

9. COUNTERING BULLYING POLICY

Policy Title: Countering Bullying Policy	Effective Date:	October 2023
Staff Member Responsible: Deputy Head Pastoral	Review Date:	October 2024

1. The aim of this policy is:

- To try to prevent bullying, as far as possible and
- To help staff, pupils and parents to deal with bullying when it occurs including on the grounds of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

Westonbirt is committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from violence and harassment so that all the pupils can develop their potential.

This policy is available on the website for all staff and parents including parents of boarders and is made known to pupils by means of the PSHE curriculum, tutorial programme and assemblies/chapel at school level and house level. New staff are aware of this policy through the induction programme.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following related policies and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.

- Promoting Positive Behaviour
- Equal Opportunities
- Safeguarding
- Use of Technology and Social Media

2. What do we mean by Bullying?

This policy uses the definition used by the DfE: bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. In essence, bullying is an abuse of power.

This definition includes:

- Hurting, harming or humiliation of another person by physical (including sexual and sexist) means
- Verbal bullying (including cyber bullying by means of electronic media like chat room and text messages)
- Emotional bullying (by excluding someone, tormenting them or spreading malicious rumours about them)
- Initiation ceremonies intended to cause hurt or humiliation
- Manipulating other people to tease or torment someone
- Complicity that falls short of direct participation in bullying

Bullying may involve actions or comments that:

- are racist, religious or cultural
- focus on disabilities or physical attributes (such as their appearance, hair colour or body shape)
- are sexist/sexual and/or homophobic, biphobic and/or transphobic
- targeted towards those with special educational needs
- Bullying may also involve damage to property and the isolation of individuals.

Using ICT in these ways is also bullying – it is known as ‘cyber-bullying’. It can involve using mobile phones, social or networking sites, like Facebook and Instagram, emails, text, including sexting, and text messages, voicemails and the posting of photographs, video clips and other electronic media on the internet.

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Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time – even in the very best schools with highly effective systems of pastoral care. Sometimes it is overt and intimidatory but it is often hidden and subtle. Whatever its nature, bullying is treated seriously at Westonbirt School because:

- It is against our ethos and values
- It is hurtful to others and to the school community
- It can cause great distress, unhappiness and psychological damage. At its worse, persistent and severe bullying can even lead to suicide which is why it is taken so seriously
- It can also be a criminal offence, for example if the behaviour amounts to harassment or to threatening behaviour

3. What do we do about it?

- 3.1 The education around bullying is included in Westonbirt's PSHE curriculum, tutorial programme and assemblies/chapel. Pupils discuss various aspects of the problem with the aim of:
 - a. providing suitable support to the bullied
 - b. providing help and guidance to the bully(ies) and bystanders
 - c. encouraging all members of the school to use language and act in a way that is respectful and kind towards others and does not perpetuate stereotypes or offence others.
 - d. to foster a culture of 'call it out' or 'call it up'.
- 3.2 Using lessons such as Drama, English and History to highlight the issue of bullying, by teaching moral values that show bullying to be unacceptable.
- 3.3 Westonbirt's Health and Wellbeing Centre, Counsellor, Listener, Mental Health Lead and Chaplain are an important part of the pastoral support system, alongside the core pastoral team of tutor/HOY/KSL/DHP, providing specialist skills of counselling, signposting and mental-health first aid. They are able to give advice to pupils who can refer themselves to them when they have a social, emotional or behavioural concern.
- 3.4 Staff are on duty at times when pupils are not in class and supervise break and lunchtime, particularly in areas where bullying might occur. They are trained to be alert to possible bullying signs and situations and are also trained to be aware of children who may be vulnerable and at risk from bullying in school.
- 3.5 We can only act to prevent or stop bullying if we are kept informed. Pupils who feel they are being bullied should inform a member of staff they feel they can talk to.
- 3.6 Pupils who think someone else is being bullied should inform a member of staff or a senior pupil e.g. Study One or a Prefect. Stamping out bullying is everybody's responsibility.
- 3.7 Staff will act promptly according to the school's countering bullying procedure.
- 3.8 All sides of the story will be listened to before a judgment is made and anybody who is involved in the incident will be asked to write an immediate account of the event.
- 3.9 The countering bullying policy dovetails with the School's Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy so that everyone understands what sanctions are for bullying and how the School supports and encourages good behaviour.

