



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Rationale and statement

The Anti-Bullying Policy is intended to be read in conjunction with other policies, in particular the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the Behaviour Policy, the Whistleblowing Policy, the Equality and Diversity Policy and the Online Safety Policy.

Statutory duty of schools

Taliesin Education Ltd (t+centres) recognises that it has a legal duty under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to draw up procedures to prevent bullying among pupils, to bring these procedures to the attention of staff, parents and pupils and to ensure it acts upon these.

STATEMENT: It is a basic entitlement of all members of t+centres to be free from humiliation, oppression and abuse.

Bullying can damage the atmosphere of a class and the climate of a school. Adults can be bullies too; they should be careful to avoid bullying even when dealing with bullies. Our Whistleblowing Policy addresses such issues with regard to the adults in our school, to raise awareness of the existence of bullying.

The connection between bullying and safeguarding

A school which does not have success in managing relationships between its students, particularly where bullying is concerned, is failing in its duty of safeguarding. Students are encouraged to report any incidence of bullying, including cyber-bullying, so that these can be addressed promptly.

Establishing a bully free zone

A chief aim of the school is to help students become confident, develop their self-esteem and raise awareness of their rights to live a peaceful and harmonious life, free from the anxiety and misery of bullying. Play is a natural part of childhood but it becomes bullying when it spoils other children's activities.

The aim of the anti-bullying policy is to ensure that pupils 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 within the school. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will pupils be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at this school.

Bullying – some definitions

- The intentional intimidation or belittling of someone through the misuse of power or position; it is destructive criticism of a person rather than constructive feedback about their mistakes; it publicly humiliates rather than privately corrects and results in the individual feeling threatened or compromised.
- Actions by a person which hurt, persecute or intimidate another.

Additional definitions

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, often repeated over a period of time, and which makes it difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. The main types of bullying are:

- Physical (hitting, kicking, theft);
- Verbal (name calling, racist and other kinds of remark which single out and abuse differences in others);
- Indirect (spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups);
- Cyber-bullying (bullying on social media);
- Contriving to apportion blame unfairly to get others into trouble.

These types of bullying can be described in a more detailed way as follows:

Physical

- Striking or hitting;
- Provoking or taunting;
- Threatening and carrying out physical action;
- Making threats of all kinds leading to action.

Verbal

- Public reprimand;
- Singling-out or victimisation;
- Belittling or patronising comments;
- Name calling, teasing and taunting (These are emotionally bruising. A disturbing aspect of name calling is that adults can give it verbal or tacit support by using nicknames and referring to students' personal attributes);
- Persistent reminders of past failings;
- Alleged 'jokes' about another which are not funny for the person receiving them; insinuations and innuendo;
- Making specific, provocative comments about members of someone's family.

Non-verbal

- Ostracising or freezing out;
- Setting impossible objectives and setting someone up to fail;
- Deliberate wrongful attribution of blame;
- 'Ganging-up' to bully with others which increases its toxic effect;
- Victimizing someone on social networking sites eg by setting up situations in which there is threat to harm;
- Rude gestures, intimidation and extortion;
- Spreading rumours on the above or sending images without permission of the subjects.

Bullying within social networking (cyber-bullying)

The popularity of social networking sites such as Facebook has given rise to a more insidious but nonetheless dangerous and potentially destructive form of bullying which is more difficult to manage within a school situation because of the lack of control of outside influences. We ensure that students look critically at these forms of communication to become aware of how they can be forums for bullying. Should there be an issue with cyber-bullying, we will work with parents/carers to address it and make any necessary changes in our provision. No Social Media sites are permitted to be used in the school IT system as these are filtered.

Some general additional points about bullying

- Boy bullies may be more 'visible' because of the aggressive masculine image in society; girls may be inclined to use more subtle means such as exclusion from the social group, and control and manipulation of others.
- Bullies often feel confident that no-one will stop them bullying in public; onlookers are then part of the bullying.
- Contrary to popular belief, victims do not always differ much from other children eg in appearance or tangible behavioural traits.
- The long-term effects of bullying can make youngsters feel isolated, believing that they deserve it and there is something wrong with them.

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- Bullies can be unaware of their behaviour and after an initial discussion to make them more aware of what they're doing, a warning should be given before a punishment is administered.
- In a specialist setting, some students may have suffered bullying/abuse within their own families or in other settings: sometimes entangling reasons for being a bully may be very complex and may need an approach involving psychological interventions by professionals. We use interagency work to address such cases.

Effects of bullying

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous and withdrawing, feigning illness, taking unusual or persistent absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lack of concentration or truanting from school. Pupils are encouraged to report any bullying which occurs within the school. Information about this process can be found in the Parents' handbook.

Our school's teaching and ancillary staff is alert to the signs of bullying and acts promptly and firmly against it in accordance with school policy. Bullying is addressed in the PSE and Social Skills curriculum, investigating some of the underlying reasons, to increase understanding of the dynamic. Empathy, also a topic within PSE, is explained in the discussion, to ensure an appropriate response when an incident occurs; the need for development of this quality is promoted as being important in the attainment of social awareness and positive interaction with others.

