



The Thomas Lord Audley School

## Anti-Bullying and Cyber Bullying Policy

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## **Statement of intent**

Thomas Lord Audley School believes that everyone in the school community has the right to learn and to teach in a healthy and caring environment, without fear of being bullied. There is no place for bullying in our schools and each of us involved in our community has a role in creating a culture where bullying is not tolerated. No child deserves to suffer the pain and indignity that bullying can cause. We recognise the negative impact it has on educational experiences and wider development. Bullying has no place anywhere in our school community and this applies both to the bullying of students and staff.

## **PART A – ANTI-BULLYING**

Providing safe and happy places in which to learn and teach is essential to achieving school improvement, promoting equality and diversity, and ensuring the safety and well-being of all members of our school communities. All students fall out from time to time and need to learn the life skills to deal with these situations, part of our role at school is to help students develop these skills

### **1. Definition**

Bullying is based on unequal power relations, real or perceived. It will usually be repeated over time and be difficult to defend against. It is intended to hurt the recipient emotionally and/or physically. It can manifest verbally, in writing or images including online, and can be done physically, financially (including damage to property) or through social isolation. Verbal bullying is the most common form especially within schools.

1.1 It takes many forms and can include:

- Physical assault
- Teasing
- Making threats
- Name calling
- Cyber bullying – bullying via mobile phone or online (email, social networks and instant messenger)

1.2 Bullying can occur during or after school hours. Whilst most reported bullying happens during the school day, it can also happen travelling to or from school, in the neighbourhood or on the internet.

1.3 The school will investigate all reports of bullying when they affect the well-being of people within the school community.

### **2. The aims of our anti-bullying strategies and interventions are:**

- To prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour.
- To react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way.
- To safeguard the student who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support for the student.

- At Thomas Lord Audley School our agreed definition of bullying is ‘ *a persistent, deliberate attempt to hurt or humiliate someone. It is characterised by three things: it is repeated over time; it involves deliberately hurtful behaviour; and it involves an unfair balance of power that makes it hard for those being bullied to defend themselves.*’

### **3. Anti Bullying Strategies**

The aims of our anti bullying strategies and interventions are to:

- ensure that all students know it is their duty to report any bullying they witness;
- prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour;
- react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way;
- safeguard the student who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support for the student;
- apply disciplinary consequences when appropriate, enabling students to learn from the experience, possibly through multi-agency support;
- bring forward an amicable solution that allows all parties involved in the incident to continue their education.

### **4. Preventative Strategies include:**

- A strong pastoral system promoting an open and honest anti bullying ethos.
- Use of our conflict resolution procedure: ‘CRACCED IT’
- Curriculum opportunities to discuss issues around diversity and draw out anti bullying messages.
- Throughout the academic year we raise awareness of the negative consequences of bullying (e.g. Anti-Bullying Week, whole school assemblies,).
- Via our School and Year Councils we engage students in the process of developing the school anti bullying policy and promoting open and honest reporting.
- We are constantly trying to improve our learning environment and conduct reviews of any potential bullying areas. Staff are vigilant and are very aware of their responsibilities.
- We apply our sanctions fairly, proportionately, consistently and reasonably, taking account of any special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities that students may have and taking into consideration the needs of vulnerable children.

### **5. Disciplinary consequences have three main purposes**

- To impress on the perpetrator that what they have done is unacceptable.
- To deter them from repeating that behaviour.
- To signal to other students that the behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from doing it.

Consequences for bullying are intended to hold students who bully to account for their behaviour and ensure that they face up to the harm they have caused and learn from it. They also provide an opportunity for the student to put right the harm they have caused.

We contact parents, promptly when issues of bullying come to light, whether a child is the one being bullied or the one doing the bullying. Concerns and complaints about bullying will always be

taken seriously and will be thoroughly investigated. Incidents of bullying are recorded by the HOY/AHOY and are co-ordinated by a senior member of staff. Records are kept that enable the school to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its anti-bullying strategies. The records also help the school to liaise and inform multi agency teams and to demonstrate defensible actions in the event of complaints being made by stakeholders.

## **6. We will always try to ensure that all parties are able to move forward from a bullying incident**

Strategies to do this could include individual or group work and will cover topics such as feelings, consequences of actions, friendships and positivity. We always encourage all parties to contribute solutions to the problem so that whenever possible they are all in agreement with the proposed solution.

