

## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

### **Aims and Objectives:**

In order for the school to achieve its aim of providing a secure, happy and stimulating environment, the safety and care of members of the school community whether they are pupils, staff or volunteers must be ensured. This environment encompasses both inside and outside school. The school's Behaviour Policy provides the parameters of expected behaviour for pupils.

Thames Christian School is committed to the principle that all forms of bullying constitutes unacceptable behaviour and that any reports of bullying will be taken seriously. Bullying is not Christlike and falls well short of the school's high expectations.

Bullying is a clear breach of the Terms & Conditions of the school and the full range of sanctions available will be used to deal with cases of bullying where found and confirmed. In extreme or repetitive cases perpetrators will face permanent exclusion (see School Handbook, Behaviour Policy, Exclusion Policy, Terms & Conditions).

The document has regard to DfE guidance *Preventing and Tackling Bullying* (October 2014), *Searching, screening and confiscation* (February 2014), *Sexting in schools and colleges* (UKCCIS)

### **Availability:**

This policy is made available to parents of pupils via the parent website and parents of prospective pupils can request a copy of the policy free of charge from the school office as indicated on the public website.

### **Responsibilities of the Whole School Community:**

It is the responsibility of the whole Thames Christian School community, pupils, staff and parents, to uphold the school values of compassion, courage, diligence, proactivity, openness, good humour and respect. These are all biblical values which reflect the faith on which the school is founded. All members of the Thames community have the right to remain free from bullying or the fear of bullying.

All individuals should feel free to be able to report any concerns related to bullying wherever they have occurred in the certain knowledge that those concerns will be listened to and the matter investigated by those competent to do so. Those who report an incident

of bullying or suspected bullying will be able to do so in safety.

It is the responsibility of everyone, pupils, staff and parents to report concerns even if they are bystanders to the bullying itself.

### **Definition of Bullying:**

A working definition of what constitutes bullying is any behaviour which aims to consciously hurt, threaten or frighten someone, causing him/her anxiety and distress. Bullying and intimidation can be and often is repeated, and is usually carried out by those individuals or groups who are more powerful. Onlookers to incidents of bullying can be seen as complicit.

Bullying includes name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, pushing, taking belongings, producing offensive graffiti, gossiping, excluding pupils from groups, spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours. Although sometimes occurring between two individuals in isolation, it quite often takes place in the presence of others. It may also take place outside of school hours or away from the school premises.

Cyber-bullying includes sexting (both text and imagery) and any other bullying or inappropriate comments by electronic means using, for example, mobile phones or social networking and may include, for example, inappropriate messaging and sending offensive or degrading images. Any communications of a bullying nature made outside of school will be treated as if was made inside school and be subject to the school's Anti-Bullying and Disciplinary procedures.

Information on how to minimise exposure to cyber-bullying can be found in the school's *Computer and Internet Acceptable Use Policy for Pupils* and at [www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk). Further advice including spotting the signs and taking action can be found in the DfE publication *Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying November 2014* and at [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk).

Specific types of bullying may relate to gender, race, religion or culture; to learning differences or disabilities; to appearance or health conditions; to sexual orientation or may be sexual or sexist in nature.

Not all bullying is deliberate or intended to hurt. Some individuals may see their hurtful conduct as "banter", "teasing" or a "game". Bullying is often hidden and subtle but can be overt and obvious. All these forms of bullying are equally unacceptable. Where bullying is not malicious it can often be corrected quickly with advice.

Bullying may cause psychological harm to the victim and mean that they become withdrawn, do not want to attend school and will simply not be able to perform their best. Children with SEND may be disproportionately impacted by bullying without outwardly showing any signs.

Where there is "reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm" the procedures of the Safeguarding Policy will apply and such peer on

peer abuse will be referred to the local authority as a child protection concern. This will be treated as a very serious issue in accordance with the guidelines above and both abuser and perpetrator will be considered to be “at risk”.

