



Anti – Bullying Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Mission Statement

‘To educate young people to meet the challenges of life courageously, to use their talents to the full and to live the values of Christ’s Gospel’

Aims and Objectives

The aim of our anti-bullying policy is to clarify for students, parents, carers and staff that bullying is always unacceptable and incidents will always be addressed. Our school is a community founded on Christ and we therefore try to uphold gospel values – love, forgiveness, reconciliation etc. All members of our school community sign up to the Code of Conduct, which emphasises these Gospel values, and that we should value one another and treat others as we would wish to be treated. Every student has the right to feel safe and happy in school and to be protected.

This policy has regard to DfE advice Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017) and the Malicious Communication Act (1988) and can be found within the ‘Policies’ section of the Thornton College web-site.

Staff

All staff members have a responsibility to be alert to and respond to signs of bullying behaviour at all times. The Deputy Head will be the designated person responsible for developing a whole school approach to bullying. The Heads of Year and/or Boarding Staff will work with the Deputy Head to ensure that the effects of bullying are taken seriously and to work with their year group(s) / Boarding Houses to prevent and tackle bullying.

Staff awareness of bullying is raised in Staff Meetings and through briefings and training sessions. These sessions ensure that all staff are aware of their role in keeping our students safe from bullying and any form of harm; that they understand the principles of our policy; that they understand our procedures; that they understand their legal responsibility to ensure that all of our students irrespective of their race, religion, culture, sexual orientation, gender, special educational need and/or disability, or family situation are free from prejudice and discrimination; that they understand where they can access support in dealing with these issues should they arise; and they also ensure that any issues can be discussed as necessary in order to action any incidents and prevent future incidents from occurring.

The PSHEE lead in the Prep School, Head of Year 7 and the Deputy Head Teacher attended the Princess Diana Award Anti-Bullying Ambassador training in 2021. The Deputy Head Teacher completed training as the Staff Anti-Bullying Lead.

Students

In 2021, all students in Year 5 and students representing all year groups in the Senior school (with the exception of those sitting external examinations/ TAGs) were trained as Anti-Bullying Ambassadors by the Princess Diana Award charity.

Anti-Bullying Ambassadors across the Prep and Senior school assist in raising awareness of bullying and support their peers in the prevention of bullying. Initiatives also include efforts to

improve the well-being of students. Anti-Bullying Ambassadors can be identified by their purple badges.

Definition of Bullying

At Thornton, we have an agreed definition that bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour repeated over a period of time, which intentionally hurts another pupil or group, physically, emotionally or verbally. The school recognises that bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on the grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted or a carer. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video). It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences, including prejudice-based bullying because of a protected characteristic.

Students, staff, parents and carers are supported to understand the school's definition of bullying through this policy, (which is available on the school website), assemblies, parent meetings, and documentation discussed and posted in tutor groups and planners.

Students may also refer to the Princess Diana Award definition of bullying as: 'Repeated, negative behaviour that is intended to make others feel upset, uncomfortable, or unsafe' – the three 'Us'.

Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience.

Possible Signs

Bullying can cause distress to students to the extent that it affects their health and development or cause them significant harm (including self-harm).

Signs of bullying include:

- Depression
- Low self-esteem
- Shyness
- Poor academic achievement
- Isolation
- Threatened or attempted suicide

Prejudice – based bullying because of a protected characteristic

All staff are aware that students with SEND and / or differences/perceived differences are more susceptible to being bullied / victims of child abuse. This includes LGBTQ+ students. In keeping with the Equality Act 2010 we take very seriously our duty to take steps to eliminate harassment, victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. Where appropriate and/or necessary, the school will invest in specialised skills to understand and address the needs of students.