### **PART B – CYBER BULLYING**

Over recent years, Cyber Bullying has become a very real social issue. We acknowledge that at school, communication technology plays an increasingly large and important part in the school curriculum.

The school understands that in the wider community, students can, and do, access all types of material online and use technology for social networking. It is therefore important to acknowledge that sometimes, these technologies are used for unpleasant purposes. We accept that there are unfortunate misuses of this technology and we aim to address any breaches of this nature.

We recognise the existence of cyber bullying and the severity of the issue.

We are committed to:

- Educating students, staff and parents about cyber bullying and its consequences.
- Providing a productive and safe learning environment.
- Providing a robust policy to prevent and, if necessary, deal with cyber bullying, should it arise in school or affect the education of students within the school community.
- Developing and improving the policies and procedures around cyber bullying through regular evaluation and review.
- Providing a strong anti-bullying policy and acting upon it where bullying arises.

## **1. Context**

- 1.1. Cyber bullying is the use of IT, commonly, but not exclusively, smartphones or the internet, to deliberately upset someone else.
- 1.2. It can be used to carry out all the different types of bullying; an extension of face-to-face bullying.
- 1.3. It can include threats and intimidation, harassment, defamation, exclusion or peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorised publication of private information or images and the manipulation of images to cause distress. It can include messages intended as jokes, but which have a harmful or upsetting effect.
- 1.4. Cyber bullying may take place inside school, within the wider community, at home or travelling.

1.5. It can draw bystanders into being accessories.

1.6. It includes:

- Threats and intimidation
- Harassment or 'cyberstalking'
- Vilification/defamation
- Exclusion or peer rejection
- Impersonation
- Unauthorised publication of private information or images
  
- Manipulation

1.7. Cyber bullying may be carried out in many ways including the following:

- Threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages
- Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips via mobile phone cameras 📷  
Silent or abusive phone calls or using the victim's phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible
- Threatening or bullying emails, possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else's name
- Intimidating or hurtful responses to someone in a chat-room/group chat
- Unpleasant messages sent during instant messaging

## **2. Legal issues**

2.1. Cyber-bullying is generally criminal in character.

2.2. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information in any media, including internet sites.

2.3. The legislation that covers cyber bullying is section 127 of the Communications Act 2003, which makes it an offence to send, by public means of a public electronic communications network, a message or other matter that is grossly offensive, or one of an indecent, obscene or menacing character.

2.4. In addition, the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.

2.5. At school, cyber bullying is considered as serious as any other form of bullying. Cyber bullying issues are dealt with in an appropriate manner dependent on the severity and frequency of the issue, and the age of the student.

## **3. Responsibilities for the prevention of cyberbullying**

3.1. The headteacher is in charge of the practices and procedures outlined in this policy and will ensure that their effectiveness is monitored.

3.2. The headteacher will ensure that the school maintains details of agencies and resources that may assist in preventing and addressing cyber bullying.

3.3. All members of staff will be trained to identify signs of cyberbullying and will be helped to stay informed about the technologies that children commonly use, by self-study and regular updates.

- 3.4. A cyber safety code will be developed, and periodically reviewed and communicated to help students protect themselves from being caught up in cyber bullying, and to advise them on reporting any incidents.
- 3.5. Students will be informed about cyber bullying through curricular and pastoral activities.
- 3.6. Students and staff are expected to comply with the Acceptable Computer Use Policy.
- 3.7. Parents/carers will be provided with information and advice on cyber bullying.
- 3.8. It is made clear in staff meetings, the staff handbook, and the Code of Conduct, that members of staff should not have contact with current or past students on social networking sites (specifically, should not be-friend students on Facebook or other social media platforms). In addition, it is advisable not to have past students as friends.
- 3.9. The delivery of PSHE is important and will discuss keeping personal information safe and the appropriate use of the internet. In addition, students will be educated about e-safety through projects in other subjects.
- 3.10. Outside the curriculum, students will receive regular pastoral sessions about e-safety and cyber bullying through assemblies, conferences and anti-bullying and PSHE Enrichment Days.
- 3.11. Students will have a voice through the school/year student council to ensure they are fully engaged and involved in evaluating and improving policy and procedures.
- 3.12. Students from all year groups electronically accept the Acceptable Computer Use Agreement before they are allowed to use school computer equipment and the internet in school. This is done at regular intervals throughout the academic year. Parents will be asked to confirm that they have discussed its contents with their children.
- 3.13. Parents will be provided with information and advice on e-safety and cyber bullying via literature, talks, etc.