Both victims and perpetrators will be supported through the school’s pastoral care and as appropriate with access to the school counsellor and by professionals as advised by social services. Perpetrators will also be subject to the school's disciplinary procedures as defined in the *Behaviour Policy* and the *Exclusion Policy*. The approach will be risk based and proportionate. It could include but is not limited to, removal from classes, restriction of freedoms, temporary and permanent exclusion.

The school will investigate all bullying reported whether it occurs within the school or whether it occurs outside of school where a member of the school community is affected.

### **Reporting and Recording Bullying:**

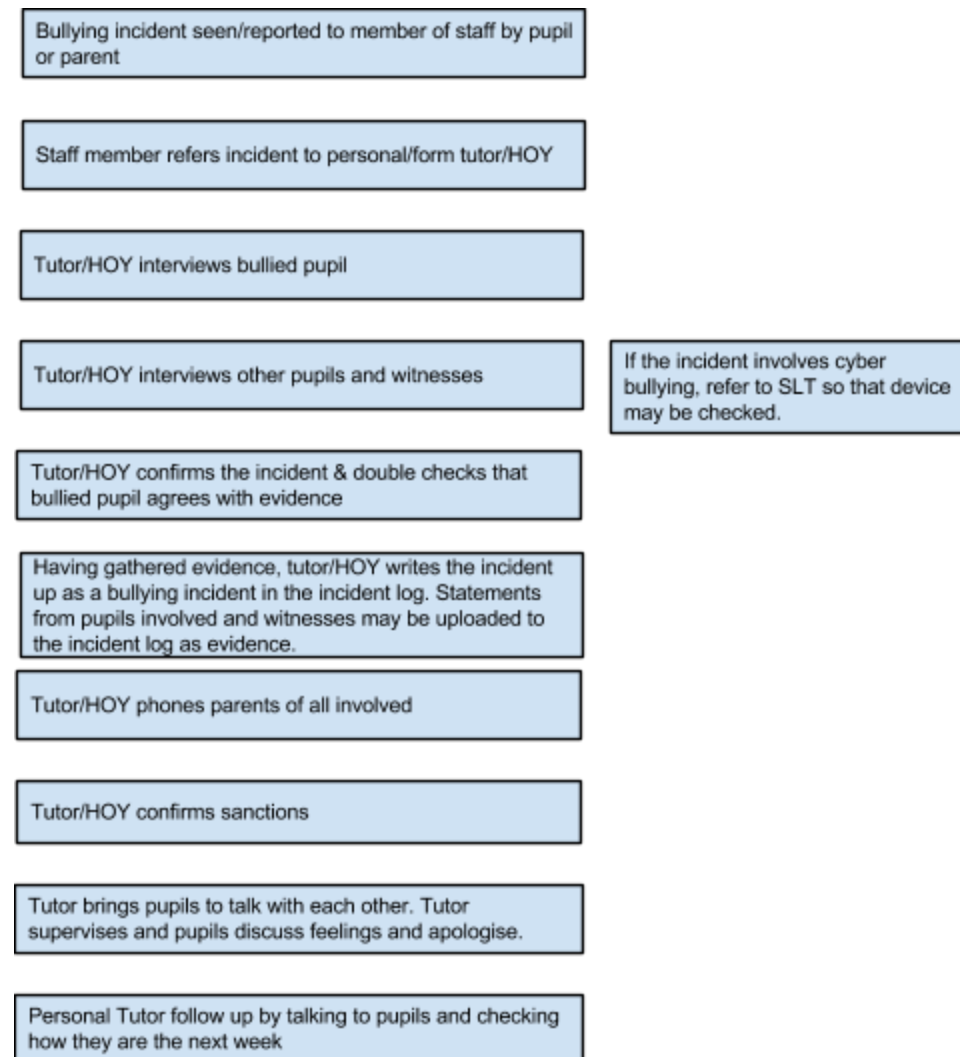
#### **Reporting**

- If a pupil feels that they are a victim of bullying they or their parents should inform an appropriate member of staff.
- Parents or pupils who have concerns about another pupil in the school should inform an appropriate member of staff.
- In most cases the most appropriate member of staff will be their child’s Form Tutor or Personal Tutor but could be any member of staff that they feel most comfortable telling.