4. Counter Bullying Procedure

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- 4.1 Pupils are encouraged to tell an adult or a senior pupil if they feel they, or someone else, are being bullied.
- 4.2 Bullied pupils can be extremely scared of telling an adult about the bullying, expecting that any intervention by adults will just make matters worse. Giving a pupil reassurance is therefore the vital first step.
- 4.3 A pupil's wish to speak in confidence should be respected, with the clear proviso that if the adult is told something which is a cause for grave concern about the pupil's safety or well-being the adult will have an obligation to discuss the matter with someone in authority.
- 4.4 When speaking with a pupil who is suffering from bullying:
 - reassure them that confidentiality will be kept, where possible
 - identify clearly what is upsetting them
 - encourage their sense of self worth
 - remind them that no-one deserves to be treated unkindly;
 - look at assertive ways to respond to unkindness;
 - encourage them to help themselves by identifying moments which may have triggered unkindness and looking at ways to handle such situations;
 - reassure them that more help and support will be forthcoming.
- 4.5 When speaking with a pupil who is known to have been bullying:
 - clearly identify what is unacceptable in their behaviour;
 - ask the pupil for their point of view;
 - try to get them to see the other person's point of view;
 - try to get them to appreciate the other's feelings;
 - look at other ways to handle irritation or dislike;
 - make a clear statement that this behaviour must stop.
- 4.6 If the bullying behaviour continues, the tutor or adult who has been handling the situation until this moment should consult the Deputy Head Pastoral and Houseparent (where needed), as it may be that a more assertive intervention is necessary. A senior member of staff will see the bullying pupil, tell them clearly which aspects of their behaviour must change immediately and that the consequences of continuing to act unkindly will be severe.
- 4.7 It may be appropriate at this point for the bully's parents to be informed and their help enlisted.
- 4.8 The peer group/s should be made aware, by their Head of Year, Houseparent or a senior member of staff, of their collective responsibility to support the bullied pupil and to help the bully to affect a change by expressing their liking of them but their disapproval of their behaviour.
- 4.9 If these steps are ineffective, the school reserves the right to express its abhorrence of bullying by suspension or even exclusion.
- 4.10 If a pupil reports an incident of bullying then it should be recorded in writing immediately noting the following key points:
 - Date
 - Time
 - Place
 - Summary of what took place
 - Alleged victim
 - Alleged perpetrator

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This report should then be referred to the Head or Deputy Head Pastoral and will be noted in the bullying log.

- 4.11 It is important that records are in place so that any emerging patterns may be identified.
- 4.12 Children will be made aware that if bullying situations are ongoing outside the school community, that they are able to seek help from within it, in the same manner in which it may be reported on site.
- 4.13 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. This is recognised within the Safeguarding Policy section 11.1 and 11.2. The threshold for reporting a bullying issue to external agencies is known to the Safeguarding Team, and all staff have a responsibility to report up.
- 4.14 This procedure seeks to identify and work with those incidents not covered in the Promoting Positive Behaviour policy. The School recognises that some events will need acknowledgement of both of these policies in their response.

5. Advice to Staff

- 5.1 Learning to live alongside people with whom they may not feel an immediate liking, and to be tolerant of others' tastes and opinions, is an important part of a boarding school education for all our pupils. Handling moments when relationships are going badly wrong is difficult, requiring greater tact and sensitivity; all staff should feel freely able to discuss concerns with colleagues who may be more experienced.
- 5.2 The Head will raise awareness of this Countering Bullying Policy with staff through INSET training, and discussions in Houseparent and Middle Management Team meetings, in order to reduce the risk of bullying.
- 5.3 INSET training should be regular and should encourage staff to be aware of the school policies, and principles; to understand the reporting procedures and legal responsibilities. Staff should also be aware of the preventative measures that can be used to support pupils and situations where bullying may exist. This is inclusive of those with protected characteristics.

6. Cyberbullying

- 6.1 Any form of behaviour constituting bullying as defined by this policy via the internet will be subject to sanctions as described in the Countering Bullying Policy and the Use of Technology and Social Media Policy and will also result in the removal of privileges with regard to accessing the internet on school computers or personal devices whilst on the school premises.

7. The role of parents

- 7.1 Parents who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's tutor or Houseparent immediately.
- 7.2 Parents have a responsibility to support the school's Countering Bullying policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school community.

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WESTONBIRT PREP COUNTERING BULLYING POLICY (INCLUDING EYFS)

Please note that this policy takes into account the whole school policy and takes reference from non-statutory guidance such as [Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#)

Aims

Westonbirt Prep School is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We therefore aim to develop a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.

We make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the eradication of bullying. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell someone such as a trusted adult and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Objectives of this Policy

- All teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.

What is Bullying?

This policy uses the definition used by the DfE: bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. In essence, bullying is an abuse of power.

This definition includes:

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Bullying may involve actions or comments that:

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Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time – even in the very best schools with highly effective systems of pastoral care. Sometimes it is overt and intimidatory but it is often hidden and subtle. Whatever its nature, bullying is treated seriously at Westonbirt School and never tolerated because:

- It is against our ethos and values
- It is hurtful to others and to the school community
- It can cause great distress, unhappiness and psychological damage. At its worse, persistent and severe bullying can even lead to suicide which is why it is taken so seriously
- It can also be a criminal offence, for example if the behaviour amounts to harassment or to threatening behaviour

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (break/ lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Procedures

1. Children are encouraged to report bullying incidents to form tutors, any members of staff or trusted adults that they feel comfortable talking to. There are also Worry Boxes, Wellbeing Wednesday sessions, Personal Development (including PSHEE), Wellbeing ambassadors etc in place for those who would rather write down their concerns or communicate them in their own way.
2. Serious incidents of bullying will be recorded by staff.
3. Where appropriate, staff will share concerns with the wider team during phase meetings, staff meetings, briefings or specifically to members of staff. This will include strategies in place and observation requests.

