



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Bullying Definitions

(Stopbullying.gov)

'Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.'

NSPCC

'Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else – such as name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally.'

(George Robinson 1995)

It is deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated often over a period of time, and difficult for those being bullied to stop the process.

Bullying can take many forms such as name calling, verbally, by text or by e-mail, (cyber- bullying), taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, pushing, taking belongings, sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet, producing offensive graffiti, gossiping, excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours. All forms of bullying in school are unacceptable and as an institution we will seek to prevent bullying and promote an appropriate school ethos in which bullying is not tolerated. Incidents of bullying will be referred using school referral system. The Pastoral Team will collate information for monitoring purposes.

AIMS:

- a. To prevent bullying in school by creating a positive environment where students respect each other and care for each other's welfare.
- b. To provide a structure of support for students who feel bullied to be counselled in a group and on a one to one basis.
- c. To provide restorative work for students who have bullied other students to attempt to prevent any recurrence.
- d. To promote a general school awareness of the causes and problems which arise in relation to bullying.
- e. To involve parents in the restorative procedures for students who may be bullied by others and for the bullied themselves.
- f. To integrate the subject of bullying into the Personal, Social and Health Education Course for every student in Key Stage 3.
- g. To involve students in ensuring that bullying is unacceptable.
- h. To ensure students and staff understand the importance of using inclusive and non-derogatory language.
- i. To help students understand the difference between banter and interactions that can threaten and hurt.

STRUCTURE

- a. The biggest barrier to preventing bullying is the identification of the situation. This is most likely to be due to the child's reluctance to report instances of bullying for fear of further bullying. A relationship of trust needs to be established between the child and his form tutor, subject teacher, head of year or SLT link. Students need to feel confident that the matter will be handled discreetly, sensitively and effectively.
- b. The topic of bullying should be focused upon in full school, year and form assembly. Sources of need and support via form tutor, year head etc. must be advertised to students. Discretion should be emphasised. Students can seek support confidentially via safeguarding@westleigh.wigan.sch.uk
- c. The whole school curriculum should deal with the topic of bullying in a variety of ways. The subject will also be dealt with in tutor time and in assemblies. Other aspects of the curriculum can also feature bullying as a topic for example Drama, PSHE, Religious Education, English Literature, History, ICT. Emphasis should be put on WHY people bully, HOW they bully, WHAT to do about being a victim of a bully.

Students must be given the opportunity to express their feelings on bullying within these subjects in a variety of ways, e.g. Group discussion, drama improvisation, written work, poetry, role-play.

- d. Students are encouraged to be tolerant and supportive of others and to accept the importance of their role in preventing bullying. Specific students including student leaders are trained to support students in school. School counsellors are also instrumental in promoting a school culture which does not sustain bullying. A student devised anti-bullying agreement has been produced for all students to subscribe to and students will be encouraged to play an active part in promoting a school ethos in which bullying will not be sustained.
- e. The supervision and day to day organisation of the school must make sure that the playground, corridors, toilets and other hidden areas are regularly visited by duty staff, welfare helpers and senior student leaders. All staff need to be on the lookout for incidents of bullying. Such incidents should be dealt with and reported via the referral system.

Teachers must be vigilant in recognising the characteristics of the bullied student. Discussion on possible bullying needs to be on the agenda of year team and pastoral meetings. Immediate and prompt actions must be taken if bullying is identified. Typical signs of bullying that may or may not form a pattern are distress, deterioration of work, illness, isolation, the desire to remain with adults, erratic attendance. All logs of bullying will be centrally stored and followed up immediately by the Pastoral Team.

