



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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Contents

Objective.....	3
Policy Links.....	3
Our School Community	3
Definition of Bullying	4
Effects of Bullying	4
Forms of Bullying Covered by this Policy.....	5
Preventing, Identifying and Responding to Bullying	5
Involvement of Students	6
Liaison with Parents and Carers	6
Links with Other School Policies and Practices	7
Links to Legislation	7
Responsibilities.....	7
Signs and Symptoms of Bullying.....	8
Dealing with Incidents	8
Supporting Students.....	9
Supporting Adults	10
Online Bullying.....	10
Dealing with Incidents	11
Online Bullying of School Staff	12
Monitoring, Evaluation and Review	12
Supporting Organisations and Guidance:.....	12
Relevant Policies	14

OBJECTIVE

This policy outlines what The Worthgate School will do to prevent and tackle bullying. The policy was drawn up through the whole school community's involvement, and we are committed to developing an anti-bullying culture whereby no bullying, including between adults, or adults and young people, will be tolerated.

POLICY LINKS

This policy is based on DfE guidance "Preventing and Tackling Bullying" last updated in 2017, "Cyber Bullying: advice for Headteachers and school staff" 2014 and supporting documents and "Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying" October 2014. We are aware of "Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges", last updated in 2021, but withdrawn in 2022.

This guidance can be found on the following links:

[DfE's Guidance for schools on preventing and responding to bullying \(2013\)](#)

[DfE's Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff \(2014\)](#)

[DfE's Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges \(2017\)](#)

OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Discusses, monitors and reviews our anti-bullying policy and practices regularly, aligning to latest government policy updates:

- We align ourselves to Trauma Informed Practice, recognising and acknowledging peoples' trauma and its prevalence. We aim to prevent re-traumatisation and promote healing. Trauma informed practitioners are aware and sensitive to the impact of trauma on peoples' behavior, mental health, and ability to engage. Trauma informed practice is based on five core principles: safety, trustworthiness, respect choice, collaboration and empowerment
- Supports all members of staff to promote positive relationships to prevent bullying
- Will intervene by identifying and tackling bullying behaviour, appropriately and promptly
- Employs a restorative approach to resolving issues
- Ensures that students are aware that all bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; those students feel safe to learn; and that students abide by the anti-bullying policy

- Requires all members of the community to work with the School to uphold the anti-bullying policy
- Reports back to parents/carers regarding concerns on bullying and deals promptly with complaints
- Seeks to learn from good anti-bullying practice elsewhere
- Utilises support from the Local Authority and other relevant organisations when appropriate
- Abides by English [anti-discrimination law](#)

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

- Bullying is “behaviour by an individual or a group, usually repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally”. (DfE “Preventing and Tackling Bullying”, 2013 updated November 2017)
- Bullying can include name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; taking belongings; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups; financial control and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours
- This includes the same inappropriate and harmful behaviours expressed via digital devices (cyberbullying) such as the sending of inappropriate messages by phone, text, Instant Messenger, through websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive or degrading, inappropriate and/or illegal content by mobile phone or via the internet
- It can also be 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, or by actual differences between children/young people, or perceived differences. Where so, such actions are classed as ‘discriminatory’
- Bullying can also be of a sexual nature and linked to sexual violence and sexual harassment between peers. When referring to sexual harassment we mean ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of School. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child-on-child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child’s dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment

EFFECTS OF BULLYING

Bullying can have a devastating effect on a young person which can last into adulthood. At its worst, bullying can cause young people to develop mental health issues, including depression and anxiety, and/or can result in self-harm. These young people may have fewer

friendships, become wary and suspicious of others, struggle to participate, have problems in school and do not reach their full academic potential and find it difficult to develop emotional resilience. Children at the highest risk are those who are both bullied, and who bully others.