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4. In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
5. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted.
6. Incidences of bullying must be recorded in a central place in order to enable patterns to be identified.
7. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
8. Use of the Behaviour Policy and the Rights and Responsibilities approach must be made in order to support the victim and the perpetrator.
9. An attempt will be made to help the reported child to change their behaviour. Support will be put in place for both the perpetrator and victim of bullying throughout the process.
10. Simple statements of the details of the incident and the way it has been resolved should be made by the class teacher in writing and this information should be available to other staff where appropriate.
11. The Head should be informed at all times when it is considered necessary for the parents of the children to be involved.

Outcomes

If possible, the pupils will be reconciled after the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with. Each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place. Children involved may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place. In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered.

Prevention

We will use the following methods for helping children to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- Understanding of school rules and creation of class rules. This is embedded in our Rights and Responsibilities approach (see Behaviour Policy). The needs and context of SEND pupils will be taken into account when dealing with and preventing bullying.
- Using Personal Development lessons, Thinking Thursday, circle time and informal opportunities to discuss bullying and to promote positive values and friendship. This supports the training and development of children's understanding in defining, preventing and reacting to bullying, as well as reflecting on their own actions and emotions.
- Put in place specific strategies for classes, groups or individuals that require assistance and support in managing social situations.
- Use anti bullying week to address concerns and support understanding of bullying from both sides and ensuring that they are fully aware of the options and strategies that they have if they are a victim or an observer of bullying.

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- Use staff and senior pupils to reinforce understanding, expectations and support around bullying through assemblies.
- Regular communication will occur between parents, staff and children to ensure that any issues are flagged up at the earliest opportunity.

Anti-bullying strategies adopted by Westonbirt Prep School

1. A whole school approach should be endorsed where children and adults work together to create an environment where bullying is not tolerated, either inside or outside of school.
2. Children should be involved in developing anti bullying strategies as they often have the best approaches to the problem, and they are more likely to use and stand by their own solutions or those created by their peers.
3. Constructive methods of dealing with bullying are more likely to change behaviour. Punishing does not often work and it is important to stress that it is the behaviour that is wrong, not the person. If possible talk through behaviour with the perpetrator, encouraging them to understand the implications and results of their actions and showing them different ways to react. Try to find out why they are bullying and help them change their attitude.
4. Acknowledge and reward children who help to prevent bullying.
5. Support schemes that encourage children to make friends. This is one of the best defences against bullying, but not everyone has the social skills to make friends. Teaching assertiveness skills and building confidence to all children may be a way to help children to make friends.
6. Children will be made aware that if bullying situations are ongoing outside the school community, that they are able to seek help from within it, in the same manner in which it may be reported on site.
7. Use Personal Development lessons and general class time to talk about bullying and intimidation in general. Use other educational elements to highlight bullying when it is appropriate to do so.
8. The threshold for reporting a bullying issue to external agencies is known to the school staff. 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. This is recognised within the Safeguarding Policy (11)
9. INSET training should be regular and should encourage staff to be aware of the school policies, and principles; to understand the reporting procedures and legal responsibilities. Staff should also be aware of the preventative measures that can be used to support pupils and situations where bullying may exist. This is inclusive of situations with SEND/LGBT and other protected characteristics.

Cyberbullying

Any form of behaviour constituting bullying as defined by this policy via the internet will be subject to sanctions as described in the Countering Bullying Policy, Pastoral Care and the Use of Technology and Social Media Policy and will also result in the removal of privileges with regard to accessing the internet on school computers or personal devices whilst on the school premises.

Staff should support all children and try to establish a climate of trust and respect for all.

Pastoral care

The Headmaster supports the staff in all attempts to eliminate bullying from the school. We do not allow bullying to take place in our school and any incidents of bullying are taken very seriously and are dealt with appropriately and quickly.

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The Headmaster monitors the incidents of bullying and reviews the effectiveness of the school policy regularly and keeps accurate records of all incidents of bullying.

It is the responsibility of the Headmaster to implement the school anti bullying strategy and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy and know how to deal with incidents of bullying. The Headmaster ensures that all children know that bullying is wrong and that it is unacceptable in this school.

The Headmaster sets the school climate of mutual support and praise for success, so making bullying less likely. When children feel they are valued and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour.

The role of parents

Parents who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's class teacher immediately.

Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti bullying policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school.

EYFS

Nursery and Reception children develop their understanding of the world through the curriculum. They develop skills around areas such as empathy and managing emotions. These help to support the prevention of bullying and the children are directly taught how to understand what bullying is and how it could affect others.

Monitoring and review

This policy should be ready in conjunction with the following related policies:

- Behaviour
- Equal Opportunities
- Safeguarding
- Use of Technology and Social Media
- Anti-Bullying Code of Conduct

This policy is monitored by the Headmaster, who analyses information with regard to gender, age and ethnic background of all children involved in bullying incidents.