



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Introduction

Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. It also affects those other pupils who watch, and less aggressive pupils can be drawn in by group pressure. Bullying is not an inevitable part of school life or a necessary part of growing up, and it rarely sorts itself out. It is clear that certain jokes, insults, intimidating/threatening behaviour, written abuse and violence are to be found in our society. No one person or group, whether staff or pupil, should have to accept this type of behaviour. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed, will a child best be able to benefit from the opportunities available at The Marches School and Technology College.

All Forms of Bullying are Unacceptable

The Marches School and Technology College aims to:

- provide for all a safe, supportive learning and work environment free from any threat or fear of being bullied.
- work towards an ethos in our community where all forms of bullying are unacceptable and where the reporting of bullying is encouraged and expected.
- reduce and eradicate wherever possible all instances of bullying
- respond effectively to all instances of reported bullying
- ensure all partners in the education process are aware of this policy and that they fulfil their obligations to it.
- meet any legal obligations which rest with the school.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (eg hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school/public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins truanting
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts to threaten suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- beings to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions go "missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner money or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money/lunch has been stolen)
- become aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated by Pastoral Leaders or members of the Leadership Group.

Action Points

What pupils can do

Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon!

- Try to stay calm
- Remind yourself that bullying is wrong. You do not deserve to be bullied.
- Don't ignore it but keep safe
- Take firm and confident action – tell the bully to "STOP"
- Don't pretend to be friends with the bully
- Let an adult know as soon as possible. This could be your Form Tutor, Pastoral Leader, Roger or Kath in TicTac or any adult at home
- You can help yourself by:
 - staying with a group of friends
 - avoiding areas where you feel unsafe
 - practising being firm and confident in front of the mirror or with friends

Teachers will take you seriously and will deal with bullies in a way which will end the bullying and will not make things worse for you.

If you know someone is being bullied you should:

- **TAKE ACTION!** Watching 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
- **Tell an adult IMMEDIATELY.** Teachers have ways of dealing with the bully without getting you into trouble
- **Don't be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully**

What parents can do

- Look for unusual behaviour in your children
- If you are worried that your son/daughter is being bullied, ask him/her directly about it

If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour

- stay calm – avoid over-reacting
- take it seriously and find out the facts
- talk calmly with your child. Let them know they are valued and that you will support them
- don't agree to keep it a secret
- talk with the school. Contact your child's Pastoral Leader, the Headteacher or a governor immediately
- keep a record of all incidents

Stay in touch with the school; let them know if things improve as well as if problems continue.

If your child is bullying

Children sometimes bully others for many reasons, including:

- they don't know it is wrong
- they are copying others
- it is a means of getting their own way
- as a way of coping with a difficult situation
- as a response to abusive situations

If you learn that your child is bullying

- try to stay calm
- talk with your child and explain that what he/she is doing is unacceptable and makes others feel unhappy
- find out if there is something in particular which is making them behave this way and try to sort it out
- work out a way for him/her to make amends for the bullying
- praise him/her when they do things well. Create opportunities for him/her to shine
- talk with your child's Pastoral Leader. Explain that your son/daughter is making an effort to change his or her behaviour. Ask what ideas they have to help.

The Marches School and Technology College staff are committed to helping.

What the school can do

- organise the community in order to minimise opportunities for bullying, eg provide increased supervision at problem times
- use any opportunity to discuss aspects of bullying, and the appropriate way to behave towards each other, eg PSD programme, assemblies, TicTac workshops
- encourage pupils to treat everyone with respect

Action to be taken when bullying is suspected

Staff should:

- take all reported instances of bullying seriously and deal with the matter sensitively
- remain calm when dealing with an incident
- take appropriate action to defuse situations if necessary
- make an assessment of the situation ensuring that the personal safety of all parties is the first consideration
- offer reassurance to the victim
- decide to either deal with the matter themselves or refer it on as appropriate to another member of staff in line with the schools Behavioural Policy

Investigating Incidents

Staff should investigate the reported incident sensitively and thoroughly bearing in mind these principles:

- reassurance to the victim is vital
- confirm and reinforce with all parties the expectation that it is right that incidents must be reported
- reinforcement that bullying can be stopped

If bullying is suspected we talk to the victim, the bully and any witnesses. Witness statements should be obtained from all concerned. If any degree of bullying is identified the following action will be taken:

Help, support and counselling will be given as is appropriate to both the victims and the bullies.

Dealing with the Victim

- Interview the victim first and separately
- Offer reassurance that bullying can be stopped and that the school will persist with strategies until it does
- Inform the victim's parents/guardians
- Offer continued support when they feel they need it
- Issue a bullying record for them to record any further instances of bullying
- Communicate with Form Tutor, Pastoral Leader, Leadership Group as appropriate
- Check on progress directly with the victim at some time in the future
- Send parent questionnaire to monitor effectiveness of the policy
- Offer counselling or other forms of support as necessary, eg Kath Davies, Roger Thomas or Gill Harper

Dealing with the Bully

- Interview the bully separately

- Remain calm
- Listen to his/her version of events
- Ask them to complete a witness statement
- Reinforce that bullying is not acceptable
- To be clear that the school expects the bullying to stop. Seek a commitment to this end from the bully
- Advise the bully that you will be checking to ensure the bullying stops
- Punish the bully
- Arrange for restoration of items damaged or taken
- Expect an apology from the bully to the victim
- Communicate with appropriate other parties, eg Form Tutor, Pastoral Leader, Jan Glover, Headteacher
- Make a written record on the bully's computer file; complete the bully record sheet and send a copy to Jan Glover; write a letter to the bully's parent/guardian
- Check at points in the future that the bullying has stopped

Disciplinary steps

- They will be warned officially to stop offending
- The bully's parents/guardians will be informed
- Further disciplinary steps will be taken according to the school's Behaviour Policy






Mentoring and Review

The following ideas are suggestions for monitoring this policy:

- Regular measurements of perceived rates of bullying taken, by means of a simple questionnaire to all pupils
- School questionnaire sent to all parents of victims of bullying in the past three/six/nine months

The policy should be reviewed annually.

Telephone Help Lines

-  **Childline** : 0800 1111
-  **Anti-bullying Campaign** : 020 7378 1446
-  **Kidscape** : 0207 730 3300
-  **The Marches School and Technology College** : 01691 664400 (during school hours)
-  **Governors: Mr R Pearson and Mrs S Bywater** : c/o 01691 664400 (during school hours)