

## Anti-Bullying Policy

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**Tanglin Trust School expects all members of the school community to treat each other with respect and dignity and does not tolerate bullying in any form. We believe that every individual is entitled to work and learn in a secure, supportive environment. The school will not condone any action that undermines a person’s right to feel safe, respected and a valued member of the community.**

This policy involves all members of the Tanglin community including students, parents, teachers and non-teaching staff. It applies to all students and adults on Tanglin Trust School premises and when engaged in activities associated with the school (e.g. class trips, CCA’s, overseas trips) as well as any visitors to school. It should be read in conjunction with the Student Code of Conduct; Misbehaviour and Sanctions Policy; Child Protection Policy.

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Pastoral Team (working group)	ESC – June 2015; Nov 2018	June 2017; Revised Oct 2018	Assistant Heads (Pastoral) with DoL	May 2020

## 1. Rationale

Our vision statement challenges us to create a learning community based on shared values. Each person is recognised as a unique individual bringing special qualities and talents to the community. Therefore, we all have a **right** to be respected and a **responsibility** to respect one another.

We do not tolerate harassment or teasing in any form that undermines a person's sense of self and belonging. All members of our community share a responsibility to ensure a secure and supportive environment, promoting growth and fostering positive self-esteem for all. We are committed to maintaining a setting in which everyone feels valued and respected and where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted.

## 2. Objectives of this policy

- To promote inclusive, tolerant behaviour within the Tanglin community.
- To raise awareness amongst staff, students and parents about bullying behaviours and the school's policy.
- To proactively address incidents of bullying behaviour affecting school life.
- To provide strategies to resolve conflict (between peers as well as across hierarchies) and to empower bystanders and targets of bullying behaviour to be resilient and aware of their rights.
- To encourage a school environment where all students, staff and parents feel safe, welcome and respected.
- To create a climate where it is acceptable to talk about bullying behaviours and to ask for help.
- To encourage the recognition and reporting of incidents involving bullying behaviour.
- To enable staff to reconcile any differences in a non-threatening, confidential manner.

## 3. Definition

### Bullying behaviour,

- is often a *repeated*, unjustifiable behaviour;
- may be experienced face to face, or *via online media*;
- intends to cause *fear, distress and/or harm* to another;
- may be *physical, verbal, relational, symbolic or psychological*;
- is perpetrated by a more powerful individual or group against a less powerful individual who is unable to effectively resist or cope.

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#### 4. Types of bullying behaviour include:

Direct	Indirect
<b>Physical</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hitting, slapping and punching.</li> <li>• Kicking.</li> <li>• Pushing, strangling.</li> <li>• Spitting, biting.</li> <li>• Pinching, scratching.</li> <li>• Throwing things e.g. stones.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting another person to harm someone.</li> </ul>
<b>Verbal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name calling, slurs.</li> <li>• Hurtful teasing.</li> <li>• Demanding money or possessions.</li> <li>• Forcing another to do homework or commit offences such as stealing.</li> <li>• Using racist, sexual, homophobic or xenophobic language towards an individual or group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spreading rumours.</li> <li>• Cajoling peers into unfriendly behaviour.</li> <li>• Using racist, sexual, homophobic or xenophobic language.</li> </ul>
<b>Cyber Bullying</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Causing harm through email, instant messaging, text messaging, voting and polling booths, bash boards, happy slapping, internet and social network abuse.</li> <li>• Misuse of associated technology i.e. camera and video facilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Misrepresenting someone else using email, social network, text messaging and associated technology.</li> </ul>
<b>Symbolic</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obscene gestures</li> <li>• Removing, hiding and/or damaging others' belongings or schoolwork.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliberate, systematic exclusion from a group or activity intended to cause hurt.</li> </ul>

Bullying behaviour occurs in a social context. In most cases bullying is a repeated, unjustifiable behaviour. Incidents involve a person or persons displaying bullying behaviour towards another, typically in the presence of others, either in a real or virtual environment.

A **bystander** is someone who witnesses or is aware of the bullying behaviour. As bystanders, peers can either reinforce the behaviour through passive compliance or help to reduce bullying behaviour by taking action to resist it.

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## 5. Rights

- Every person has the right to feel safe.
- Every person has the right to be treated with respect and fairness.
- Every person has the right to learn.

