



Anti-Bullying Strategy

A key feature of Townshend as a small school is that it has the atmosphere of a family, with a great deal of care and concern shown for the welfare of the members of that family.

Even so, it is recognised that bullying behaviour can happen anywhere, and the school is not immune to its effects. Therefore there is constant vigilance exercised in preventing any aspect of bullying culture from permeating into the interactions of students and staff.

Definition

Bullying can be defined as such:

'Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally'. (U.K. Department of Education 2013)

Research suggests there are five essential components of bullying behaviour:

- 1. Intention to harm: bullying is deliberate, with the intention to cause harm; friends teasing each other in a good-natured way is not bullying, but a person teasing another to upset them is bullying.*
- 2. Harmful outcome: one or more persons are hurt physically or emotionally.*
- 3. Direct or indirect acts: bullying can involve direct aggression, such as hitting someone, as well as indirect acts such as spreading rumours.*
- 4. Repetition: bullying involves repeated acts of aggression: an isolated aggressive act, like a fight, is not bullying.*
- 5. Unequal power: bullying involves the abuse of power by one or several persons who are (perceived as) more powerful, often due to their age, physical strength or psychological resilience. (U.K. National Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children - NSPCC)*

Effects

It is essential to address any aspect of bullying behaviour because research (NSPCC 2010) has demonstrated that children and young people who are bullied are more likely to:

- Experience negative physical and mental health issues such as depression and anxiety, increased feelings of sadness and loneliness, changes in sleep and eating patterns, and loss of interest in activities they used to enjoy. These issues may persist into adulthood.
- Decrease their academic achievement and school participation. They are more likely to miss, skip, or drop out of school.
- Have suicidal thoughts and a small number might retaliate through violent measures later in life

Children and young people who are bullies: are more likely to:

- Engage in violent and other risky behaviours into adulthood
- Abuse alcohol and other drugs in adolescence and as adults
- Get into fights, vandalism, and drop out of school
- Engage in early sexual activity
- Have criminal convictions as adults
- Be abusive toward their partners, spouses, or children as adults

Children and young people who witness bullying (bystanders) are more likely to:

- Have increased use of tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs
- Have increased mental health problems, including depression and anxiety
- Have poor attendance at school

Prevention

At Townshend, strategies to prevent bullying behaviour aim to:

1. Nurture the 'spiritual being within'.

Exposure to the Townshend daily routine of prayer, reflection and moral dialogue in classes enforces the notion that human virtue should be developed and then practiced. An eternal spiritual truth such as 'the Golden Rule – *Lay not on any soul a load that you would not wish to be laid upon you, and desire not for anyone the things you would not desire for yourself*' then becomes a strong internal moral force in preventing antithetical behaviour such as bullying.

2. Raise awareness of bullying behaviour.

Every year, at a common morning Assembly, the concept of bullying in all its forms, including cyber-bullying, is raised and illustrated by senior administration. Further discussion is then encouraged in the subsequent home-room classes that follow.

In the evening, Dormitory orientation that is led by senior students emphasises the behaviour needed to maintain a unified and emotionally safe campus.

3. Provide a safe 'hearing' ear.

Students are constantly reminded, at orientation, assemblies and home-room, that any form of emotional distress should immediately be raised with the counsellor, home-room teacher, dormitory parents, or administration. This is re-inforced to their parents during the orientation programme.

4. Provide staff the skills to recognise and deal with bullying.

As part of staff training at the start of the school year, communication and the effects of bullying are discussed regularly.

Fortnightly school staff meetings, weekly dormitory staff meetings, and weekly meetings of the dormitory staff with the counsellor throughout the year seek to identify 'students of concern' who may have experienced emotional difficulties. Any cases raised are investigated and action planned. Usually the counsellor takes the lead in addressing the student individually.

Parents are encouraged to communicate any unusual changes in their child's emotional state to school staff – usually the counsellor or dormitory parents, and sometimes the home-room teacher.

5. Ensure there are fair and consistent consequences for those who perpetrate bullying.

These are established through consultation taking into consideration several factors including the level of awareness of the child, the extent of their behaviour and the harmful effect on others and the community.

Consequences can range from meetings and counselling to more severe measures such as suspension and expulsion.

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This policy is a living document. It is reviewed continuously to keep it up-to-date with statutory and non-statutory guidance and legislation revisions/releases. This policy document is subject to at least one plenary review every three years.	
Last Plenary Review Date	Responsible Person
10_2023	V. Williams