#### **4. Required actions if cyber bullying occurs**

- 4.1. Advise the victim not to respond to the message.
- 4.2. Refer to relevant policies including: E-safety, Acceptable Computer Use, Anti-bullying, Behaviour and PSHE, and apply appropriate sanctions.
- 4.3. Advise the student not to delete the message/image.
- 4.4. Secure and preserve any evidence.
- 4.5. Inform the Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) and senior management team.
- 4.6. Notify parents of the students involved.
- 4.7. Consider delivering a parent workshop for the school community.
- 4.8. Consider informing the police, depending on the severity or repetitious nature of the offence.



## **5. Required actions if malicious posts or threats are made against students or teachers**

- 5.1. Inform the site used and request the comments be removed if the site is administered externally.
- 5.2. Secure and preserve any evidence including URLs, screenshots and print-outs.
- 5.3. Inform the headteacher and senior management team.
- 5.4. Inform parents.
- 5.5. Depending on the severity, evidence will be sent to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre.
- 5.6. Inform police as appropriate.

## **6. Reporting**

- 6.1. At school, issues of cyber bullying should be reported according to the processes in the school's procedures.

## **7. Responding to cyberbullying**

- 7.1. Cyber bullying will generally be dealt with according to the Anti-Bullying Policy.
- 7.2. A cyber bullying incident might include features different to other forms of bullying, prompting a particular response. Significant differences may include:
  - Impact: possibly extensive scale and scope
  - Location: the anytime and anywhere nature of cyber bullying
  - Anonymity: the person being bullied might not know who the perpetrator is
  - Motivation: the perpetrator might not realise that his/her actions are bullying
  - Evidence: the subject of the bullying will have evidence of what has happened

## **8. Support for the person being bullied**

- 8.1. The feelings of the victim are paramount and, as with any form of bullying, support for the individual will depend on the circumstances.
- 8.2. Available support will include:
  - Emotional support and reassurance that it was right to report the incident.
  - Advice not to retaliate or reply, but to keep the evidence and show or give it to their parents or a member of staff.
  - Emotional support and reassurance that they have not done anything wrong.
  - Advice on other aspects of the code to prevent re-occurrence.
  - Advice on how the perpetrator might be blocked from the individual's sites or services.

- Actions, where possible and appropriate, to have offending material removed from the host media.
- Advice to consider changing email addresses and/or mobile phone numbers.
- Discussing contacting the police in cases of suspected illegal content.

## **9. Investigation and legal powers**

- 9.1. Again, the nature of any investigation will depend on the circumstances. The school will follow the guidance set out in the DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation (2018 update)
- 9.2. Where the person conducting the search finds an electronic device, they may examine any data or files on the device if they think there is a good reason to do so. In determining a good reason, the staff member must reasonably suspect that the data or file on the device in question has been, or could be, used to cause harm or to disrupt teaching or break school rules.
- 9.3. All the searches will be authorised by a Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher and may include:
- 9.3.1. Review of evidence and advice to preserve it, for example, by saving or printing (e.g. phone messages, texts, emails, website pages).
- 9.3.2. Efforts to identify the perpetrator, which may include looking at the media, systems and sites used.
- 9.3.3. Identifying and questioning witnesses.
- 9.3.4. Contact with the CEOP centre if images might be illegal or raise child protection issues. The school will also contact the police or Social Care.
- 9.3.5. Requesting a student to reveal a message or other phone content or confiscating a phone.
- 9.3.6. The school has a duty to protect all of its members and provide a safe, healthy environment.

## **10. Working with the perpetrator**

- 10.1. Work with the perpetrator, and any sanctions, will be determined on an individual basis, in accordance with the Anti-Bullying Policy, with the intention of:
- Helping the person harmed to feel safe again and be assured that the bullying will stop.
  - Holding the perpetrator to account, so they recognise the harm caused and do not repeat the behaviour.
  - Helping bullies to recognise the consequences of their actions and facilitating change in their attitude and behaviour.
  - Demonstrating that cyber bullying, as with any other form of bullying, is unacceptable, and that the school has effective ways of dealing with it.

## **11. Cyber bullying education**

11.1. As part of our on-going commitment to the prevention of cyberbullying, regular education and discussion about e-safety will take place as part of the computing and PSHE curriculum.