learning and Rewards Policy where these impact on school life for students.

The school will work with the police where necessary when incidents are reported to the police by parents.

If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will always be informed.

3. Tackling bullying policy

This policy takes into account the following documents:

Preventing and Tackling Bullying Advice for Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies July 2011

Shropshire Children's Trust (SCT) and Shropshire Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) Tackling bullying Charter 2011

SSCB Child Protection Procedures

4. Aims of this Policy

The aims of the school's tackling-bullying strategies and intervention systems are to:

- Ensure students can learn best in a safe and calm environment that is free from disruption and in which education is the primary focus
- Prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour in line with the Behaviour for Learning and Rewards Policy.
- React to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way
- Safeguard those students who have experienced bullying and those who have been involved in the act of bullying, and to trigger actions to support these students.

5. Introduction

Bullying can affect everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. It also affects those other students who watch, 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, and it rarely sorts itself out. It is clear that certain jokes, insults, intimidating/threatening behaviour, written abuse and violence are to be found in our society. No one person or group, whether staff or student, should have to accept this type of behaviour. Only when all issues of bullying are tackled, will a child best be able to benefit from the opportunities available at The Marches School.

Bullying takes place in schools as it does in other work places and outside the school. The aim of the tackling bullying policy is to ensure that students in this school learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will students be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at this school.

5.1 Bullying can be related to:

Race, religion or culture

Special educational needs or disabilities

Appearance or health conditions

Sexual orientation, sexist or sexual bullying

Young carers or looked-after children or otherwise related to home circumstances

Verbal (name calling, sexist, racist and homophobic remarks, and other discriminatory language)

Indirect (cyber bullying, spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups)

5.2 Bullying includes:

- Name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, threatening behaviour, kicking, hitting, pushing or taking belongings
- Inappropriate or threatening text messaging and emailing, sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet
- Producing offensive graffiti
- Gossiping, excluding people from groups, and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.

6. Prevention

The school's response to bullying does not start at the point at which a child has been bullied. We aim to be proactive and have systems in place to allow for information to be passed to the Student Support Team.

- Students study the impact of Bullying in the Year 7 curriculum
- A group of trained Welfare Ambassadors hold drop-in sessions for their peers
- A space on the school website allows for confidential reporting
- Regular assemblies take place to reinforce our stance
- The school's tackling bullying definition was developed by the student body and is displayed throughout the school
- A bully box is placed in the Learning Resources Centre and emptied by the Welfare Ambassadors
- Support is shared within the school planner.
- Staff are aware of the signs to look out for and report this up to the Student Support Team.
- The school discussed differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender or sexuality. Also children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities.

There is an ethos through the school and demonstrated in the school's Behaviour for Learning and Rewards Policy for all within the community to both celebrate success and treat one another with respect. We value respect for staff and other students, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others.

There is an emphasis on all members of the school taking responsibility for tackling bullying and reporting it when it is seen.

We believe that bullying is behaviour by an individual or group over a period of time that hurts another either physically or emotionally.

All members of our community are responsible for challenging bullying and reporting it when we see it.

The Marches' Tolerance and Wellbeing Committee 2017

7. Intervention

Disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably taking account of any special educational needs or disabilities that the students may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable students. The school also considers the motivations behind bullying behaviour and whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is the case the child engaging in bullying may need support themselves.

The school also **involves parents** to ensure that they are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied, with information on the school website and in the Parent guide – given to parents at induction in Year 6 and when joining the school “mid-term”.

8. Signs and Symptoms

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:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- does not want to go on the school/public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins truanting
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts to threaten suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares or cannot get to sleep
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions go “missing”
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner money or other monies continually “lost”
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money/lunch has been stolen)
- become aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what is wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated by the Student Support Team or members of the Leadership Group.

Action Points

9. What students can do

Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon!

- try to stay calm
- remind yourself that bullying is wrong. You do not deserve to be bullied
- do not ignore it but keep safe
- take firm and confident action – tell the bully to “STOP”
- do not pretend to be friends with the bully
- let an adult know as soon as possible. This could be your tutor, the Student Support Team or any adult at home – and KEEP coming back if further issues happen
- Keep a diary – when, where, who was involved, what did they do, who else was there
- you can help yourself by:
 - staying with a group of friends
 - avoiding areas where you feel unsafe
 - practising being firm and confident in front of the mirror or with friends

Teachers will take you seriously and will deal with bullies in a way which will end the bullying and will not make things worse for you.