The effects on children who bully other children are shown to be at increased risk of substance misuse/academic problems and violent behaviour in later life. The effects on children witnessing bullying may show similar signs to children being bullied. ([NSPCC Bullying and cyberbullying advice](#))

FORMS OF BULLYING COVERED BY THIS POLICY

Bullying can happen to anyone. This policy covers all types of bullying including:

- Bullying related to race, religion or culture
- Bullying related to SEND (Special Educational Needs or Disability)
- Bullying related to appearance or physical/mental health conditions
- Bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic bullying)
- Bullying of young carers, children in care or otherwise related to home circumstances
- Sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying
- Bullying via technology – online or cyberbullying
- Bullying related to finance
- Bullying related to gender identity or expression

PREVENTING, IDENTIFYING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING

The School Community will:

- Create, support and role-model an inclusive environment which promotes a culture of mutual respect, consideration and care for others, which will be upheld by all
- Work with staff and outside agencies to identify all forms of prejudice-driven bullying
- Actively provide and promote systematic opportunities to develop students' and staff's social and emotional skills, including their resilience
- Recognise that bullying can be perpetrated or experienced by any member of the community, including adults and children (child on child abuse is referred to in our policies as 'Student on Student abuse')
- Provide a range of approaches for students, staff and parents/carers to access support and report concerns
- Challenge practice which does not uphold the values of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect towards others. Where staff are concerned, see Low-Level Concerns policy located in the Safeguarding Policy (and CATS Global Schools' Central Policies)

- Consider all opportunities for addressing bullying in all forms throughout the curriculum and supported with a range of approaches such as through student action groups, displays, assemblies, peer support and the student council
- Regularly update and evaluate our approaches to take into account the developments of technology and provide up-to-date advice and education to all members of the community regarding positive online behaviour
- Train all staff including teaching staff, support staff (including administration staff, lunchtime support staff and site support staff) and pastoral staff to identify all forms of bullying, follow the School policy and procedures (including recording and reporting incidents)
- Proactively gather and record concerns and intelligence in a timely manner about bullying incidents and issues to effectively develop strategies to prevent bullying
- Take appropriate, proportionate and reasonable action, in line with existing School policies, for any bullying brought to the School's attention which involves or affects students even when they are not on School premises, for example when using School transport or when online etc.
- Use a variety of techniques, including the Restorative Approach, to resolve the issues between those who bully and those who have been bullied
- Work with other agencies and the wider School community to prevent and tackle concerns
- Celebrate success and achievements to promote and build a positive School ethos
- Be encouraged to use technology, especially mobile phones and social media positively and responsibly

INVOLVEMENT OF STUDENTS

- Ensure that all students know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying
- Ensure that all students are aware of the range of sanctions which may be applied against those engaging in bullying
- Involve students in anti-bullying campaigns in the School through vehicles such as Student House Leadership, Student Council, PT (Personal Tutor) groups and Student committees (such as the Diversity Committee and Mental Health Champions)
- Publicise the details of help lines and websites in the boarding residences
- Offer support to students who have been bullied and to those who are bullying, in order to address the problems they have

LIAISON WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

- Ensure that key information (including policies and named contact points) about bullying is available to parents/carers in accessible formats

- Ensure that all parents/carers know who to contact if they are worried about bullying
- Ensure all parents/carers know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively to raise concerns in an appropriate manner
- Ensure all parents/carers know where to access independent advice about bullying.

LINKS WITH OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES AND PRACTICES

This policy links with other School policies, practices and action plans including:

- Student behaviour policy
- Complaints policy
- Safeguarding
- Online Safety
- Pastoral Principles, Welfare and Practice.

LINKS TO LEGISLATION

There are several pieces of legislation which set out measures and actions for schools in response to bullying and criminal and civil law. These may include (but are not limited to):

- The Education and Inspection Act 2006
- The Education Act 2011
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children Act 1989
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- The Computer Misuse Act 1990 (last updated 2015)

RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Principal, Vice Principal, Assistant Principal Pastoral and Director of Safeguarding, Mental Health and Wellbeing, along with the Senior Leadership Team, take lead roles in monitoring and reviewing this policy
- Governors, the Principal, Senior school Managers, Teaching and Non-Teaching staff to be aware of this policy and implement it accordingly
- The Principal will coordinate the communication of the policy to the School community and ensure that disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably
- Staff to support and uphold the policy
- Parents/carers to support their children and work in partnership with the School, thereby triangulating support

- Students abide by the policy, avoid causing distress / harm to others and demonstrate the 'Caring' / 'Communicator' / 'Open-Minded' / 'Resilient' / 'Critical thinkers' Worthgate Characteristics