Prevention

All staff are aware that children learn best in a calm and safe environment and that it is everyone's responsibility to prevent bullying occurring in the first place. At Thornton, staff closely monitor the

behaviour and interactions of students and act quickly should issues arise that may lead to incidents of bullying. Autistic children and young people may not be able to recognise bullying being done to them due to a lack of social understanding and it is therefore important that staff continue to monitor relationships. Staff log concerns on Cpm's and inform tutors, Heads of Year and/or Boarding Staff of any concerns and relationships are monitored. Where appropriate, early intervention takes place, either through a conversation with individuals, with groups of pupils and/or with parents / carers.

Prevention is also assisted through discussion of issues of difference in curriculum lessons, PSHEE, tutor time and assemblies. Students are reminded of the importance of demonstrating tolerance and respect to all of those around them both in how they speak and in how they behave. They are not only encouraged to speak up if they are experiencing any difficulties, but they are also encouraged to speak up for any others they see who may be experiencing difficulties.

Emphasis is placed on the school's high expectations of behaviour and respect for all. All students are made aware of such expectations and both staff and older students know it is their responsibility to exemplify these standards to all in their own behaviour. Senior girls who are given positions of responsibility, are aware that they should be setting a good example to the rest of the school. Prefects and the Head Girl team have links with classes across the school and are available to listen. Students are aware that they should inform a member of staff should a student confide that they are being bullied or should they find themselves as bystanders.

In addition to the support offered by tutors, the availability of staff as part of the school's Listening Ear initiative also allows students to discuss any concerns they have.

Curriculum

Our curriculum enhances this policy:-

- by dealing with the topic of bullying, in a way which explores why it happens and gives alternative ways of behaving and dealing with difficulties.
- by using teaching methods which encourage co-operative work and a variety of groupings, so that students extend their relationships beyond a small group of friends.
- through assemblies and PSHEE.

The following information is distributed to students annually through their planners:

- Online Safety
- Personal and Confidential Matters
- Anti-Cyber bullying code
- Advice for Children and Young People: Be Safe and smart online.
- What is bullying guides.

We aim to protect all students and staff and ensure that they feel safe at all times, including when using new technology and accessing the internet. All students are made aware of the Anti-cyberbullying Code and the 7 rules (located in their School Planner).

Cyber-bullying by children, via texts.

Thornton College has mechanisms in place to deal with incidents and sanctions are applied to students in keeping with our behaviour policy. Students are educated to understand and respond to the risks involved (including the sharing of concerns with a responsible adult) and information

sessions and talks are scheduled as required. This is overseen by our DSL and Head of Computer Science. We have appropriate filters in place to keep our students safe when accessing the internet at school. All staff are aware of safety issues and have signed the Information Technology Policy. Students will be taught appropriate use of the internet and social media as part of their IT and tutor, and PSHEE programme.

Students, staff and parents are supported to understand the risks posed by the CONTENT accessed by students – their CONDUCT on line - who they have CONTACT with in the digital world – and the risks posed by COMMERCE, including online gambling and inappropriate advertising.

If an electronic device that is prohibited by the school rules has been seized and there is reasonable ground to suspect it contains evidence in relation to an offence, or a pornographic image or a child or an extreme pornographic image, the device will be given immediately to the police.

We have an agreed IT and E-Safety policy and Acceptable Use Policy in place that outlines our management of access to the internet. Our internet access is monitored by SOPHOS to prevent access to material that is inappropriate for our students and a daily report is emailed to the DSL, the Bursar and IT Manager and the Deputy Head along with immediate alerts when searches of a extremist, profane or sexual nature are detected. We manage access to 3G and 4G through our Behaviour Policies and Use of Devices Policy. Boarders are not allowed access to their mobile devices overnight.

For further detail see our IT Acceptable Use & E-Safety Policy.

Procedures

Allegations of bullying are reviewed by Heads of Year and the Deputy Head Teacher (and/or Boarding Staff where appropriate). However, we acknowledge that a bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. (In this instance, all concerns will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead). External support may still be sought and provided for students whether or not the incident is deemed to be a safeguarding issue. This may be to support the student/s who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

All staff recognise that early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and is not acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating.

