

# TORMEAD

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

***This whole school policy also applies to the Early Years Foundation Stage***

### **Introduction**

1. Tormead School is committed to providing a safe and secure environment which enables each girl to learn and thrive in a relaxed and supportive atmosphere. Thus, bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school.
2. We are committed to promoting a positive culture which encourages good behaviour where the girls feel free of the fear of bullying, but also, in the rare instances where it should occur, confident about sharing any concerns which they may have about their own well-being or that of others, safe in the knowledge that they will be listened to and the matter investigated and dealt with appropriately.

### **Scope**

3. This policy applies to all girls and staff at Tormead School.

### **Circulation**

4. This policy is available to staff on Google Drive under Allstaff/ Policies. It is also available to parents on the website and girls on their App4 planners.

### **References**

5. This policy has been developed in accordance with principles established by the non-statutory DfE advice document *Preventing And Tackling Bullying In Schools* (2017); *School Support For Children And Young People Who Are Bullied: Advice For Schools* (DfE 2014); *Cyberbullying: Advice For Headteachers And School Staff* (DfE 2014); and *Advice For Parents And Carers On Cyberbullying* (DfE 2014).

### **Other Policies**

6. This policy should be read in conjunction with Tormead's:
  - Accessibility Policy
  - Behaviour Policy
  - Equal Opportunities Policy
  - Girls' E-Safety and Acceptable Use of IT Policy (Junior School)
  - Girls' E-Safety and Acceptable Use of IT Policy (Senior School)
  - Girls' Code of Conduct
  - Processing, Retention & Storage of Data Policy
  - Staff E-Safety and Acceptable Use of IT Policy (Employment Manual)
  - Safeguarding Policy
  - SEND Policy

### **Definition**

7. Bullying is any conscious behaviour, repeated over time, which is intended to cause hurt either physically or emotionally, is often motivated by prejudice, and is an abuse of power by those who carry it out. It normally relies on observers and onlookers either doing nothing to stop the bullying or becoming actively involved in supporting it, defined as passive bullying. It is important to note the distinction between bullying, as defined above, and conflict, where girls may have arguments or say hurtful things as a result of an isolated friendship issue.

8. Bullying may be motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sexual orientation, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted, or has caring responsibilities.

9. Although bullying can take many forms, it can broadly be categorised as either physical or non-physical bullying. Physical bullying may involve actions such as hitting, pushing or damaging/ hiding possessions. Non-physical bullying can be direct or indirect. Direct non-physical bullying may involve name-calling, threats or teasing. Indirect non-physical bullying may involve exclusion; ignoring; graffiti; spreading false rumours; spiteful texts, messages, photographs and emails over social media (cyberbullying); and ruining friendships. Indirect non-physical bullying has been found to cause the most damage in terms of mental health and yet is often the hardest to recognise and respond to.

10. Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using technology: for example, on social media sites, through a mobile phone, or via gaming sites. Its effects can be devastating. By its very nature, cyberbullying tends to involve a number of online bystanders and can quickly spiral out of control. Children and young people who bully others online do not need to be physically stronger and their methods can often be hidden and subtle.

11. Cyberbullying can also involve adults, with some teachers having become victims of internet messaging which undermines or ridicules them. It is unacceptable for pupils, parents and colleagues to denigrate and bully school staff via social media in the same way that it is unacceptable to do so face to face.

12. Bullying may cause serious psychological or physical harm to its victims and in the most extreme circumstances, even lead to suicide. In some instances, it may also be treated as a criminal offence under the laws concerning harassment and threatening behaviour.

### **Indicators**

13. Common signs that a girl is being bullied may include that she:

- Is reluctant to attend school
- Is unwilling to walk to school/ travel on bus
- Develops a pattern of minor illnesses/ feels ill in the mornings
- Has property or money which is lost or damaged
- Becomes withdrawn and anxious or loses confidence
- Becomes aggressive or disruptive
- Cries herself to sleep or has nightmares/ difficulty sleeping
- Begins to do poorly in school work
- Does not want to go to school and/or avoids meeting friends and schoolmates
- Avoids formerly enjoyable social situations
- Stops eating
- Gives improbable excuses
- Is frightened to say what is wrong

