



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY v 2.7

Policy Statement

Town Close enjoys a happy and friendly atmosphere, however, there will be occasions when children are unhappy as a result of the behaviour of others. It is the School's policy that behaviour which causes distress to another person, whether intentional or thoughtless, is unacceptable and, if repeated, may be regarded as bullying and will be treated as such.

Whilst learning to understand and manage conflict is an important part of growing up, bullying is not simply a 'falling out'. Research shows that experiencing bullying can have a significant impact on a child's life well into adulthood.

To ensure we are able to prevent bullying, act quickly when it takes place and avoid misidentifying bullying, it is vital that we have a shared definition of bullying (see below) which is understood by the whole school community, including parents, pupils and all staff.

The seriousness of bullying must not be underestimated because it can lead to psychological damage and even potentially self harm and/or suicide.

We aim:

- To encourage all pupils to respect one another.
- To ensure that all targets of bullying are aware of the support available to them, i.e. class teacher/tutor, external providers
- To provide guidance and support for the pupil exhibiting bullying behaviour as we seek to modify their behaviour.
- To provide support to all those who may have been affected by bullying: target, bystanders, parents, pupil's exhibiting bullying behaviours, wider school community.
- To outline a variety of courses of action so that the School's response is appropriate to each separate incident, e.g. no blame policy.
- To structure the procedure in such a way that everyone knows what to do when an incident occurs.
- To ensure that everyone knows bullying is unacceptable at Town Close.
- To raise staff awareness so that the risk of bullying can be reduced.
- To raise children's awareness through the PSHE programme, "TheTown Close Way", assemblies etc.

What is bullying?

Definitions

There is no legal definition of bullying, however, The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) have an agreed and shared definition, which has been used for over 30 years:

The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online.

Bullying is the repeated wilful, conscious desire to harm, threaten or frighten someone - it can be physical or verbal. Any pushing, kicking, threatening, teasing or name-calling which happens repeatedly to make a child feel hurt, frightened and/or lonely is bullying. Racial or overtly sexual remarks may well be bullying as are comments about a disability or gender. One off incidents will be responded to via our Behaviour Policy. In recent years cyber bullying has become prevalent via social media websites, text messages or photographs on mobile phones and email. Given the differing nature of cyber bullying, one off incidents will be treated as potential bullying.

Throughout this policy, terminology when referring to bullying situations will be used as follows:

- **Target** – often referred to as the ‘victim’.
‘Victim’ terminology can imply that the person given this label has no power and is helpless to change what has happened to them.

At Town Close, we actively encourage children to be assertive and to speak out clearly, if they are uncomfortable with a behaviour exhibited towards them.

- **Pupil exhibiting bullying behaviours** – often referred to as the ‘bully’.
‘Bully’ implies that the child’s behaviour is fixed and therefore unlikely to change. Recognising that the child is exhibiting certain behaviours, helps to support them to change such behaviours to more positive and respectful ones.
- **Bystanders** – anyone who witnessed the event, but whom, for whatever reason, felt unable to intervene.

What does bullying behaviour look like?

At Town Close School, we consider the context within which incidents and/or behaviours of concern occur. We will consider the motivations behind the behaviours and will take into account the age and stage of development of the pupils involved. Our focus will always be the safety and welfare of all children involved.

Bullying behaviour may include, but is not limited to:

- Physical – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc.
- Verbal – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling
- Emotional – isolating others, tormenting, hiding books/belongings, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation, and coercion
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc.
- Online / Cyber – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion etc.
- Indirect – can include the exploitation of individuals such as ‘false friendships’, criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation, and radicalisation
- Prejudice-related – derogatory and discriminatory language and behaviour including that which is racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist in nature. This language and behaviour may be directed towards people because of their race/ethnicity/nationality; because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans, or are perceived to be, or have a parent/carer, sibling, or friend who is, because they have a learning or physical disability. Such language and behaviour are generally used to refer to something or someone as inferior.

There is no hierarchy of bullying, all forms of bullying are taken equally seriously and will be dealt with appropriately.

General Statement

Cases of bullying come to light in numerous ways but, in all instances, children and/or parents are encouraged to report the matter to a member of staff. As far as possible, such a report will be treated as confidential.

What should I do?

On becoming aware of a potential bullying incident, a member of staff should:

- intervene immediately to ensure the protection of the target, pupil displaying bullying behaviours and bystanders.
- Report and record bullying incidents to the Deputy Head Pastoral (MW) for Prep Department pupils and the Pre Prep Head/Deputy Head for Pre Prep Department pupils. These records will be held on the schools bullying log.

It is very difficult to lay down appropriate sanctions because every case of bullying is different. Sanctions can range from a simple apology through to the Pupils’ Disciplinary code being applied with expulsion in extreme cases. On occasion, a ‘no blame’ policy may be appropriate, especially at the first sign of a problem.

If disciplinary action is required, this may be administered by senior staff while, in extreme cases, the pupils and their parents will see the Headmaster, who will then decide on appropriate action. In all cases, a record should be made of the incident on the School’s bullying log to enable patterns to be identified. The Deputy Head (Pastoral) will keep oversight of this log of all reported incidents.

Help, Support and Counselling

All affected parties of bullying will be given support, including:

- Targets of bullying
- The pupil(s) exhibiting bullying behaviours
- Bystanders
- Parents of affected pupils (in points 1, 2, and 3)
- Any other affected member of the school community

Targets of bullying are supported in some or all of the following ways:

- By offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience with their class teacher/tutor or another adult of their choice, and bring a friend for support
- By informing their parents / guardians
- By offering continuing support

Pupils exhibiting bullying behaviours are helped in some or all of the following ways:

- By talking about what happened to discover why they became involved
- By informing their parents/guardians
- By endeavouring to dispel their prejudices as far as possible
- By taking one or more of the disciplinary steps described below to prevent further bullying

Disciplinary Steps (see School Behaviour Policy and Pupils' Disciplinary Code)

- They will be warned officially to stop offending and this will be recorded on the schools bullying log
- Their parents will be informed, by phone if possible
- They will be given an appropriate sanction such as lunchtime detention or internal exclusion
- For a serious incidence or repeated offences, they may be suspended for a fixed period or expelled from school, this is at the discretion of the Head teacher

Advice given to children who think they are being bullied

1. Generally it is best to tell someone straight away. It is right to raise your concerns.
2. Teachers will take you seriously and will deal with the bullies.
3. Try not to show that you are upset. This is hard, but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
4. Be proud of who you are. It is good to be individual. No-one deserves to be bullied; bullying is wrong.
5. Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied and that it is **wrong**.
6. Fighting back may make things worse. If you want to fight back, talk to a teacher or parent/guardian instead.

Advice given to children who think another child is being bullied

1. **TAKE ACTION!**
2. Waiting 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.
3. If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult immediately. Teachers have ways of dealing with the bully without getting you into trouble.

Further information and support can be found on the Anti-Bullying Alliance website:

[Anti-Bullying Alliance](#)

Last reviewed October 2024

Next review October 2025