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF BULLYING

Staff must be alert to students who may be vulnerable and at risk from bullying. A student may indicate by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if they have concerns about a student:

- Is frightened of walking to, around, or from School
- Changes their usual routine by feeling ill in the mornings or is unwilling to go to School or begins to truant
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Attempts or threatens suicide, self-harm or runs away
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Begins to do poorly in School work
- Comes home or back to the Boarding House with clothes torn or damaged or has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- Has unexplained injuries
- Becomes uncharacteristically aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other students
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Is afraid to use the internet or their mobile phone
- Is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received

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

DEALING WITH INCIDENTS

The following steps may be taken when dealing with all incidents of bullying reported to the School:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident must be reported immediately to the student's House Pastoral Director (HPD) who will report to a member of the Safeguarding Team. The bullying allegation will be dealt with sensitively and quickly, by an allocated member of staff
- A clear and precise account of the incident(s) will be recorded in writing and given to a member of the Safeguarding Team. A note will be logged on the student's iSAMS

page in the following format: it will be noted as a 'Welfare Concern' under 'Pastoral' and will be entered in the student's *private notes* box

- The designated lead on the bullying case will interview parties suspected of involvement and will record the incident – All paper records of the incident will be kept and the incident will be logged in the 'Student Concern Log' kept by the Assistant Principal Pastoral
- Teachers/Personal Tutors and House Parents will be kept informed as necessary
- When responding to cyberbullying concerns, the school will take all available steps to identify the bully, including looking at the school systems, identifying and interviewing possible witnesses, utilising methods listed in the 'Screening, Searching and Confiscation Policy' and contacting the service provider and/or the police or social services, if necessary. The police will need to be involved to enable the service provider to investigate the data of another user
- A bullying incident will be treated as a Child Protection concern where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm
- If content posted online is offensive, inappropriate or illegal, and the person or people responsible are known, then the school will ensure that they understand why the material is unacceptable, will demand that they remove it and will issue an appropriate sanction and support where helpful. If the police or social services are involved, content will be left for the police to action its removal
- Where the bullying takes place outside of the school site, then the school will ensure that the concern is investigated, and that appropriate action is taken in accordance with the school's behaviour and discipline policy
- Parents/carers will be kept informed as appropriate
- Sanctions will be used as appropriate and in consultation with relevant parties
- If necessary and appropriate, the police or other local services will be consulted

SUPPORTING STUDENTS

Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff of their choice, who will listen sympathetically and decide next steps with the student
- Being advised to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience as appropriate
- Reassuring the student, providing ongoing support and following up to check in later
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence
- Working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance

- Promoting anti-bullying awareness through national, local and School campaigns

Students who have bullied will be supported by:

- Discussing what happened and establishing the concern and the need to change
- Informing parents/carers to help triangulate change the student's attitude and behaviour
- Providing appropriate education and support
- If online, requesting content is removed and reporting account/content to service provider
- Sanctioning in line with School behaviour/discipline policy. This may include official warnings, study support, removal of privileges (including online access when encountering cyberbullying concerns), and fixed-term and permanent exclusions
- Speaking with police or local services to provide extra support

SUPPORTING ADULTS

Adults (staff and parents) who have been bullied or affected will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the concern with the designated safeguarding lead/Director of Safeguarding, Mental Health and Wellbeing and/or a senior member of staff/Principal
- Being advised to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience as appropriate
- (Where the bullying takes place outside the School site), the School ensuring the concern is investigated, and that appropriate action is taken in accordance with the School's behaviour and discipline policy
- Reassuring and offering appropriate support
- Working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance

Adults (staff and parents) who have bullied will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened with a senior member of staff and establishing the concern
- Clarifying the School's official procedures for complaints or concerns
- If online, requesting content is removed and reporting account/content to the service provider
- Instigating disciplinary, civil or legal action

ONLINE BULLYING

Definition and description

Online bullying is defined as the use of technology, such as email and social networking sites, to deliberately hurt or upset, harass or threaten someone. Unlike physical forms of bullying, the internet provides further opportunity for bullying to continue past School hours and invades the victim's home life and personal space. It also allows distribution of hurtful comments and material to a wide audience.