14. Common signs that a girl is being cyberbullied may include that she:

- Becomes upset after using the internet or her mobile phone
- Is unwilling to talk or secretive about her online activities and mobile phone use
- Spends much more or much less time texting, gaming or using social media
- Has many new phone numbers, texts or e-mail addresses showing up on her mobile phone, laptop or tablet
- Seems withdrawn, upset or outraged after texting or being online

15. Staff are aware that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can face additional challenges and may be particularly vulnerable to bullying and abuse. They are alive to the possibilities that:

- they may have an impaired capacity to resist or avoid bullying and abuse

- there might be an assumption without further exploration that indicators of possible bullying and abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability;
- children with SEND might be disproportionately impacted upon by behaviours such as bullying and abuse, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- they may have speech, language and communication needs which may make it difficult to tell others what is happening.

## **Prevention**

At Tormead we employ a number of strategies to minimise the risk of bullying, firmly believing education to be the best means of preventing bullying incidents.

### *Culture & Ethos*

16. Our first value, 'We treat everyone with respect and dignity' firmly underpins our ethos and sets the standard for expected behaviour at Tormead. Fundamental British Values also inform our Behaviour Policy and Girls' Code of Conduct, which make specific our expectation that girls will behave in a respectful and considerate manner towards staff and their peers at all times. Girls in Year 5 and above are also required to accept and sign the appropriate (Junior or Senior) Girls' E-Safety and Acceptable Use of IT Policy. Through consistent implementation of the Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies, Tormead staff demonstrate their commitment to preventing and dealing with any inappropriate behaviour; they also model respectful relationships in their interactions with the girls and one another. Through whole-school and year group assemblies, we celebrate the girls' achievements in all fields, creating a culture of appreciation and openness. Peer Mentoring, the House system and the Year 7 & 9 Aunts and Nieces programme allow the girls the opportunity to support each other across year groups.

### *Education & Awareness*

17.1 Girls are taught about aspects of bullying in Year 5-9 PSHE and IT lessons and sometimes through content in Drama and English lessons, depending on the texts covered. Childline posters are displayed around the school as well as posters advising what girls should do if they are feeling worried or want to speak to someone. Form Tutors and Heads of Year use form time and/ or assemblies as they deem necessary to reinforce a strong anti-bullying message. Our reinforcement of Fundamental British Values through the curriculum, extra-curriculum and ethos of the School also places the emphasis firmly on the role of democracy in our society and the need to be tolerant of those different from ourselves. The Junior School are visited periodically by the NSPCC. The girls are encouraged to look out for each other and report any concerns they might have to a member of staff. A similarly open dialogue is also encouraged in Tormead parents, whose good relationships with Form Tutors and Heads of Year make communication strong and reporting of concerns easy.

17.2 Girls are taught to use the internet safely and responsibly through IT and PSHE lessons and also through visits from an e-safety expert who visits the school every two years, addressing girls from Year 3 upwards. Girls in Year 5 and above are also required to sign and agree to the appropriate (Junior or Senior) Girls' E-Safety and Acceptable Use of IT Policy within School. The School's Smoothwall internet filter restricts access to websites with inappropriate content (abuse, adult content, bullying, criminal activity, radicalisation, substance abuse, suicide) and attempts by girls to access these are monitored via a weekly report, which enables any searches of concern to be followed up by the E-safety Co-ordinator and then, if necessary, Heads of Year. The School's online safety systems are reviewed termly and updated regularly as appropriate. Further details of e-safety provision can be found in the Girls' E-Safety and Acceptable Use of IT Policies (both Junior and Senior versions) which are also updated regularly as appropriate.

17.3 It is important that all staff are aware of what to look for in identifying incidents of bullying and to this end, they are regularly updated regarding e-safety and IT usage, given training about bullying (which can include outside speakers) and kept up-to-date with any changes in school policy. Form tutors are encouraged to adopt the investigative process outlined below in dealing with any conflicts between girls in their care (whether deemed bullying or otherwise), under the guidance of their Head of Year.

17.4 The Executive Group will ensure that policies and procedures are in line with best practice. In particular, they will ensure that all staff receive suitable training and development to carry out their e-safety responsibilities. Regular review of e-safety and network provision will be undertaken by the Network Manager, E-safety Co-ordinator, Assistant Head: Wellbeing and Deputy Headmistress.