On report of an incident of bullying, Heads of Year and/or the Deputy Head and/or Boarding Staff will investigate (The Deputy Head Teacher will investigate where students involved are from different year groups and/or where support is needed during the investigation). Statements will be taken from all students involved and any witnesses. Information will be logged on Cpoms. Depending on the nature of the incident, as proven by evidence collated, statements and reports will be logged either as bullying or another pastoral category.

Once information is collated, the HOY and/or Boarding staff will discuss the statements and any further evidence with the Deputy Head Teacher and /or the Head Teacher.

If bullying is confirmed by evidence, sanctions will be issued in line with the Behaviour Ladder. Every effort will be made to resolve the problem through talking to both parties. This may involve all parties taking part in the Restorative Justice programme. The focus should be on how the situation can be resolved.

Parents of both parties should be informed of what has happened and how it has been dealt with.

If the bullying behaviour continues, and discussions have not proved successful, then further sanctions follow in line with the Schools Behaviour and Sanctions Ladder. It is important that support is maintained for both parties, even when sanctions have been applied.

The school will support all children who are bullied and make appropriate provision for a child's needs. The nature and level of support will depend on the individual circumstances and the level of need. These can include asking the pastoral team to provide support, providing wellbeing support, engaging with parents, referring to local authority children's services, completing a Common Assessment Framework or referring to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Procedures involving electronic devices:

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 Head Teacher, 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.

Consequences

In line with our Behaviour Policy, there will be consequences for incidents of bullying behaviour. We recognise that the serious nature of bullying can cause physical and emotional harm, both of which may lead to psychological damage to the victim. All incidents of bullying will be treated seriously. Should investigations confirm an incident of bullying has taken place, the student accused of bullying will be issued with a Red Card (including a HOY detention) and parents/guardians contacted. All parties involved will be invited to participate in the restorative justice programme established in the College. Parents will be informed of developments. During meetings individuals will be made aware of their behaviour and its effect upon others. Support will be offered to all who need it and this may include continued meetings with the Head of Year.

Should the student who has alleged an incident of bullying refuse to participate in a programme of restorative justice, the individual/s accused of bullying will be given the opportunity to meet regularly with the Head of Year to discuss the impact of their behaviour on others.

Should the individual accused of bullying refuse to participate in a programme of reconciliation, then sanctions in addition to the Red Card may be applied.

1. In serious situations the individual accused of bullying may be excluded from lessons or excluded from school for a fixed period.
2. The Head Teacher will become involved when offences are repeated / very serious.
3. Very serious incidents of bullying will result in expulsion - (See Behaviour Policy, Exclusion from School).

Parents will be kept informed and the situation will be monitored to ensure all conflicts have been resolved.



What is bullying?

When someone says or does something unintentionally hurtful and they do it once,
that's **rude**

When someone says or does something intentionally hurtful and they do it once,
that's **mean**

When someone says or does something intentionally hurtful and they keep doing it
— even when you tell them to stop or show
them that you're upset, that's **bullying**



What is bullying?

Several Times On Purpose

How can we stop bullying?

S

Stand up to them and use your words to tell them to stop.

T

Take appropriate action to move away from the situation.

