

	POLICY TITLE	Anti-Bullying Policy
Committee/person responsible for policy		Local Advisory Body
Date approved by Local Advisory Body		9 November 2017
Date of last review		November 2017
Next review due		November 2018

The aim of the anti-bullying policy is to ensure that students 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. Students must be encouraged to report all bullying.

Bullying is defined as any behaviour by an individual or group that:

- i. is meant to hurt - the person or people doing the bullying know what they are doing and mean to do it;
- ii. happens more than once - there will be a pattern of behaviour, not just a 'one-off' incident;
- iii. involves an imbalance of power - the person being bullied will usually find it very hard to defend themselves.

It can be:

- i. emotional, e.g. being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, threatening gestures;
- ii. physical, e.g. kicking, hitting, taking and damaging belongings;
- iii. verbal, e.g. name calling, taunting, threats, offensive remarks including homophobic, racist and sectarian;
- iv. relational, e.g. spreading nasty stories, gossiping, excluding from social groups;
- v. intimidation and harassment, e.g. pressure from members of a group against an individual creating a feeling of unease or fear;
- vi. cyber/virtual bullying, e.g. gaming, texts, e-mails, picture/video clip bullying, Instant Messaging (IM).

Peer on Peer Abuse

Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use the school's anti-bullying procedures where necessary. However, all staff recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers and should be clear about the school's policy and procedures regarding peer on peer abuse. All peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Peer on peer abuse can take many forms, including:

- physical abuse such as biting, hitting, kicking or hair pulling
- sexually harmful behaviour/sexual abuse such as inappropriate sexual language, touching, sexual assault
- sexting, including pressuring another person to send a sexual imagery or video content
- teenage relationship abuse - defined as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual or emotional abuse, perpetrated against a current or former partner
- initiation/hazing - used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as sports team or school groups by subjecting them to a series of potentially humiliating, embarrassing or abusing trials which promote a bond between them
- prejudiced behaviour - a range of behaviours which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless or excluded and which relates to prejudices around belonging, identity and equality, in particular prejudices linked to disabilities, special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender and sexual identity.

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with peer on peer abuse, for example girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence.

At our school, we take the following steps to minimise or prevent the risk of peer on peer abuse.

- An open and honest environment where young people feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them.
- Assemblies are used to provide a moral framework outlining acceptable behaviour and stressing the effects of bullying.
- RE and PSHE are used to reinforce the message through stories, role play, current affairs and other suitable activities.
- Staff will endeavour always to create surroundings where everyone feels confident and at ease in school.
- We will ensure that the school is well supervised, especially in areas where children might be vulnerable.

Cyber – bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff who has been formally authorised by the headteacher, that staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

If an electronic device that is prohibited by the school rules has been seized and the member of staff has reasonable ground to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must give the device to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable. Material on the device that is suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, or that is a pornographic image of a child or an extreme pornographic image, should not be deleted prior to giving the device to the police. If a staff member finds material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, they can decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of school discipline.

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, aggressive, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school.

Schools' teaching and support staff must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with school policy.

Statutory duty of schools

Head teachers have a legal duty under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to draw up procedures to prevent bullying among students and to bring these procedures to the attention of staff, parents and students.

Implementation

At Taunton Academy all adults have a responsibility to model positive and supportive behaviour in their dealings with students, and with one another, so that students have the confidence to pass on information. This ethos is stressed during the student transition activities and is regularly visited in assembly and through PSHE. Students are reminded of their part in sustaining the qualities of community life that allow students to learn without fear of bullying.

There are important opportunities in many curriculum areas to raise issues of bullying and allow for contextual tutoring to take place. Staff will be alert to the opportunities and be aware of the need to monitor the responses from students and act on any information that they receive.

At Taunton Academy we are aware that it is the quality of relationships within a school community that allow issues to be resolved effectively. Consistency and continuity are very important, as is the support of parents and the wider community in upholding the values of the school.

The school website, noticeboards, assemblies and tutor programme provide information for
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students about what to do if they feel bullied. Students are advised to tell a member of staff who will arrange to see the pupil to discuss the problem. Parents and carers are also encouraged to contact the school about bullying and are reassured that the matter will be dealt with in a discreet, sensitive and appropriate way.

Students are encouraged to report bullying on behalf of others if necessary and to realise that it is never acceptable to be a bystander if bullying is taking place. Useful contact phone numbers and website addresses are given on the school website. In most instances it is best to contact the year leader/tutor, who will direct the concern to the most appropriate member of staff.

The following steps may be taken when dealing with incidents:

The school:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by a member of staff
- A clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to the year leader
- An appropriate member of staff will interview those concerned and will record the incident
- Parents will be kept informed
- Sanctions will be used as appropriate
- Referral may be made to partner agencies should this be necessary

Where allegations of sexual violence or sexual harassment are made, the school will act in accordance with the guidance set out in Part 5 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

Students:

Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- offering an opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff to reassure the pupil
- offering ongoing support with an appropriate adult for an agreed period
- taking steps to restore self-esteem and confidence to allow the pupil to regain control of their social situation
- in some cases making a referral to an external agency

Students who have bullied will be helped by:

- discussing what happened
- discovering why the pupil became involved
- establishing the wrong doing and need to change
- informing parents or carers to help change the bullying behaviour of the pupil
- monitoring the pupil's progress and future behavior
- in some cases making a referral to an external agency

The following disciplinary steps can be taken:

- letter home and record on pupil's file
- official warnings to cease offending

- detention
- supervision of students in, or exclusion from, certain areas of school premises
- internal exclusion
- fixed-term external exclusion
- permanent exclusion

As well as using its own sanctions, the school will co-operate fully should a case of bullying be referred to the police.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

The school will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school and with partners in the community.