Online bullying is more prevalent, as students who would not consider bullying in the physical sense may find it easier to bully through the internet, especially if it is thought the bullying may remain anonymous.

Bullying may take the form of:

- rude, abusive, demeaning or threatening messages
- posting insulting, derogatory or defamatory statement
- setting up websites that specifically or by proxy, target the victim
- making or sharing derogatory, embarrassing or indecent images or videos of someone.

Online bullying can affect students and staff members. Often, the internet medium used to perpetrate the bullying, allows the bully to remain anonymous. In extreme cases, online bullying could be a criminal offence under the Harassment Act 1997 or the Telecommunications Act 1984.

DEALING WITH INCIDENTS

The following covers all incidents of bullying that involve students at the School, whether they take place on School premises or outside School. All incidents should be dealt with under the School's behaviour policies and the student-on-student abuse guidance.

The School's safeguarding, anti-bullying and behaviour policies and acceptable use policy, cover the issue of online bullying and set out clear expectations of behaviour and sanctions for any breach.

Any incidents of online bullying should be reported to the Safeguarding and Pastoral Teams, who will inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The DSL/APP will record the incident on the Student Incident Log and ensure that the incident is dealt with in line with the School's anti-bullying policy. Incidents should be monitored, and the information used to inform the development of anti-bullying policies.

Where incidents are extreme, for example threats against someone's life, or persist over time, consideration should be given to reporting the matter to the police as in these cases, the bullying may be a criminal offence.

ONLINE BULLYING OF SCHOOL STAFF

- Principals should be aware that School staff may become victims of online bullying by staff, students and/or their parents. Through the duty of care owed to staff, Principals should ensure that staff can report incidents in confidence and receive adequate support, including taking any appropriate action against other parties
- The issue of online bullying of School staff should be incorporated into any anti-bullying policies, education programmes or discussion with students so that they are aware of their own responsibilities
- Incidents of online bullying involving School staff should be dealt with by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or a Senior Leader in the same manner as incidents involving students, except that records will be stored with HR, not in the Student Incident Log
- Staff should follow the guidance on safe IT use they must not use their own mobile phone numbers or email addresses to contact parents or students, so that no record of these details becomes available
- Personal contact details for staff should not be made public
- Staff should follow the advice above regarding online bullying of students and not reply to messages but report the incident to the Principal immediately
- Where the bullying is being carried out by parents, the Principal should contact the parent to discuss the issue. A home/School agreement with the parent(s) can be used to ensure responsible use.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The monitoring of all incidences of bullying will be reviewed by the Assistant Principal Pastoral, by examining the Student Incident Log to determine the number of incidences of bullying that have occurred in the year, to evaluate how effective an intervention programme was and what the overall outcome was. This review will be recorded in the annual reports to the Principal and the Safeguarding Governor and published through the Governors' reports..

SUPPORTING ORGANISATIONS AND GUIDANCE:

- Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Childline: www.childline.org.uk

- DfE: “Preventing and Tackling Bullying. Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies”, and “Supporting children and young people who are bullied: advice for schools” October 2014: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>.
- DfE: “No health without mental health”: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/no-health-without-mental-health-a-cross-government-outcomes-strategy>
- Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk
- Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk
- MindEd: www.minded.org.uk
- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
- Young Carers: <https://www.carersuk.org>

Cyberbullying:

- Childnet International: www.childnet.com
- National Online Safety <https://nationalonlinesafety.com/>
- Digizen: www.digizen.org
- Internet Watch Foundation: www.iwf.org.uk
- Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk

LGBT :

- EACH: www.eachaction.org.uk
- Pace: www.pacehealth.org.uk
- Schools Out: www.schools-out.org.uk
- Stonewall: www.stonewall.org.uk

SEND (ALN):

- Changing Faces: www.changingfaces.org.uk
- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk
- DfE: SEND code of practice: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

Racism and Hate:

- Anne Frank Trust: www.annefrank.org.uk
- Kick it Out: <http://www.kickitout.org>
- Report it: www.report-it.org.uk

- Stop Hate: www.stophateuk.org
- Show Racism the Red Card: <http://www.theredcard.org/>

RELEVANT POLICIES

Behaviour Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Online Safety Policy

Pastoral Principles and Welfare Policy