#### *Feedback*

18. A bullying questionnaire is sent to all girls in the Senior School at least twice during a girl's seven-year career and the responses fed into our monitoring and review process.

#### **Role of Parents**

19. Parents are encouraged to read this policy and attend the Tormead Talks which pertain to this subject as well as iPad Information Evenings. In order to understand their daughter's use of the internet and social media, parents are recommended to watch the digital safety films available on the School website and to maintain an open dialogue with their daughters, as well as remind them that they can talk to an adult if they are being bullied and need support. It can be a good idea to set boundaries over internet use in the form of an agreed switch-off time or a mutually agreed 'contract' and to use any appropriate privacy settings or parental controls.

#### **Reporting**

20. The reporting of bullying (including cyber-bullying) is a whole-school responsibility and anyone - girl, member of staff or parent - who is concerned that bullying is taking place should report their concerns as soon as possible to an appropriate member of staff, for example the Form Tutor or Head of Year in the Senior School and Class Teacher or Deputy Head (Logistics) in the Junior School. Although it may be harder to deal with bullying off school premises, we still encourage the swift reporting of any anti-social behaviour occurring outside school and would investigate/ advise further action as appropriate.

##### *20.1 Girls*

A girl who feels that she is being bullied should report it as soon as possible to a member of staff in whom she feels she can confide. Normally, this would be her Form Tutor, Head of Year or the Assistant Head: Wellbeing in the Senior School, and Class Teacher or Deputy Head (Logistics) in the Junior School, but she may feel more comfortable speaking to a subject teacher, school Health Care Lead, Pupil Support Officer, counsellor, family member or friend. The most important thing is that she reports the situation. If she does not, then the bully may carry on with her behaviour and the girl continue to suffer; others too may become further victims of the bully's behaviour. It is important that girls are mindful of the fact that doing nothing is an example of passive bullying.

##### *20.2 Staff*

Staff should notify the appropriate member of staff immediately if they have any concerns that any girl is being bullied. In the Senior School, this is the Head of Year; in the Junior School, the Deputy Head (Logistics). If a girl has approached them with a disclosure of bullying, it is important that she is reassured that she has acted wisely in speaking out and informed that the matter will be taken seriously. If staff feel that there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is in immediate danger or is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, then they must treat this as a safeguarding issue and report it to the Designated

Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately. The DSL will then assess whether the incident meets the threshold for reporting to external agencies and take action accordingly.

The DSL with lead responsibility is:

Miss Tania King, Deputy Headmistress  
(external: 01483 796084; internal: 265; [tking@tormeadschool.org.uk](mailto:tking@tormeadschool.org.uk))

The Deputy DSLs are:

Miss Penny Borgonon, Pupil Support Officer  
(external 01483 796076; internal 257; [pborgonon@tormeadschool.org.uk](mailto:pborgonon@tormeadschool.org.uk))

Mrs Sam Jones, Assistant Head: Adventure & Service  
(external: 01483 796094; internal 203; [sjones@tormeadschool.org.uk](mailto:sjones@tormeadschool.org.uk))

Miss Marie Langlet, Assistant Head: Wellbeing  
(external: 01483 796057; internal 267; [mlanglet@tormeadschool.org.uk](mailto:mlanglet@tormeadschool.org.uk))

Mrs Karen Moulder, Deputy Head of Junior School: Logistics (also Designated Safeguarding Lead for Early Years)  
(external: 01483 510985; internal 280; [kmoulder@tormeadschool.org.uk](mailto:kmoulder@tormeadschool.org.uk))

Mrs Louise Whitaker, Head of Year 7  
(external: 01483 796054; internal 235; [lwhitaker@tormeadschool.org.uk](mailto:lwhitaker@tormeadschool.org.uk))

Should a member of staff be concerned that a member of school staff is being bullied, s/he should report these concerns to the Deputy Headmistress.

### 20.3 Parents

Parents should notify the school immediately if they are concerned that their daughter, or any other girl, is being bullied. They should report Senior School concerns to their daughter's Head of Year and Junior School concerns to the Deputy Head (Logistics). The member of staff notified will then take steps to deal with the matter in accordance with this policy.