O

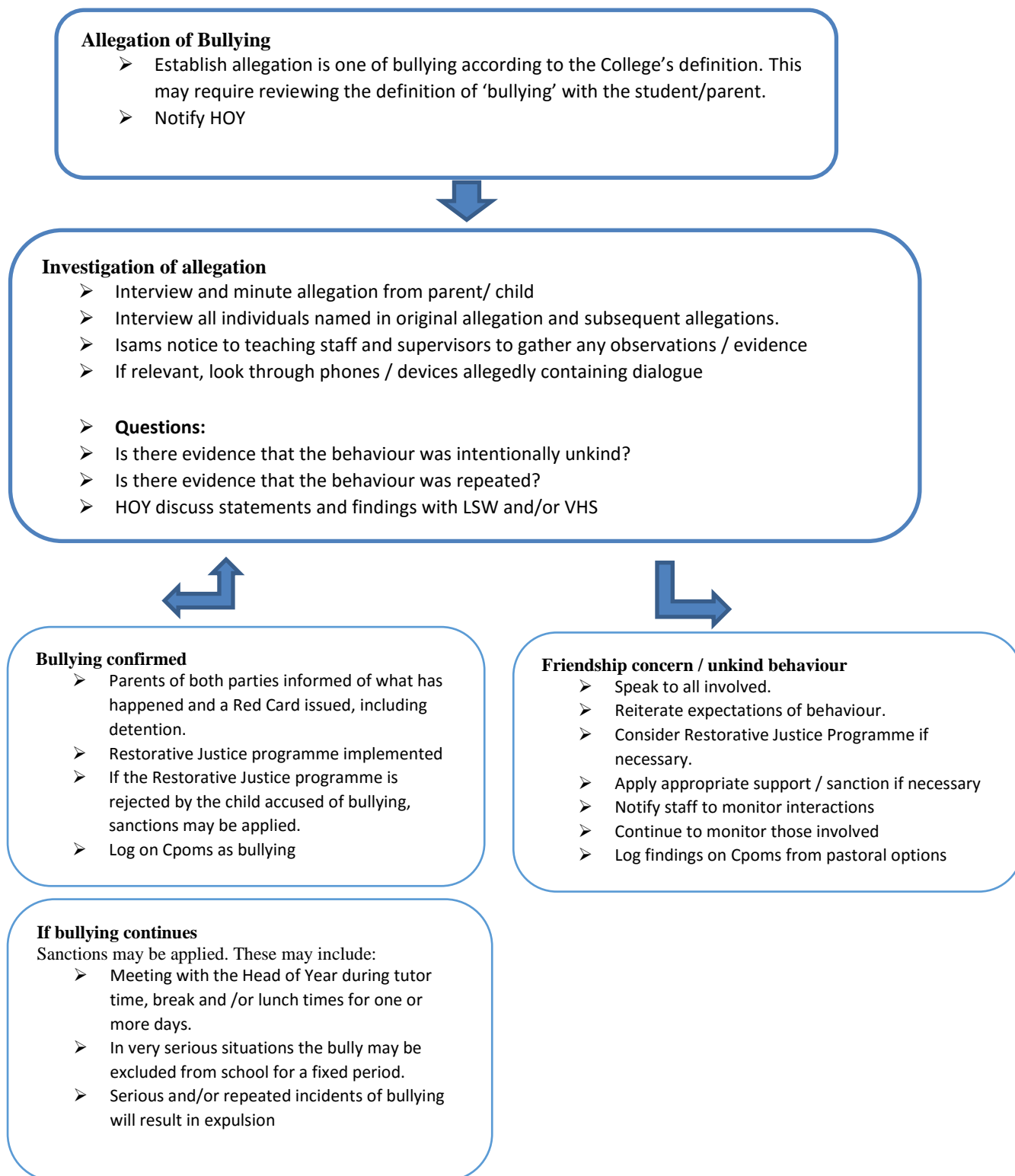
Open up to an adult or prefect straight away.

P

Prevent things from getting worse. Don't ignore it!

Appendix 3:

Bullying and Restorative Justice: Staff



Appendix 4

Bullying and Restorative Justice: Parents / Students

Thornton College recognises the serious nature of bullying. All incidents of bullying will be treated seriously. In line with our ethos, our approach to bullying is guided by the values of love and forgiveness; as such, our initial response will always be to support all involved and seek ways to resolve concerns and build relationships.

Allegation of Bullying – This can be made to any member of staff. They will confirm that the allegation is one of ‘bullying’ in line with the College’s definition – see policy.