## 6. Community Responsibility

It is everyone's responsibility to identify and prevent bullying behaviour. In the management of bullying incidents all parties are expected to treat each other with respect and dignity, and to ensure the confidentiality of any issues that may arise (in accordance with the school's confidentiality policy).

Staff, students and parents have the following responsibilities:

### The Leadership Team will

- Support, promote, enact, maintain and review the anti-bullying policy and procedures.

### All staff, students and parents will

- Be familiar with the school's anti-bullying policy and procedures.
- Respond to incidents by contacting the appropriate member of staff.
- Aspire to model caring and tolerant behaviour.
- Protect the person experiencing bullying behaviour from further harm.

### Teachers will

- Discuss in class, particularly in the first weeks of each school year, the non-acceptance of bullying behaviour – including online behaviour.
- Raise student awareness of the community's shared responsibility for ensuring that all members feel equally respected and valued.
- Teach (through the PSHCE and Lifeskills curriculum) relevant strategies, concepts and terminology in relation to incidents of bullying
- Attend to reported incidents of bullying behaviour promptly and sensitively, following the guidance in Section 7, below.
- Record incidents of bullying behaviour brought to their attention (in accordance with the guidelines of their particular school).

### Students who experience bullying behaviour need to communicate about it by

- Telling someone they trust (a teacher, staff member, student leader or parent).

### Student witnesses to bullying behaviour (bystanders) should

- Intervene verbally, if they are able, in a non-aggressive manner.
- Offer support to the target of the bullying behaviour.
- Seek assistance from a teacher, staff member, student leader or parent.

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### Parents of a child experiencing bullying behaviour should

- Speak to their child, **acknowledging the problem** and helping them to talk through it using the 'THINK, PLAN, TALK' steps in Appendix 1.
- **Reassure** their child that a solution will be found.
- **Inform** the class teacher or tutor of the concern (it is strongly advised that parents do not engage with the alleged student(s) or their family members directly).
- **Work with the class teacher/tutor** initially to seek a resolution. More serious or persistent issues will be escalated to the relevant Head of Year and, if necessary, to the appropriate Deputy/Assistant Headteacher (see flowchart in Appendix 1).

### Parent witnesses should

- Offer non-aggressive verbal intervention.
- Seek immediate assistance from the school by informing an appropriate member of staff

## 7. Responses to Bullying Incidents

7.1 Incidents involving bullying behaviour will be managed by addressing both the specific behaviour (with reference to the Student Code of Conduct), and the social context.

In dealing with accusations or incidents of bullying our primary aims are to protect the student experiencing the bullying behaviour from further harm, reduce stress and increase responsibility for modifying unacceptable behaviour.

Targets of bullying behaviour and bystanders are often unwilling to open up issues if the only response is one of blame and punishment. Research and best practice clearly indicate the best approach is always to work with all students involved, in a solution focussed way. We seek to:

- identify the facts,
- increase empathy
- identify strategies for a positive way forward.

Whilst our primary aim is to prevent bullying behaviour occurring, students must understand that such behaviour has consequences. In response to bullying behaviour, the school may apply a range of sanctions, up to and including suspension or exclusion, in accordance with the Misbehaviour and Sanctions Policy.

For any student's misbehaviour which infringes on the laws of Singapore, the school may inform the relevant authorities. Where it is mandatory under the laws of Singapore to report the infringement, the school will inform the relevant authorities.

7.2 In many cases, a resolution to prevent further bullying behaviour will be found through discussions with individuals or groups, focussing on:

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- (i) awareness of the Code of Conduct and inappropriate behaviour
- (ii) empathy for the feelings of the student experiencing bullying behaviour
- (iii) examples of appropriate behaviour
- (iv) strategies for resolving conflict amongst peers

Several discussions may be required, and class teachers/ tutors will review to ensure that there has been a positive behaviour change.

7.3 In more serious instances (for example where the bullying behaviour has persisted for a longer time), the class teacher/ tutor will be supported by a senior member of staff (Head of Year/ Assistant Head or Deputy Head). Strategies to address the behaviour may include:

- (i) The Method of Shared Concern
- (ii) Motivational interviewing/ mentoring
- (iii) Peer support
- (iv) Collaborative case management involving the Coordinated Wellbeing Services (CWS) team
- (v) Application of sanctions in accordance with the School's Misbehaviour and Sanctions Policy. Bullying behaviour may be treated as Level 2, 3 or 4 Misbehaviour and could ultimately lead to exclusion from School.

