

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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Introduction

We believe that our pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied. We are proud of and wish to maintain the family-like atmosphere we enjoy at Westbourne; therefore, we believe that bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. It also affects those other children who watch, and less aggressive pupils can be drawn in by group pressure. Bullying is not an inevitable part of school life or a necessary part of growing up, and it rarely sorts itself out. It is clear that certain jokes, insults, intimidating/threatening behaviour, written abuse and violence are to be found in our society. No one person or group, whether staff or pupils, should have to accept this type of behaviour. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will a child best be able to benefit from the opportunities available at Westbourne.

We have a clear policy on the promotion of good citizenship, where it is made clear that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour. It is **WRONG** and will not be tolerated.

Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- to demonstrate that we take bullying seriously and that it will not be tolerated;
- to take proactive measures to prevent all forms of bullying;
- to support everyone in the actions to identify and protect those who might be bullied;
- to demonstrate that the safety and happiness of our pupils is enhanced by dealing positively with bullying;
- to promote upstanding behaviours and avoid bystanding behaviours and by doing so, creating an environment where it is not seen as an offence to tell someone about bullying;
- to promote positive attitudes in our pupils.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as:

- deliberately hurtful behaviour, whether physical or psychological;
- repeated over a period of time;
- where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves;
- involving deliberate aggression;
- having an unequal power relationship;
- resulting in pain and distress;
- being persistent.

Types of Bullying

Bullying can occur through several types of anti-social behaviour. It can be at least:

- **PHYSICAL** - A child can be physically punched, kicked, hit, spat at, etc.
- **VERBAL** - Verbal abuse can take the form of name-calling. It may be directed towards gender, ethnic origin, physical/social disability, or personality, etc., and/or including comments of a homophobic nature.



- **SOCIAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL** - A child can be bullied simply by being excluded from discussions/activities with those they believe to be their friends.
- **DAMAGE TO PROPERTY OR THEFT** - Pupils may have their property damaged or stolen. The alleged bully may use physical threats in order that the pupil hands over property to them.
- **CYBER (ELECTRONIC BULLYING)** - Pupils may be subject to threats and intimidation by means of text messages, voice mails and internet chat rooms or email. The difficulty with this type of bullying is that the alleged bully works under a greater cloak of secrecy from adult gaze and supervision.

Signs of Bullying

There are often signs in pupils who are being bullied including:

- Being frightened of travelling to and from school
- Not wanting to go to school
- Becoming withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Having possessions which are damaged or “go missing”
- Starting to stammer
- Having money continually “lost”
- Being frightened to say what’s wrong
- Stopping eating
- Having unexplained cuts, bruises
- Becoming aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Giving improbable excuses for any of the above
- Being afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Nervous or jumpy when a cyber-message is received
- Articulating that they have regular headaches, stomach-ache, anxiety
- Having sudden changes in behaviour, for example, becoming withdrawn, shy or nervous.

Dealing with Bullying

All staff should be aware of these possibilities and report promptly any suspicions or concerns to the Form Tutor, Coordinators (Middle Years, IB or GCSE), or the Principal/ Vice Principal(s) depending on the seriousness of the concern, and use iSAMS Wellbeing Manager to record the event.

If a pupil is being bullied, they should:

- be reminded that silence is a bully’s greatest weapon;
- tell themselves that they do not deserve to be bullied, and that it is ‘WRONG’;
- be proud of who they are and that it is good to be an individual;
- try not to show that they are upset. This is hard to do in the situation but a bully thrives on someone’s fear or sadness;
- stay with a group of friends/people/trusted adult; there is safety in numbers;
- be encouraged to be assertive – shout “No!” Walk confidently away. Go straight to a teacher or a member of staff;
- be aware that fighting back may make things worse;
- be assured that it is best to tell an adult that they trust straight away; they will receive immediate support.



Advice for pupils

Look at ways in which you can help prevent bullying in your class and in school.

- If you accidentally offend or upset someone, be brave enough to say sorry;
- Include new pupils in your group. Try to get to know all people in your class and appreciate their good qualities;
- Seek help if you know someone is being bullied;
- Encourage each other to not get involved in unpleasant behaviour;
- Get help to deal with a situation before it gets out of hand;
- Never join in bullying or encourage it in any way;
- Don't accept name calling;
- Express your disapproval when you see someone doing something unkind;
- Treat others as you would like them to treat you;
- Share any problems by telling someone – your parents, a teacher, your friends, an older student;
- Remember the School will investigate claims of bullying in a sensitive way;
- Support those who experience bullying;
- Help eliminate bullying by reporting incidents you see;
- Value people's individuality.