Investigation of allegation

The Head of Year (and/or form tutor in the Prep School) will be informed of the allegation and will investigate. They will:

- Speak to you / your daughter
- Speak to all individuals / witnesses you / your daughter names and anyone else named during the investigation.
- Speak to staff who may have witnessed incidents
- If relevant, look through phones / devices

Based on the evidence collated during the investigation, the Head of Year will consider whether:

- behaviour was **intentionally unkind**
- behaviour was **repeated**



Bullying confirmed

- You and the parents of those accused will be informed of what has happened and a Red Card issued to the child accused of bullying
- You / your daughter will be offered the opportunity to take part in Thornton’s Restorative Justice Programme.
- If the Restorative Justice programme is rejected by the child accused of bullying, further sanctions may be applied.

Friendship concern / unkind behaviour

- The HOY will speak to all involved and emphasise our high expectations of behaviour. The Restorative Justice programme may be implemented.
- Sanctions will be implemented if required.
- Staff will continue to observe the relationship and ensure that it remains positive.

If bullying continues

Sanctions may be applied. These may include:

- Meeting with the Head of Year during tutor time, break and /or lunch times for one or more days.
- In very serious situations you / your daughter may be excluded from school for a fixed period.
- Serious and/or repeated incidents of bullying will result in expulsion

Misinterpretation of behaviour

- You / Your daughter will be informed that evidence does not suggest an incident / incidents of *bullying* occurred.
- Your daughter will be offered support if necessary.
- Staff will be asked to observe the relationship and ensure that it remains positive.

Appendix 5 : Restorative Justice

We recognise that, at Thornton, as in each community, there will, from time to time, be conflict, as differences of opinion emerge and individuals speak and act in ways which cause hurt to others, whether intentional or not. The mark of a strong community is not the absence of such conflict but rather, the way in which the community recognises and deals with it so that relationships which are broken can have the potential of being restored, that those who feel victimised are heard and that we are all called upon to take responsibility for our part building a community of respect and responsibility, where forgiveness is encouraged and where honesty is required. To this end, we believe in the concept of Restorative Justice.

What is Restorative Justice?

Restorative Justice enables those who have been harmed to convey the impact of the harm to those responsible, and for those responsible to acknowledge this impact and take steps to put it right. Effective restorative practices foster awareness of how others have been affected by inappropriate behaviour by actively engaging all participants in a process which separates the deed from the doer and rejects the act not the actor, allowing individuals to make amends for the harm caused. Restorative practices acknowledge the intrinsic worth of each person and their potential contribution to the school community. By putting the victim at the centre of the process, the wrongdoer is held accountable to the person they have harmed and is also given the choice to put things right and to make amends.

We intend that this approach will help our students develop good relationships, resourcefulness, resilience, reflective thinking, appropriate risk-taking and the ability to take responsibility.

Promoting Restorative Approaches

Our Code of Conduct states that we want everyone at Thornton College to be happy, to be able to learn and to be safe. All pupils are encouraged to be aware not only of their own needs but also those of others. We aim to develop values of respect, tolerance, self-control, resilience and a sense of responsibility, however, we know that conflict is also a part of life. How we deal with it makes a difference. The restorative approach helps us to learn from conflict by aiming to repair and balance.

Restorative approaches encourage pupils to think about how their behaviour affects others, both pupils and staff. It helps children to develop respect, responsibility and truth telling. If a child has done something wrong they will be asked to put things right and change their behaviour so it does not happen again. The aim is that they take responsibility for their actions and help to fix the situation. If someone is upset, the aim is that they feel better.

Accentuating the positive often helps to prevent the multiplication of the negative. We aim to be a community in which the positive is upheld and applauded, so that our students learn self-discipline with regard to their own words and actions and learn to make good choices, as well as accept responsibility for the choices they do make and their effects on others. To that end, we adopt a resolution focus to issues which arise in school on a day-to-day basis. We promote the concept of a fresh start: although persistent or serious misbehaviour needs recording and dealing with, every child must feel that every day is a fresh start. We aim to recognise conflict, face it, deal with it fairly and move on positively.

Offering the possibility of the offender sitting down with the offended also allows for other possibilities - a greater understanding of the other, a reconciliation and rebuilding of relationships

and the strengthening of a community in which mistakes are allowed but not ignored and where forgiveness and a new start are a reality.