### Investigation

21. Although there is a whole-school responsibility for preventing and tackling bullying, an allegation of bullying would normally be investigated and dealt with by the Head of Year/ Deputy Head (Logistics) of Junior School, with the support and input of Form Tutors and the Assistant Head: Wellbeing and other staff as appropriate. The suggested stages are as follows:

- Interview with 'victim' to find out what has been happening, who is involved and how she is feeling. Open questions should be used. Ask 'victim' to write down her perception of how she has been treated and is feeling (this should be presented to the 'bully/bullies' anonymously at first, with the 'victim's' permission). Collect any further evidence e.g. screenshots/ notes etc.
- Interview with the alleged 'bully/bullies' where 'victim's' statement is read out. Their responses should be noted carefully and heard just as was done in the case of the 'victim'. Open questions should be used. An emphasis should be placed upon resolution rather than blame and sanction, with the 'bully/bullies' being asked to consider how to put things right.
- A meeting between the 'victim' and the 'bully/bullies' under the supervision of the member of staff involved, the aim of which is to allow the girls to give their side of events openly and fully and for the 'victim's' point of view to be understood and empathised with. An emphasis should be placed on the girls expressing how they

feel, with a way forward, initiated by the ‘bully/ bullies’ agreed. The ‘victim’ may well feel more comfortable with a friend in attendance.

- After an agreed time, another meeting with all parties in which progress can be monitored. Reassurance and continuing support (counselling/ meetings with pastoral staff/ referring to CAMHS) should be provided for both the ‘victim’ and the ‘bully/bullies’. A further meeting is also advised in the following half term to monitor and follow up further.
- Parents of all the girls involved should be informed of the progress and outcomes of the investigation.
- Staff dealing with such situations will also be supported and guided by their line manager.

### **Recording**

22. Records of pertinent conversations will be written for each girl (both ‘victim’ and ‘bully/ bullies’) at every stage of the process. These will be saved on the relevant girl’s electronic file as part of her ‘Individual Record’ and kept for the duration of her school career and beyond, in accordance with the process outlined in the Processing, Retention and Storage of Data Policy. A summary write-up will be included under the relevant girls’ names on either the Junior or Senior ‘Daily Record’ which is shared with staff in both settings at the end of each day and deleted after a week.

After each case, an entry will be made in either the Junior or Senior School’s central log of bullying incidents (by the Deputy Headmistress in the Senior School or the Deputy Head (Logistics) in the Junior School); each individual case will then be reviewed and our practice adapted accordingly as appropriate. It should be noted that cases of bullying are rare at Tormead; nevertheless, the Safeguarding Governor, in conjunction with the Deputy Headmistress, reviews bullying incidents termly.

Annual handover meetings in both the Junior and Senior School allow details of friendship issues and bullying incidents to be shared between outgoing and incoming pastoral staff.

### **Sanctions**

23. We emphasise mediation and girl-driven resolutions to any such incidents and have found this approach to be effective in the vast majority of cases. However, in the event that this approach is unsuccessful, a sanction may be imposed, at the judgement of the Deputy Headmistress. This might be applied to all those involved in the bullying, including those found guilty of ‘passive’ bullying. Cases of severe and/or persistent bullying may result in suspension or the girl(s) involved being permanently excluded.

Advice may be sought from appropriate agencies e.g. Kidscape, Anti-Bullying Alliance, Police.

### **Criminal Law**

24. Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence. If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police.

### **Monitoring**

25. The progress of all the girls involved will continue to be monitored in accordance with the investigative steps set out above. However, pastoral staff will continue to be alive to the possibility of further development and are advised to monitor informally by, for example, informally questioning the girls at a later date as part of the follow-up process to ensure that the situation remains resolved. Pastoral staff will share any incidents in their annual handover meetings in September.

**Review**

26. The Deputy Headmistress will monitor the operation of this policy and its procedures; these will be reviewed every year or earlier if necessary and taken into account any incidents or feedback from questionnaires. Any deficiencies or weaknesses will be dealt with without delay once identified.

**Date of Last Review:** 15 May 2019

**By Resolution of the Governing Body:**

MRS R HARRIS  
Chair of Governors

MRS C FOORD  
Headmistress

4 June 2019



## **Appendix: Further Sources of Information**

<https://www.kidscape.org.uk/>

<http://diana-award.org.uk/>

<http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>

<http://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

<http://www.youngminds.org.uk/>

<http://www.familylives.org.uk/>

HYPERLINK "http://www.familylives.org.uk/"