- f. Parent interviews must be arranged if bullying is suspected.
- g. Support staff are available to counsel and work with victims of bullying and also the bullies. Sessions can be arranged to promote good relationships between students and to ensure bullying behaviour is minimised. Confidence/esteem building sessions, anger management, relationship building can be used to create a climate where bullying is unacceptable.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN IF BULLYING HAS OCCURED

1. The student who is bullied must be offered immediate help within the pastoral structure of the school. Each case must be dealt with discreetly and sensitively. Interviews with parties must take place.
2. The bullied student should record the events in writing. The bully or bullies should record the events in writing. The teacher and/or a senior colleague should record their discussion with both parties.
3. The parents of all the students involved should be contacted. Discussion of action strategies must take place hopefully with parental co-operation. Student, Teacher, Parent, must contribute to the plan of action.
4. Each case will be dealt with on an individual basis. Depending on the severity of the case various forms of action may be taken. The victim will need support and strategies need to be used to rebuild the student's self-esteem.
5. The student who bullies others however will need careful counselling on reasons for bullying, aspects and consequences of this sort of anti-social behaviour. Support is available via the Pastoral Team, Learning Support Centre and the school counsellor.
6. In severe cases, the ultimate sanction will be exclusion.
7. Governors must be kept fully informed of cases of bullying and in the more severe cases Governors will need to be involved with any disciplinary action taken e.g. exclusion.

SPECIFIC TYPES OF BULLYING

Bullying Related to Race, Religion or Culture

Some surveys have found that a high proportion of bullied students have experienced racist or faith-based bullying. Recent political and social issues also appear to have been a factor in bullying and harassment. There is research to support the suggestion that where black and minority ethnic (BME) children experience bullying, it is more likely to be severe bullying.

Bullying related to special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities

Children and young people with SEN and disabilities are more at risk of bullying than their peers. Public bodies have new responsibilities to actively promote equality of opportunity for all disabled people and eliminate disability-related harassment.

Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, whether in mainstream or special schools, do not always have the levels of social confidence and competence and the robust friendship bonds that can protect against bullying.

Bullying related to appearance or health conditions

Those with health or visible medical conditions, such as eczema, may be more likely than their peers to become targets for bullying behaviour. Perceived physical limitations, such as size and weight and other body image issues can result in bullying.

Bullying related to sexual orientation

Evidence of homophobic bullying suggests that children and young people who are gay or lesbian (or perceived to be) face a higher risk of victimisation than their peers. Homophobic bullying is perhaps the form of bullying least likely to be self-reported, since disclosure carries risks not associated with other forms of bullying.

Bullying of young carers or looked-after children, or otherwise linked to home circumstances

Children may be made vulnerable to bullying by the fact that they provide care to someone in their family with an illness, disability, mental health or substance misuse problem. Young carers may be taking on practical and emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult. Research has highlighted the difficulties young carers face, including risks of ill-health, stress and tiredness, especially when they care through the night. Many feel bullied or isolated. Children in care may also be vulnerable to bullying for a variety of reasons, such as they're not living with their birth parents or because they have fallen behind in their studies.

Some students are heavily influenced by their communities or homes where bullying and abuse may be common. Some bullying at school may arise from trauma or instability at home related to issues of domestic violence or bereavement or from the experience of being part of a refugee family. Siblings of vulnerable children may themselves be the subject of bullying by association.

Sexist or Sexual bullying/Peer on Peer abuse

Sexist and sexual bullying affects both genders. Boys may be victims as well as girls, and both sexes may be victims of their own sex. Sexual bullying may be characterised by name calling, comments and overt "looks" about appearance, attractiveness and emerging puberty. In addition, uninvited touching, innuendos and propositions, pornographic imagery or graffiti may be used. If a young person feels pressurised to show images of themselves or others share such images, this must be treated under this agenda.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a "method" of bullying, rather than a "type" of bullying. It includes bullying via text message; via instant messenger services and social network sites; via email; and via images or videos posted on the internet or spread via mobile phone. It can take the form of any of the previously discussed types of bullying – ie technology can be used to bully for reasons of race, religion, sexuality, disability etc.

Though the evidence base is narrow, UK studies indicate that around 20% of children and young people have suffered cyberbullying.

Unlike other forms of bullying, cyberbullying can affect a child for 24 hours a day and invade their personal space and even enter the 'safe' home environment.

Useful websites to help:-

- www.childline.org.uk – contains tips and resources for victims
- www.kidpower.org.uk – practical help for young people and parents
- www.bullying.co.uk – help and advice for victims, parents and schools
- www.nspcc.org.uk – help and advice for parents and families

Students can confidentially log any concerns they have about a potential bullying issue by emailing: safeguarding@westleigh.wigan.sch.uk

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