

10a Truro Prep School Anti-bullying Policy

A copy of this is published in the following areas:

*The school's website
Staff Handbook
Parents' Handbook (summary)
School Intranet*

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A. Aims and Objectives

Truro School Prep is committed to providing its pupils with a safe, secure, comfortable and caring environment within which all pupils can flourish and grow with confidence. No child should ever have to accept bullying as a normal or even occasional part of their school life. Bullying of any kind is deemed unacceptable and will be taken very seriously.

The school aims:

- To create an environment that believes bullying is unacceptable and to ensure that it is tackled immediately when identified;
- To ensure a safe environment for its pupils;
- To raise general awareness so that the whole school community can play its part in recognising and responding should bullying occur.

It is the objective of this policy to set out clearly the means by which the school shall meet its aims by:

- Ensuring that all pupils, parents, teaching staff, non-teaching staff and governors are familiar with the school policy, and will know what to do if bullying occurs;
- Conducting appropriate training;
- Building understanding and discussion of anti-bullying and related topics in PSHE and pastoral sessions.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- School Behaviour Policy
- Anti- Racism Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Learning Support Policy

B. Definitions

- Bullying encompasses any behaviour that **persistently** seeks to undermine or hurt an individual or individuals;
- Bullying can take many forms and is often motivated by prejudice;
- Bullying is not a single, isolated incident of friends falling out. In helping to tackle bullying effectively and to avoid it being minimised or trivialised, it is important that parents, pupils and staff use the term accurately, with care and consideration.

Bullying is:

- Persistent;
- Intentionally negative;
- Involves an imbalance of power within a relationship.

It is often:

- Hidden;
- Subtle;
- Hard to see and understand.

It includes:

- Aggressive or insulting verbal put-downs;
- Physical attacks that aim to hurt or undermine another individual;
- Mistreatment of another individual's possessions;
- Selective acceptance within and exclusion from a group;
- Written or electronic communications that convey insults to another individual;
- Writing (graffiti) on a wall or a board making derogatory references to another individual.

Specific areas of bullying for further consideration and awareness include:

- **Racial:** where the focus of the bullying centres on the race of the victim (see the Anti-Racism Policy) OR where racist comments are made regardless of the race of the victim;
- **Religious:** where a pupil's beliefs or religious background are mocked, attacked or undermined;
- **Cultural:** where a pupil's cultural values are mocked – this might include taste in music, dress-sense, appearance etc.
- **Sexual:** where a pupil is subjected to either physical or verbal abuse, which is sexual in its intent;
- **Sexist:** where a person's gender forms the basis for the abuse (see the Equal Opportunities Policy);
- **Homophobic:** where the abuse makes reference to the actual or implied sexual orientation of the victim, both demeaning the victim and implying non-acceptance of homosexuality;
- **Disability:** where the victim is bullied for either having a disability or insults are formed that imply a disability;

- **Cyber bullying:** which includes the use of social websites, personal websites, mobile phones, text messaging and e-mail.

A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

C. Signs of Bullying

The impact on a victim of bullying is likely to include some or all of the following effects:

- Loss of self-esteem and/or self-confidence;
- School phobia;
- A drop in academic performance;
- Introspection;
- Disturbed sleep;
- Bed-wetting;
- Difficulties forming successful friendships / relationships;
- Bullying of another, less powerful acquaintance;
- Frequent visits to the medical room with symptoms of headaches, stomach pains;
- Unexplained cuts and bruises.

The effects of sustained bullying can cause lasting psychological damage and in some extreme circumstances, well documented in the press, has led to suicide.

Whilst bullying is not a criminal offence in its own right, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

Failure to challenge bullying behaviour by individuals makes such behaviour culturally acceptable, which undermines the values and ethos of the school.

The school has a duty to demonstrate within its own management and operation an abhorrence of bullying, not just within the pupil population, but in its dealing with all staff and parents.

D. Procedures

All members of staff should be alert to the possibility of bullying and it is imperative that all cases of bullying are taken seriously and reported as laid out in this policy.

Recognising signs presupposes and underlines the necessity for teachers (in particular, Form Teachers) to maintain a close and empathetic relationship with all pupils in their care.

Although incidents of bullying will usually be reported to Form Teachers in the first instance, staff should not deal with situations in isolation; investigations should take place with the support and advice of the Pastoral Care Coordinator.

Procedures for dealing with a specific report of suspected bullying

The procedures outlined here broadly follow this pattern:

- The identifying or reporting of a concern;
- Investigation and assessment of the concern;
- Drawing up and implementing an action plan;
- Review of progress and further action.

Investigation and assessment of the concern

On receiving a report of bullying from a pupil or a parent, or where a staff member has a concern, staff must:

- Inform either the EYFS Coordinator or the KS1 Coordinator (for pupils from Nursery to Year 2), or the Pastoral Care Coordinator (for pupils from Year 3 to Year 6); the Form Tutor is to be updated via email;
- A meeting will then be convened and parents will be contacted;
- The investigation will be conducted sensitively.

The school will need to know what is happening, who is carrying out the bullying and when and where it happens

Action planning

Drawing up and implementing an action plan:

- The Action Plan Meeting will be convened as soon as possible after the investigation has been undertaken;
- The meeting will review the investigation, agree conclusions and draw up an action plan;
- A date to review the situation and progress made will be set (this should be no more than one week after the action plan has been put into action);
- Copies of findings will be kept in the pupil concerns folder held by the Pastoral Care Coordinator.