7.4 Immediate responses to serious individual incidents:

**For cyberbullying incidents involving inappropriate internet posts/content**

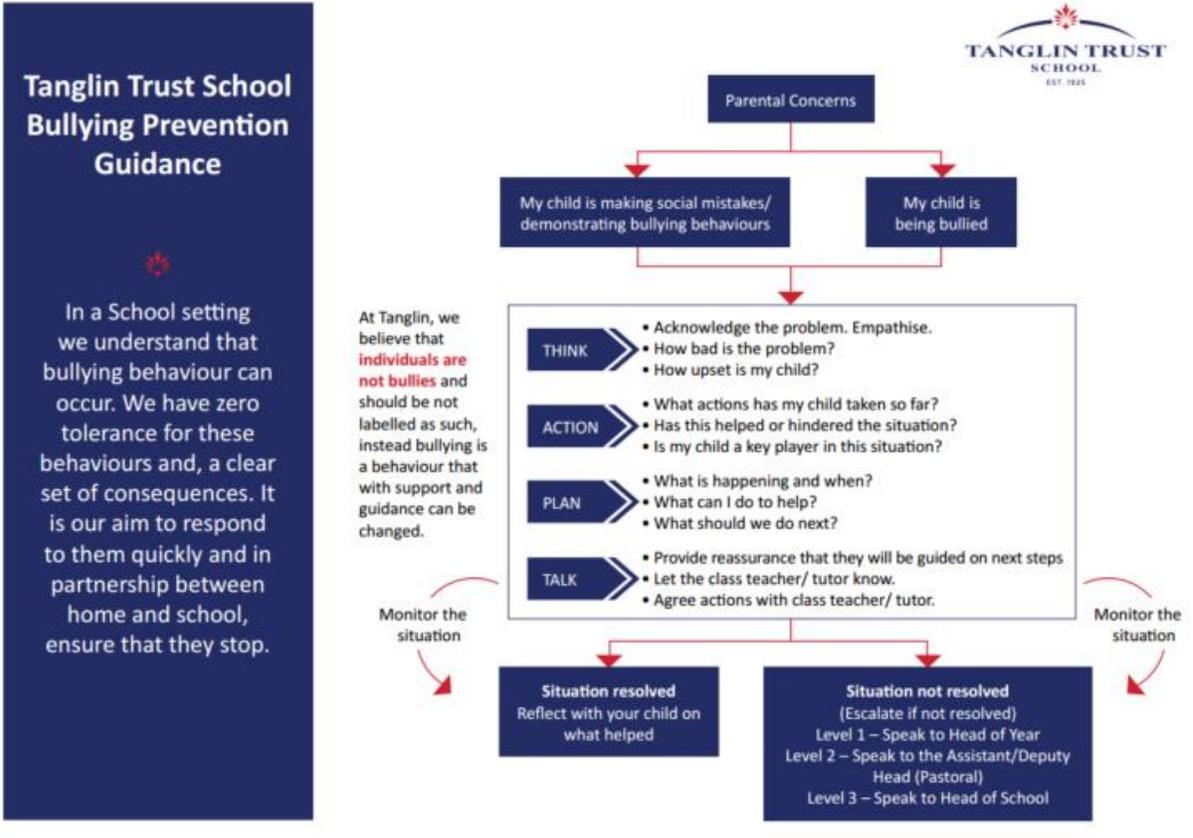
- Parents of the student responsible for the inappropriate posts will be notified as soon as the school becomes aware of them.
- All involved will be expected to remove inappropriate posts/content as soon as possible.
- The behaviour will be treated in the same way as any other bullying behaviour, with an appropriate response as in 7.2 or 7.3 above.
- Inappropriate use of the internet may be regarded as a Level 1, 2, 3 or 4 Misbehaviour.

**For incidents involving Physical Violence or Intimidation**

- Staff should seek immediate assistance from a colleague or senior member of staff.
- All students involved should be separated with minimal physical contact.
- Students involved (including bystanders) in the incident should be questioned separately as soon as possible after the incident to establish the facts.
- The incident will be referred to the appropriate Assistant Head/ Deputy or Head of School. Physical violence may be considered a Level 2, 3 or 4 Misbehaviour.
- In accordance with the Misbehaviour and Sanctions Policy, all involved in a serious physical assault that leads to bodily harm (those assaulting and those being assaulted) will normally be excluded from school for the rest of the day on which the assault takes place, and the following day for a cool-off period during which an investigation will take place.

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