Advice for parents

Advice given to parents in a suspected case of bullying. Parents should:

- Look for unusual behaviour in your children. For example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, have trouble sleeping, or not complete work to their normal standard;
- Always take an active role in your child's education. Enquire how their day has gone, who they have spent their time with, how lunchtime was spent etc.;
- Inform the School IMMEDIATELY if you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow;
- Advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse;
- Tell your child there is nothing wrong with them. It is not their fault that they are being bullied;
- Make sure your child is fully aware of the School policy concerning bullying, and that they should not be afraid to ask for help.

Preventing Bullying

To help minimise the incidence of bullying, the school:

- organises the community in order to minimise opportunities for bullying;
- provides increased supervision at problem times;
- ensures teachers arrive at their class on time, especially for the form tutor periods and directly after breaks;
- ensures that teachers do not leave a class unsupervised during a lesson (except in the case of Sixth Form students);
- uses any opportunity to discuss aspects of bullying, and the appropriate way to behave towards each other, e.g. the Form Tutor sessions and PSHE sessions;



- deals quickly, firmly and fairly with any complaints, involving parents where necessary;
- puts in place and implements a firm but fair discipline structure;
- ensures teachers do not use teaching materials or equipment which give a bad or negative view of any group because of their ethnic origin, gender, etc.;
- encourages pupils to discuss how they get on with other people and to form positive attitudes towards other people. This includes a review of what friendship really is;
- encourages pupils to treat everyone with respect;
- reviews the school policy and its degree of success on a regular basis.

Actions to be taken when bullying is suspected.

We will treat bullying in whatever form it takes as a serious offence and take every possible action to eradicate it from our School.

The victim should be consulted as to what would help them before a course of action is decided. Some victims may only want to be supported from a distance or only require someone to listen.

a) If bullying is suspected or reported the incident will be investigated and dealt with initially and immediately by the teacher involved. (If a racial or homophobic element is suspected then the Principal/ Vice Principal(s) must be informed immediately).

b) Interviews with the Form Tutor (and/or Key Stage Coordinator) followed by written statements, if appropriate, from the victim, the alleged bully and any third parties should be taken, being careful not to single out anyone publicly. The investigator will ensure that all parties are treated with sympathy, respect and understanding. They should be offered the opportunity to have a pupil or staff advocate with them. This may or may not include interviewing the pupils with their parents, depending on the seriousness of the issue.

c) The Form Tutor in consultation with the appropriate Coordinator will determine the appropriate strategy and plan of action to combat the bullying.

d) At this stage, help, support and counselling will be given as is appropriate to both the victim and the alleged bully. We support the victim in the following ways:

- by offering them an immediate opportunity to discuss their experience with a teacher of their choice;
- by informing the victim's parents/guardians;
- by taking one or more of the seven disciplinary steps described below to prevent more bullying.

f) We also discipline, yet try to educate, the bully in the following ways:

- by talking about what happened to discover why they acted the way they did;
- informing the alleged bully's parents/guardians;
- by continuing to work with the alleged bully in order to get rid of prejudiced attitudes as far as possible;
- by taking one or more of the disciplinary steps described below to prevent more bullying.

Disciplinary steps

These steps will be applied as appropriate by the Coordinators, or the Principal/ Vice Principal(s) and wisdom and professional judgement will be used in applying these steps to individual cases:



- Pupils will be warned officially to stop offending and/or a sanction given.
- The pupil's parents/guardians will be informed officially that steps are being taken.
- Pupils may be excluded from communal areas during break and/or lunch times and, if necessary, supervised in class.
- Pupils may be escorted to and from the School premises.
- If the matter persists pupils will be suspended from school for a minor fixed period (one or two days).
- If pupils continue after step 5 they will be recommended for suspension from school for a major fixed period (up to five days) or for an indefinite period. If step 6 is unsuccessful and the bullying persists, pupils will be recommended for permanent exclusion (expulsion) from school.

We aim to raise awareness of the anti-social nature of bullying and the need to prevent it in school by means of the Health and Wellbeing programme (PSHE), school assemblies, the school council and in Form Tutor's sessions.

Help Organisations

Family Lives (formerly Parent Line Plus) - [Parenting and Family Support | Family Lives](#)

KIDSCAPE Help With Bullying - kidscape.org.uk

Childline – 0800 1111 - [Childline | Free counselling service for kids and young people | Childline](#)