Review of progress and further action:

The 1st Review Meeting will:

- Assess progress;
- Agree further action required;
- Set date for a further meeting if necessary.

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a form tutor or member of staff of their choice;
- Reassuring the pupil;
- Offering continuous support;
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence including counselling if needed;
- Helping with coping and avoidance strategies.

Pupils who have bullied will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened and discovering why the pupil became involved;
- Establishing the cause and the need to change behaviour;
- Informing parents or guardians to help change the attitude of the pupil.

Possible disciplinary action by the school:

- Verbal warning;
- Restitution of property, if appropriate;
- Detention;
- Exclusion from certain areas of school premises and life (such as extra-curricular activities);
- In serious cases or where there is repeated bullying, exclusion from the school for a fixed term;
- Continued bullying behaviour will be incompatible with remaining at school and permanent expulsion may be used in such cases.

Every effort will be made to reconcile the pupils.

E. Raising Awareness with the School Community

Staff and Training:

It is vital that staff are made fully aware of their responsibilities and implement this policy with consistency.

- All academic staff will be trained at least once a year, to review the use of the procedures outlined in this policy.

Attendance at these training sessions will be logged on the staff training record.

- This policy will form part of the staff handbook;
- Induction of new staff will include specific training about this policy.

Pupils through the curriculum:

It is the responsibility of the Head and all staff to establish a culture where all forms of bullying and bullying behaviour are unacceptable.

Through the use of assemblies and PSHE pupils will be taught that:

- All forms of bullying are unacceptable;
- What bullying is and is not; the misuse of the word “bullying” by pupils to refer to individual incidents of “unkind” behaviour can lead to a culture of trivialisation and the masking of genuine concerns. Pupils need to be taught to recognise the persistent nature of bullying and that it is not always overtly nasty, but can be the manipulation of the victim through the selective offering of friendship;
- There are different forms of bullying;
- What to do if they think they are being bullied or someone else is being bullied.

Pupils must be empowered to tell an adult immediately if they believe they are being bullied; either a teacher or a member of the school staff that they trust. Ideally this should be the form teacher, but could also include the EYFS and KS1 Coordinators, the Pastoral Care Coordinator, and the Head. Pupils must be told not to wait to find the “right” person, but to tell someone immediately. If they cannot tell a member of staff, they should tell their parents.

As in other situations, confidentiality should not be promised, as this could prevent further action being taken to stop the bullying.

The pupil should be reassured that all efforts will be made to ensure the matter is dealt with in a way that avoids the bullying becoming worse (i.e. as a result of retaliation).

E. Strategies for dealing with bullying (including sanctions)

In the first instance, the school, through its pastoral system, will do all it can to create an atmosphere and ethos within the school where all forms of bullying and aggressive behaviour are culturally unacceptable.

This can be achieved through:

- Assemblies that encourage understanding of relevant issues;
- Staff modeling appropriate behaviours and attitudes;
- PSHE lessons and the specific use of Circle Time to define appropriate and inappropriate behaviours; discussion around behaviours that upset, and the development of pupil strategies for standing up to bullying behaviours;
- Form Time and the creation of Class Codes of Conduct;
- The School’s Behaviour Policy;
- All staff making themselves available and open to pupils’ concerns and comments;
- Listening to concerns raised through The School Council and acting where appropriate;
- Listening to concerns raised by parents and acting where appropriate.

Dealing with specific cases of bullying:

A specific plan will be agreed (*as set out in the Procedures on page 4*) by the Head, the EYFS or KS1 Coordinators or the Pastoral Care Coordinator and the Form Teacher.

The range of strategies employed may include:

- Circle time within class groups or specific pupil groups (e.g. all boys in a year group or all girls in a class) to discuss the issues, brainstorm strategies for avoiding confrontations and to set targets for improvement;
- Discussion with parents of concerned parties (in nearly all case the parents of those involved should be informed and kept updated with progress as a matter of course);
- One to one counseling for both the victim and the perpetrator (this may be with a school mentor, a third party mentor, or a school mentor in the presence of a neutral third party mentor);

- Use of the school's disciplinary procedure to punish unacceptable behavior. Sanctions may include temporary or permanent exclusion from school;
- Use of Anti-Bullying in Cornwall (ABC) as an outside agency both to consult and engage with the staff and pupils: 01872 222447;
- Use of NSPCC: workshops, in school, with pupils and NSPCC facilitator on an annual basis;
- If bullying persists both in and out of school, external agencies may be contacted to support both the bully and the bullied, e.g. a pupil may need access to a counsellor to help them integrate with other children. In certain circumstance, support and advice may be required from the police, LADO and social services.

All actions will be recorded as set out in the procedure, with notes kept on the individual pupil concerns files.

G. Responsibilities of the school community

Staff

- To foster self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others;
- Demonstrate high personal standards of personal and social behaviour;
- Actively discuss with pupils the importance of telling someone about bullying when it happens;
- Be alert to any signs;
- Deal with issues promptly;
- Listen to pupils and act seriously on issues to support and protect them;
- Report any suspected cases to the EYFS or KS1 Coordinators, Head or Pastoral Care Coordinator.

Pupils

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity;
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help prevent any further instances.

Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should:

- Not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.

Parents

Support their children and the school by;

- Understanding what bullying is and is not;
- Advising their children to report any bullying and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils;
- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any forms of bullying;

- Being sympathetic towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken;
- Keep a written record of any reported instances of bullying;
- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying.