



Anti-Bullying Policy

This document will be reviewed annually or in response to changes in legislation		
Created	June 2025	Head of Pastoral Care
Reviewed		
Approved	July 2025	Master

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

Behaviour Policy
Student Code of Conduct
Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
Student ICT Acceptable Use Policy
Online Safety Policy,

PSHE Policy, Searching Policy
Relationship and Sex Education Policy
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. There is no legal definition of bullying. However, it's usually defined as behaviour that is repeated, intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally and often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.
- 1.2. 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) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between students, or perceived differences. (Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies, 2017)
- 1.3. Bullying can be:
 - physical: hitting, kicking, taking belongings;
 - verbal: name calling, insulting, offensive remarks, threats;
 - emotional: spreading rumours, exclusion, ostracising;
 - online bullying: using technology – mobile phone, social networks, email, etc – deliberately to hurt or humiliate another; or
 - sexual: unwanted sexual comments, suggestions or threats.
- 1.4. It may be directed at an individual or affect a wider group. It is difficult for victims to defend themselves from bullying. Particular awareness should be given to the possibility of bullying towards students or members of staff with protected characteristics namely: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 1.5. The College recognises the seriousness of bullying in causing physical and/or emotional harm. They recognise that bullying may result in long term psychological damage and even suicide.
- 1.6. The Master reserves the right, to such extent as is reasonable, to regulate the conduct of students when they are off-site or not under the control or charge of a member of staff. This includes the inappropriate use of technology.
- 1.7. Some features of online bullying differ from other forms of bullying. The key differences are:
 - impact: the scale and scope of online bullying can be greater than other forms of bullying.
 - targets and perpetrators: the people involved may have a different profile to traditional bullies and their targets.
 - location: the 24/7 and anywhere nature of online bullying.
 - anonymity: the person being bullied will not always know who is bullying them.
 - motivation: some students may not be aware that what they are doing is bullying.
 - evidence: unlike other forms of bullying, the target of the bullying may have evidence of its occurrence.

2. AIMS

- 2.1. Thomas's College aim is that staff, students and parents work together to create a happy, caring learning environment in line with our School rule 'Be Kind' and our School Values.
- 2.2. The aim is to make Thomas's College a school in which bullying – of any kind – is not tolerated and to have a whole school approach to ensuring safety, security, openness and confidence. The College aims for values of respect for staff and other students, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others to permeate the whole school environment.
- 2.3. The College recognises that technology plays an important and positive role in student's lives, both educationally and socially. It is committed to helping all members of the College community to understand both the benefits and the risks, and to equip students with the knowledge and skills to be able to use technology safely and responsibly.

3. OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. To raise awareness of the College's expectations in terms of behaviour and to adhere to the Student Code of Conduct and School Values.
- 3.2. To communicate effectively to all members of the College community the College's stance on bullying of any kind.
- 3.3. To engage members of the College community in reaching a shared understanding of what bullying and online bullying is.
- 3.4. To communicate effectively to all members of the College community the College's policy and to have clear procedures so that it is easy to report bullying, including online bullying and bullying outside the College.
- 3.5. To promote an open atmosphere in which victims and witnesses know that it is right "to tell" and feel safe to do so.
- 3.6. To train staff to be alert to students who may be vulnerable and at risk from bullying.
- 3.7. To train and work with staff so that they can identify different sorts of bullying and know how to deal with cases sensitively, supportively and effectively.
- 3.8. To ensure all staff will challenge any abusive behaviour between students that comes to their notices and will report to the DSL any concerns of this nature. Refer to the College's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for further information.
- 3.9. To identify low level disruption and adopt early intervention measures to help set clear expectations and prevent behaviours escalating.
- 3.10. To have a recognised procedure of sanctions for bullying that is clear and consistent.
- 3.11. To take appropriate action in cases of bullying and keep a detailed record.
- 3.12. To work with students in a range of ways to equip them with social and emotional skills in order to reduce bullying and to be able to counter and deal with bullying, including online bullying.

4. ANTI-BULLYING CHARTER

- 4.1. In order for the College community to remain a happy and safe place where bullying is not tolerated the College will:
 - 4.1.1. continue to strive to uphold the rule – 'Be Kind' and incorporate the College values in everyday life of the students;
 - 4.1.2. continue to keep up to date with online bullying issues and support/awareness strategies so that they can be part of our curriculum in the future;
 - 4.1.3. annually review training and procedures to handle all types of bullying, including that linked to race, religion, culture, special educational needs and disabilities, appearance or health conditions, online bullying, sexual orientation, young carers

or looked after students, or otherwise linked to home circumstances, and sexist or sexual bullying; and

- 4.1.4. run an Anti-Bullying Committee as part of Student Voice where students can review and come up with their own ideas frequently.

5. PRACTICES TO PROMOTE AN ANTI-BULLYING CULTURE

- 5.1. The Leadership Team and the staff body develop a range of strategies for involving students, staff and parents in anti-bullying measures. This will include prevention, communication, knowledge of sanctions and celebration of success.
- 5.2. The College has a clear ethos about how members of the College's community should be treated and members of staff provide good role models. The pastoral care and ethos of the College is designed to raise self-esteem and value the contribution of all students, therefore making bullying less likely.
- 5.3. There are clear School rules known to all members of the College community which are applied as consistently as possible. The Anti-Bullying Policy is re-introduced to all students each academic year.
- 5.4. Through the curriculum, an anti-bullying ethos is developed and self-esteem and peer power enhanced. Respect for others, tolerance and kindness are promoted at every opportunity.
- 5.5. There are open discussions about differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and different family situations.
- 5.6. *Staff*
 - 5.6.1. Members of staff are supported to promote positive relationships and identify and tackle bullying appropriately by:
 - Attending training on behaviour and anti-bullying management.
 - Upholding the rule: 'Be Kind'. Using the 10 School values as a vehicle to consolidate the School rule. These values are prominent around the College.
 - Referring any suspected cases of bullying to Directors of Stage and Head of Pastoral Care (or Director of Boarding if during boarding hours).
 - Sharing any issues that a teacher notices with a parent/carer.
 - Holding regular Welfare meetings to discuss any ongoing concerns and discuss themes within cohorts, which allows more experienced staff the opportunity to offer advice and disseminate good practice.
 - Form teachers regularly reminding students they can tell a teacher, or known adult of any concerns.
 - Form Representatives also form an Anti-Bullying Committee that contains students from across all age groups. This committee meets termly.
 - Raising awareness about bullying behaviour through the PSHE syllabus and the College's Anti-Bullying Policy. Students are taught strategies for avoiding becoming victims of bullying and cyber-bullying behaviour.
 - Understanding the Anti-Bullying Policy and knowing who to report to.
 - Ensuring that lunch times and break times are suitably supervised and all staff on duty are aware of issues between students and trained to deal with situations.
 - Knowing that any referrals should be made through the Head of Pastoral Care to the Counsellor if deemed necessary.
 - 5.6.2. All new members of staff are given guidance on the College's Anti-Bullying Policy and on how to react to allegations of bullying. They are required to read the College's policy as part of their induction.

- 5.6.3. Records of all incidents are kept by the Head of Pastoral Care in order that patterns of behaviour can be identified and monitored, in particular with relation to any protected characteristics. These records also allow an evaluation of the effectiveness of the policy.

5.7. *Students*

- 5.7.1. Students are made aware that all bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively by:
- A combination of direct discussion about bullying and indirect strategies in teaching and other aspects of the College including Student Council and assemblies.
 - Creating a culture where students feel safe, are able to and are provided with the opportunity to talk/tell.
 - Making students aware of different types of bullying and educating them accordingly - online safety, physical, verbal and social.
 - Being involved in reviewing the Anti-bullying Policy, understanding and abiding by it.
 - Signing the Student ICT Acceptable Use Policy before they use the internet at the College.
 - Being aware of sanctions for bullying and how seriously it is taken.
 - Ensuring both victims and perpetrators are helped both during and after the situation to stop further issues arising.
 - Special awareness-raising days or events e.g. Anti-bullying Week and displays.
- 5.7.2. Through the Student Council, students' views on the subject are heard and their ideas on improvement encouraged.
- 5.7.3. Students are involved so they understand the College's approach and are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders.
- 5.7.4. Students are regularly reminded they can report bullying of any kind to any member of staff and it is made easy for students to report bullying, so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on.
- 5.7.5. In cases of online bullying, students are advised not to retaliate or reply but to keep any evidence and report the matter to their parent(s) or a member of staff.
- 5.7.6. Specific organisations or resources are used for help with particular problems.

5.8. *Parents*

- 5.8.1. Parents are involved and informed to ensure that they are clear that the College does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied.
- 5.8.2. Parents work with the College to uphold the Anti-Bullying Policy by:
- Encouraging communication with members of staff.
 - Being aware of and able to access the Thomas's Anti-Bullying Policy.
- 5.8.3. Parents are encouraged to tell the College of concerns, including those relating to incidents out of the College, as soon as possible. Any concerns raised by parents will be sympathetically heard and investigated. The College understands that these are sensitive situations and will preserve anonymity where possible.
- 5.8.4. Parents are expected to follow the Parent Code of Conduct and support the College's stance on bullying.

6. SAFEGUARDING

- 6.1. A bullying incident will be addressed as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Where this is the case, the College's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will follow the College's safeguarding procedures and will not investigate further before advice has been sought from Children's Services and/or the police.
- 6.2. All staff will challenge any abusive behaviour between students that comes to their notice and will report to the Head of Pastoral Care any concerns of this nature.
- 6.3. The College also understands that a child exhibiting bullying behaviour may be an indicator that he/she is experiencing abuse and/or being bullied.
- 6.4. Any allegations against staff bullying students will be handled following guidance in the DfE statutory guidance 'Keeping children safe in education' and the College's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and where appropriate the Complaints Policy.