#### **Recording**

- All reports of bullying will be recorded as a bullying incident in the incident log and investigated. The investigation may involve all pupils concerned writing an account of the incident. The accounts will be uploaded to the incident log as evidence. This should be done as soon as possible after the incident is reported.
- Where a pupil is at risk or maybe at risk of harm the incident should be referred to the DSL as a Safeguarding concern.
- The following flowchart should be followed during an investigation.

## Responding



## Recurrence

- If a second incident occurs, the incident may be referred to a member of the Senior Leadership Team for further investigation. Parents will be contacted and requested to come into school to discuss and help resolve the situation.
- If the bullying persists it may be necessary to refer either or both parties to the schools counselling service or in serious cases to the local authority for an Early Help Assessment or a referral to CAMHS.
- Sanctions will be determined in accordance with the *Behaviour Policy*, however, serious instances or instances of recurrence temporary or permanent exclusion will be considered in accordance with the *Exclusions Policy*.

## Malicious Accusations

- Malicious accusation of bullying behaviour, if found to be untrue, will be treated very seriously and result in disciplinary sanctions.

## Electronic Devices and Social Media Accounts

- Under the Education Act 2011 pupils may be asked to access their social media, mobile phones or other electronic devices so that teachers can investigate inappropriate behaviour or material if the need arises.

## Indecent and Inappropriate Material

- Sexual imagery of under 18's will be treated as a Safeguarding issue and must be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible. The procedures in the *Safeguarding Policy* will be followed.
- Viewing, sending or otherwise possession of sexual or illegal material will be dealt with under the *Behaviour Policy* and the *Exclusion Policy*. The material may be passed on to the police and any electronic devices used may be retained for further investigation. Parents will be notified and pupils will be requested to delete inappropriate material if it is not required as evidence. The pupil will be given a deadline by which they must have deleted the imagery from all devices, online storage and social media.

## Criminal Law

- Some forms of bullying may constitute a criminal offence under the Protection and Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003 and the Public Order Act 1986. If it is believed that an offence has been committed advice will be sought from the Police. For example under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

## Strategies Used to Minimise Bullying:

The school aims to educate all pupils and staff as to the consequence and repercussions of their actions.

- Staff training days and staff meetings are used to raise awareness and identify vulnerability and patterns as well as regular reviews of the incident log by the Senior Leadership Team.
- The Safeguarding team monitor the internet activity of pupils involved in bullying incidents.
- Staff and pupils are frequently reminded of the school's position on bullying and their responsibility to report bullying through assemblies and other activities in the curriculum.
- Parents are reminded of the school's position on bullying and their responsibilities at parent events and through the communication of this policy.
- Heads of Year hold conversations with the perpetrator to try to ascertain why they are engaging in bullying behaviour.

- Teaching on the ethics of Jesus and the biblical mandate of respect for one another and compassion and care of the marginalised.
- Emphasis of the school's values during assemblies and form time especially the avoidance of prejudice based language.
- The school's PSHEE programme specifically addresses anti-bullying and emphasises the importance of celebrating differences between people.
- The school's PSHEE programme and curriculum includes specific lessons on keeping safe in particular keeping safe online and the use of websites such as [www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk) and [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk).
- The student leadership team are encouraged to be caring and vigilant to others in the school community.
- Role play in Drama and the study of Literature and History.
- The student council, listening post and counselling service which aims to provide a listening culture.
- Mediation sessions to resolve conflict.
- Use of the schools based counselling service
- Speech and Language and other specialist sessions.
- Teaching victims assertiveness strategies.
- Close supervision of pupils especially outside of lessons including before and after school, break time and lunch time.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The policy will be reviewed at least annually in the light of the incident log.

### **Useful References**

Childline offers a free 24-hour helpline and counselling service      0800 1111

Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA)      [www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed in April 2018

### **Signed**