If you know someone is being bullied you should:

- TAKE ACTION! Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own
- Tell an adult IMMEDIATELY. Teachers have ways of dealing with the bully without getting you into trouble
- Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully just to be cool

10. What parents/carers can do

- Look for unusual behaviour in your children
- If you are worried that your son/daughter is being bullied, ask him/her directly about it
- Ask friends if they know any details

If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour

- stay calm – avoid over-reacting
- take it seriously and find out the facts
- talk calmly with your child. Let them know they are valued and that you will support them
- do not agree to keep it a secret
- talk with the school. Contact your child's Tutor, the Student Support Team – House Director and Assistant House Leaders
- keep a diary of all incidents – date, time, what happened, who was involved, who was also there

Stay in touch with the school; let them know if things improve as well as if problems continue.

10.1 If your child is bullying

Children sometimes bully others for many reasons, including:

- they do not know it is wrong
- they are copying others
- it is a means of getting their own way
- as a way of coping with a difficult situation – perhaps at home
- as a response to abusive situations
- To get along with other people
- To feel better about being bullied themselves

10.2 If you learn that your child is bullying

- try to stay calm
- talk with your child and explain that what he/she is doing is unacceptable and makes others feel unhappy
- find out if there is something in particular which is making them behave this way and try to sort it out
- work out a way for him/her to make amends for the bullying
- praise him/her when they do things well. Create opportunities for him/her to shine
- talk with your child's tutor. Explain that your son/daughter is making an effort to change his or her behaviour. Ask what ideas they have to help
- perhaps check their online sites and monitor these into the future to build your confidence that they have stopped their behaviour

11. Action to be taken when bullying is suspected

Staff should:

- take all reported incidents of bullying seriously and deal with the matter sensitively
- remain calm when dealing with an incident
- take appropriate action to defuse situations if necessary
- make an assessment of the situation ensuring that the personal safety of all parties is the first consideration
- offer reassurance to the victim
- decide to either deal with the matter themselves or refer it on as appropriate to another member of staff in line with the school's Behaviour for Learning and Rewards Policy
- record single concerns on the SIMS log as a factual statement

Investigating Incidents

Staff should investigate the reported incident sensitively and thoroughly bearing in mind these principles:

- reassurance to the victim is vital
- confirm and reinforce with all parties the expectation that it is right that incidents must be reported
- reinforcement that bullying can be stopped

If bullying is suspected we talk to the victim, the bully and any witnesses. Witness statements should be obtained from all concerned. If any degree of bullying is identified the following action will be taken:

- Help, support and counselling will be given as is appropriate to both the victims and the bullies.

Dealing with the Victim:

- interview the victim first and separately
- offer reassurance that bullying can be stopped and that the school will persist with strategies until it does
- inform the victim's parents/carers
- offer continued support when they feel they need it
- issue a bullying record for them to record any further instances of bullying
- communicate with tutor, house director, leadership group as appropriate
- house director initiates an entry into the school's bullying log and records a review date in their diary
- check on progress directly with the victim at the time recorded in the bullying log
- offer counselling or other forms of support as necessary
- offer support from peers through the welfare ambassadors
- offer social time within Safe Haven if appropriate
- offer the opportunity to meet with the bully in a restorative conference as appropriate.

Dealing with the Bully

- Do not use the term bully until the facts are established
- Ensure that the behaviour is criticised and not the person
- Interview the bully separately
- Remain calm
- Listen to his/her version of events
- Ask them to complete a witness statement
- Reinforce that bullying is not acceptable
- To be clear that the school expects the bullying to stop. Seek a commitment to this end from the bully
- Advise the bully that you will be checking to ensure the bullying stops
- Punish the bully
- Arrange for restoration of items damaged or taken
- Expect an apology from the bully to the victim
- Communicate with appropriate other parties, e.g. tutor, teaching staff
- Make a written record on the bully's computer file; complete the bully record sheet and send a copy to Deputy Headteacher, Student Welfare; write a letter to the bully's parent/carer
- Check at points in the future that the bullying has stopped
- Work with the bully to meet with the victim in a restorative conference as appropriate
- Offer support from peers through the Welfare Ambassadors
- Offer counselling or other forms of support as necessary

12. Disciplinary steps

- They will be warned officially to stop offending
- The bully's parents/carers will be informed

- Further disciplinary steps will be taken according to the school's Behaviour for Learning and Rewards Policy

13. The Role of the Governing Body

Governors have the responsibility to ensure that the tackling bullying policy is in place, that it reflects school's values and practice, and is reviewed annually.

14. Monitoring and Review

The following ideas are suggestions for monitoring this policy:

- Regular measurements of perceived rates of bullying taken, by means of a simple questionnaire to all students
- School questionnaire sent to all parents/carers of victims of bullying in the past

The policy should be reviewed annually.

Telephone Help Lines



Childline : 0800 1111



Tackling bullying Campaign : 020 7378 1446



Kidscape : 0207 730 3300



Cybermentors : www.beatbullying.org.uk



The Marches School: 01691 664400 (during school hours)