7. ONLINE BULLYING

- 7.1. Thomas's College also operates a number of specific preventative measures to deter online bullying. This includes:
 - Making positive use of technology across the curriculum.
 - Ensuring all students know they are expected to adhere to the Student ICT Acceptable Use Policy.
 - Monitoring and filtering arrangements overseen by the IT department in conjunction with the Head of Pastoral Care.
 - Applying sanctions where appropriate for any breaches of the Student ICT Acceptable Use Policy.
 - Giving students specific guidance on the appropriate use of social media and what constitutes online bullying.
 - Supporting students in safe and responsible use of the internet including understanding the importance of password security, the need to log out of accounts and keeping other personal details safe.
 - Educating students about the risks of sexting and the consequences of sharing or forwarding sexual images.
 - Regularly evaluating and updating approaches to take account of developments in technology.
 - Providing information on external reporting routes e.g. mobile phone company, internet service provider, Childline.
 - Encouraging families of Fourth and Fifth Form students to go 'smart phone free'
- 7.2. The Master reserves the right, to such extent as is reasonable, to regulate the conduct of students when they are off-site or not under the control or charge of a member of staff. This includes the inappropriate use of technology.

8. PROCEDURES IN RESPONSE TO A REPORT OF A BULLYING INCIDENT

- 8.1. Members of staff should follow these guidelines:
 - Remain calm and listen carefully to what is being said by all parties.
 - Take the report seriously.
 - Do not jump to conclusions.
 - Reassure the student that they are doing the right thing in reporting.
 - Offer the student practical help, advice and support.

- In the case of online bullying, preserve any written evidence; texts, instant messenger conversations, print or produce a screen-grab of social media, or email messages. Refer to the Online Safety Policy for further information.
- If an incident concerns images which may be illegal or anything that raises child protection concerns, staff must contact the DSL immediately and follow the Online Safety Policy.
 - Do not forward/download or share images which cause concern nor search for or view further images.
 - Do not investigate further.
 - Do not delete the imagery or ask the child to delete it.
 - In an emergency contact the police or the Children's Services.
- Report the bullying concern or incident to the Head of Pastoral Care.
- Enter the details of the incident onto CPOMs.
- Staff should be aware that boarding can carry additional risk and exposure to bullying behaviour.

8.2. The Head of Pastoral Care or a member of the Leadership Team will:

- Speak to the alleged bully and any other student as appropriate.
- Ensure other members of staff are informed as necessary.
- Inform the parents of the alleged bully and also the parents of the victim(s).
- Determine any disciplinary sanctions deemed necessary.

8.3. *Sanctions*

8.3.1. Sanctions for bullying will be in line with the Behaviour Policy and in cases of serious or persistent bullying could result in a fixed or permanent exclusion.

8.3.2. Refer to the Behaviour Policy for further details.

8.4. *Next steps*

8.4.1. The alleged victim will be encouraged to adopt self-help, i.e. to be assertive in a non-violent way.

8.4.2. The incident should be kept 'open'. The support of other students in the class may be vital to ending the bullying behaviour.

8.4.3. By-standing may be discussed with the peer group as relevant so all students understand that it is unacceptable to watch bullying taking place and do nothing about it.

8.4.4. The motivation of the bully or bullies will be explored and appropriate support strategies offered to prevent a repetition in the future.

8.4.5. There should be consideration that a child may possibly be a provocative victim and may also need additional support in this respect.

8.4.6. In the case of online bullying the College will assist in removing any hurtful or embarrassing content from the web, either by contacting the person who posted it (if known) or by contacting the host provider and making a report to get the content taken down.

8.4.7. In some cases, the person being bullied may be able to block the person bullying from their sites and services.

8.4.8. Unless the victim sees it as a punishment, it may be advisable to change their information e.g. mobile phone number.

8.4.9. The steps outlined above will need to be modified according to the needs, age and level of understanding of the child.

9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- 9.1. The College will undertake an audit of 'hot spots' in the buildings, campus and off-site facilities to identify areas and times where students feel vulnerable or at risk.
- 9.2. The College will undertake regular audits of parents' and students' views of the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy and procedures.
- 9.3. The College will regularly evaluate and update their approach to take account of developments in technology, for instance updating "acceptable use" policies for all devices.
- 9.4. All reported cases of bullying will be recorded, including online bullying, and the Head of Pastoral Care will:
 - keep records confidential and secure;
 - allow access to the records by the Leadership Team.
- 9.5. The Head of Pastoral Care will report formally to the Leadership Team at the end of the academic year on the number and type of cases recorded and the trend of cases over the previous three years.
- 9.6. The Head of Pastoral Care will review this policy annually, using monitoring information and feedback from staff, students and parents, on any required changes to this policy or procedures or to any other related policy.

10. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy pays due regard to the following statutory guidance and other government advice:

DfE Statutory Guidance 'Keeping children safe in education' (Sept 2025)

DfE Guidance 'Behaviour in Schools' (Feb 2024)

DfE Statutory Guidance Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' (2021)

DfE Guidance 'Preventing and tackling bullying' (July 2017)

DfE Guidance Cyberbullying: 'Advice for headteachers and School staff (2014)

The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (2014)

The Equality Act (2012)

The Education Act (2011)