



A WHOLE-SCHOOL POLICY ON BULLYING

A STATEMENT ON BULLYING

Bullying can be described as deliberately hurtful, threatening or frightening behaviour, whether physical or psychological, repeated over a period of time where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

According to 'Kidscape':

- it involves aggression and unequal power relationship; and
- it results in pain and distress and is persistent.

A person is being bullied when someone else, or a group of others, sets out to make him or her miserable and unhappy.

Bullying is harmful behaviour over a period of time. Staff will watch out for the signs and symptoms of all forms of bullying:

- physical
- verbal
- indirect, e.g. spreading rumours or social exclusion
- misuse of mobile phones or Internet message boards and chat rooms (c.f. Section on Cyberbullying below).

The school recognises that any pupil can be bullied but certain factors that can make bullying more likely are:

- a lack of close friends in the school
- shyness
- race, culture, religion or sexual orientation
- a disability or some other obvious difference in appearance or health
- gender issues.

RECOGNISING AND ACTING TO PREVENT BULLYING

Recognising the Signs of Bullying

Bullying is always wrong because of the hurt and distress it causes.

Tettenhall College does not accept or tolerate bullying. We will do all we can to prevent it happening, and to deal with it when it does happen; recognising that both the person being bullied and the bully needs help.

Staff will suspect bullying is occurring if a pupil:

- becomes withdrawn and anxious
- shows a deterioration in his or her work
- starts to attend school erratically
- has spurious illnesses
- persistently arrives late at school
- prefers to stay with adults.

The College also believes that it should raise the awareness of bullying and educate all members of the School community as to how to behave towards one another in a civilised manner. Examples of such education can be found in the programme for PHSE, the content of assemblies and the enrichment programme and the day to day pastoral work by all members of staff.

Pupils will be involved in the positive strategies through both the school council and forms/tutor groups. Pupils, especially the Peer Mentors, will have an input into the PHSE anti-bullying programme, and will be consulted on how it could be developed.

A major part of the programme will consist of educating pupils in how to cope with bullying.

What should you do if you are being bullied or you are aware that someone else is being bullied?

Because bullying can only continue if there is a conspiracy to keep it secret, always tell someone (for example a prefect, a member of staff or your parents) if you are being bullied or if you see bullying going on. What you say will be treated seriously and sensitively.

What will happen is this:

- The person being bullied will be encouraged to talk about it with a member of the pastoral staff of his or her choice.
- The bully (or bullies) will be interviewed. In serious cases, written statements from both the victim, the bully and any witnesses may be asked for. 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 will also have to be used against bullies.
- Ways of dealing with each individual situation will be discussed. In many cases, admonishment and counselling of the bully may be sufficient to resolve the issue and to prevent any recurrence. However, if it is appropriate, sanctions will be imposed. In extreme cases or where there have been previous warnings, offenders may be suspended or excluded from the School.
- It is the School's policy to tackle any case of bullying in partnership with parents. Therefore parents will be informed of any incident of bullying as soon as is possible.
- In all cases, there will be close monitoring of the situation afterwards for as long as is necessary to ensure that the incident can be considered to be closed.

Useful advice can be found in the DCSF non-statutory guidance 'Bullying – Don't Suffer in Silence

CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is a 'method' of bullying, rather than a 'type' of bullying. It includes bullying via text message, via instant-messenger services and social network sites, via email, and via images or videos posted on the internet or spread via mobile phone. It can take the form of any of the previously discussed types of bullying, i.e. technology can be used to bully for reasons of race, religion, sexuality, disability, etc.

Dealing with Cyberbullying Incidents

There is usually some visual evidence after cyberbullying has taken place. Pupils should be encouraged to pass this on to a member of staff or their parents. In some cases, it will be necessary to contact mobile phone companies, Internet service providers or social networking sites.

The following advice should be given to those experiencing cyberbullying:

- ✓ Do not retaliate or reply.
- ✓ Block or remove offenders from buddy lists.
- ✓ Review the information you are giving out.
- ✓ Make sure you tell an adult.
- ✓ Try to keep calm and do not let the bully see a reaction.

If the person responsible for the bullying is identified, sanctions will be applied under the school's behaviour policy. In addition, the following sanctions might be implemented, depending upon the nature and severity of the bullying:

- ✓ confiscating equipment such as mobile phones
- ✓ withdrawing access to the Internet for a set period of time
- ✓ limiting use of the Internet for a set period of time
- ✓ contacting the police,
- ✓ where the cyberbullying is sufficiently severe, informing external agencies such as social networking or email member sites.

Support will be provided for the victim.

This may include meeting the bully to discuss what has happened and agree a way forward. It is important that all children and staff recognise that when an incident of 'cyberbullying' takes place it is dealt with swiftly. Parents should be told, in the early stages of any bullying, what actions have been taken to remedy it.

Use of Mobile Phones in School by Children

All mobile phones brought to school must be clearly labelled with the child's name. It should be expressly understood and agreed that under no circumstances should the mobile phone be used during the school day, including for taking photographs. The school retains the right to confiscate mobile phones for up to 48 hours where when they are being used inappropriately.

Use of Mobile Phones in School by Staff and adults

Although staff and adults will bring mobile phones onto the premises, it must be understood that these should not be used for the purpose of taking photographs and they should be switched on to vibrate mode while on school premises.

All members of staff must be careful about giving out their mobile number. Wherever possible, the school's mobile phone should be used for school trips and visits. However, there may be times when more than one phone is necessary. Where this is the case, a member of staff may use their personal phone but access to this should be restricted.

E-mailing and Instant Messaging

No member of staff may give a pupil their personal email address. Children and staff should never reply to unpleasant or unwanted emails or open files from people they don't know.

When writing emails or instant messages, think carefully about the content. When angry or distressed, you might send something likely to cause further anguish. Leave the computer and discuss the issue with someone else.

Bystanders; the issue of being a bystander or accessory is addressed with all children. Pupils are encouraged to respect other people on and offline and to recognise how sharing a secret and passing on numbers and passwords can cause harm and distress to others.

Being a bystander can include:

- forwarding messages
- contributing to discussions
- taking part in an online poll.

Monitoring and Review of the Bullying policy

This policy is regularly monitored to ensure that it is working as effectively as possible. The whole school community is made aware of ways of reporting incidents of bullying. Bullying is reported to a member of school staff who will then report it to his or her line manager, and the appropriate action will be taken.

CONCLUSION

At Tettenhall College we do not accept that bullying is an inevitable part of school life. No-one should have to suffer bullying. It is up to all of us to take action when bullying happens, to us or to others.