Implementation

The following steps are taken when dealing with incidents:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident is dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached or who has noticed any signs or symptoms of bullying.
- The young person is given reassurances that the matter will be dealt with sensitively and quickly. The student may not feel he is able to talk about it, but staff need to be alert to behaviour which might indicate a problem e.g. change of mood, unusual quietness, depression, change in eating patterns etc.
- A clear record of the incident is written up in the Incident Book, by the staff and students involved. This is then passed on to the Head of Centre or a member of the Senior Leadership Team for immediate action.
- The Head of Centre interviews all concerned and the incident is recorded and kept within individual student files.
- In the first instance, and depending on the severity, the bully will be told that such anti-social behaviour must stop. The situation will then be monitored. Firm disciplinary action involving the Head of Centre and tutors will result if the warning is ignored. In more serious cases immediate disciplinary action will be taken.
- Each case will be followed up to ensure that the victim is given support and to prevent recurrence of the bullying behaviour.

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- Parents/carers are kept informed.
- Sanctions are used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned.
- If a bullying situation continues, despite all efforts to stop it, it may be necessary to set up meetings with relevant outside personnel, consider a period of respite for a set time, or instigate a placement review if necessary.
- Should bullying occur in a home situation, the school will work with the relevant agencies to address such problems.
- A record of the incident is kept in individual student files.
- An annual review of bullying incidents is kept within the general Safeguarding records.
- Tutor sessions can be used to discuss bullying. Role-play situations can be difficult as they often evoke feelings and behaviours which are difficult to contain or defuse. This is better done in very small groups with high staff ratio. Issues such as these are used as material in PSHE and Citizenship lessons, often within Tutor Assemblies.

Bullying as it affects a child in care and entrenched habits

Many young people come into care as a result of abuse of one kind or another. Students at our school may bring with them negative habitual behaviour developed from being bullied, or as bullies themselves; they may have had periods of misery as a victim and decided that if you can't 'beat 'em' it may be better to 'join 'em'. Even very young children learn that aggressive behaviour can help them get their own way. Students who may not begin as bullies may join bullying gangs: bullies try to involve others in their activities. A bully gets satisfaction from another's pain, fear and humiliation. It is the responsibility of those caring for them to provide a safe and secure environment in which they can live and function. When a young person claims to be bullied or victimised, this is taken seriously and thoroughly investigated. The Head of Centre/ Senior Leadership Team is always informed in the first instance. Bullying may involve bullying by a peer, a person the pupil comes into contact with outside the school, a member of staff, or it may be happening within the family.

Ways of dealing with bullies

There is no blanket approach to bullying: where a member of staff is involved this will be dealt with through the usual disciplinary action; where a peer is involved, staff may hold a meeting between the complainant and the bully and try to resolve it, letting the person who is bullying be aware that their behaviour will be monitored.

It is important that all students at the school develop the skills and experience to manage people who bully them, know how to address such individuals, and feel confident to call upon the available support to make this a reality. It is difficult to predict how a bully may respond to being challenged – sometimes it can 'go underground' and the bully will devise more covert or subtle ways of victimising another – staff need to be vigilant to spot such developments. Staff is also encouraged to be aware that such scenarios may arise, albeit in some cases, in a more 'sophisticated' manner which can be difficult to define and deal with among adults in a team. Staff needs to be aware of any sub-currents among adults which may have an adverse effect on

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the group and deal with these accordingly by bringing them out into the open and vigorously and robustly addressing them.

Support for those who have been bullied or who have bullied others

Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a tutor or member of staff of their choice;
- Staff reassuring the student;
- Offering continuous support and checks about the status of the behaviour;
- Taking any action required to restore self-esteem and confidence.

Students who have bullied will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened;
- Discovering why the student became involved;
- Establishing the wrong-doing and highlighting need to change;
- Informing parents or guardians to work with the school to help change the attitude of the student.

Sanctions

In addition to the expression of disapproval, the following disciplinary steps may be taken:

- Raising awareness of why bullying is resorted to with a view to the bully reviewing their behaviour.
- Informal warnings increasing to official warnings to cease offending.
- Minor fixed-term exclusion.
- Major fixed-term exclusion.
- Permanent exclusion, as a last resort if all else has failed. (Before this happens, support from other agencies, TAC meetings will have been fully utilised.)

Addressing bullying through the curriculum

Within the curriculum, the school raises the awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in PSHE, tutorial time, assemblies and specific subject areas, as appropriate, in an attempt to reduce the occurrence of such behaviours.

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History and implementation of this Anti-bullying Policy:

Accepted by SLT in this format: November 2017

Approved by t+centres Governors: Sept 2020

Last revised: Sept. 2020

To be reviewed: Sept. 2021

SLT, all staff and governors have read, discussed and contributed to this policy.

The Head of Centre will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

Effectiveness of the policy:

Data for attendance indicates that recorded general bullying incidents have been very few and the policy needs no amendments at the present time.

Number of general bullying incidents which were not resolved after a single intervention:

During September 2015-2016: 0

September 2016-17: 0