



Anti-Bullying Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy is as an integral part of our Behaviour and Attendance Policy.

Purpose/Background

The Westwood Academy aims to ensure that all members of the school community feel welcome, safe and happy and so are able to learn and make progress. Bullying of any kind prevents this happening. Bullying makes people feel unsafe.

As a school, we take bullying seriously. Pupils, parents and carers should understand that reporting bullying is essential, and be assured that the school will support them fully whenever bullying is reported. It is the responsibility of all members of the school community to implement the Anti-Bullying Policy.

Policy Objectives

- To build an anti-bullying ethos in the school.
- To ensure all staff, pupils and parents and carers have a clear understanding of what bullying behaviour is.
- To ensure all governors and staff know and understand the school policy on bullying and follow it when bullying is suspected or reported.
- To ensure that all pupils, parents and carers know the school policy on bullying and feel confident to activate the anti-bullying systems.
- To challenge attitudes about bullying behaviour.
- To increase understanding for pupils who are bullied.

Pupils in or on the way to The Westwood Academy are entitled:

- To feel safe and not to be made unhappy by others.
- Not to be frightened by others.
- Not to be touched.
- Not to be teased about race, religion, disability, social class, gender, personal differences, performance at school or any other matter.
- Not to be made unhappy by unpleasant notes, letters, text messages, e-mails, phone calls, social media, any form of gossip, or by any other means.

PRACTICE AND PROCEDURES

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour. It can be a one-off incident, but more commonly it is repeated over a period of time. It can be carried out by individuals, or by groups. It can be emotional, physical, racist, sexual, verbal, and homophobic or a combination of these in nature. It can take the form of name-calling, threatened violence, actual violence, intimidation, isolation, ridicule, or other action such as spreading unpleasant stories and gossip, sending text messages, e-mailing, use of social media and telephoning. All bullying is designed to make the victim feel threatened, humiliated and unsafe.

Not all negative interactions between pupils can be characterised as bullying and the school works hard to ensure that pupils, parents and carers understand the differences between bullying and 'falling out' or arguing.

Signs of bullying might be:

Physical: bruises, scratches, cuts, damaged clothes.

Health: loss of appetite, stomach-aches, headaches, soiling/bedwetting.

Emotional: unwillingness to go to school, withdrawn or secretive behaviour, unhappiness, unusual shows of temper, refusal to speak about problems, high levels of anxiety.

Change of routine: asking to be taken to school, coming home for lunch, taking longer to get home, asking for more money, using different routes to school, lost or missing belongings.

Academic: concentration difficulties, damage to work, missing work, fall in academic grades.

Preventing Bullying

Prevention is better than cure. At The Westwood Academy everyone is vigilant for signs of bullying and always take reports of bullying incidents seriously. We use the curriculum to reinforce the ethos of the school and to help pupils to develop strategies to combat bullying behaviour.

We make sure that pupils understand that they must report any incidence of bullying to an adult and that, when another pupil tells them that they are being bullied, or if they see bullying taking place, it is their responsibility to report their knowledge to a member of staff. There is guidance in the pupil planner about the action a pupil should take if they have been bullied, or if they are aware of other pupils being bullied. Pupils can report incidents to any member of the teaching or support staff.

Reporting Bullying

Pupils who are bullied, who witness bullying or who have even participated in bullying, should feel confident to report it to any member of the school staff whom they trust enough to tell. Each incident will be dealt with on its merits, but all reported incidents of bullying will be taken seriously and investigated.

Incidents will be recorded on Incident Forms. The form mentor and/or College Director of the bullied student, or the member of staff to whom the incident was initially reported, will be responsible for completing the Incident Form. Staff must clearly explain the nature of the incident and any action they have already taken to deal with the issue. Staff are encouraged to obtain written statements from the students involved (victim, alleged bully, potential witnesses). A copy of the Incident Form and relevant statements must be sent to the College Director. The College Director will use the information to decide on the appropriate course of action to resolve the situation.

In order to ensure effective monitoring and to facilitate co-ordinated preventive action, all bullying Incident Forms must be sent to the Senior Leadership Team. The Headteacher will be made aware through regular leadership meetings. If the bullying has a racist element, it will be treated as a racial incident and recorded in the Racial Incident File.

Responding to Bullying

When an incident of bullying is discovered, staff (College Directors/Mentors) will discuss issues relating to the incident with the pupils involved, in a way suitable to their age and level of understanding. We try to make use of the problem-solving approach. Each pupil will be given an opportunity to talk and the discussion will remain focused on finding a solution to the problem and preventing any recurrence of the bullying. Pupils who have been bullied will receive appropriate support, including help from external agencies, where needed. Bullies and Pupils who have bullied will be offered help or counselling, and may be placed on a behaviour contract and/or daily report.

If bullying persists, one or a combination of the following actions will be taken:

- An official report will be made and filed in the pupil's personal record.
- Existing disciplinary sanctions will be used.
- Parents or carers will be contacted to discuss the issues. They will be given feedback on progress in dealing with the incident. Additional external help may be sought for example from Educational Psychologists or Behaviour Support Services.
- Exclusion from the school – this is dependent on the severity and/or persistence of the bullying and will be a final resort.
- School may contact police to inform them of any violent/persistent bullying incidents in school and to and from school whilst pupils are in their school uniforms.

Staff are trained to use strategies to prevent bullying and to respond to bullying incidents. These include:

- Role-play and other drama techniques to help pupils understand and appreciate the feelings of others.
- Circle approaches to help pupils share information and to provide a forum for discussing important issues such as equal rights, relationships, justice and acceptable behaviour.
- Training in the use of peer mentors.
- A programme of form tutor sessions focusing on bullying, as part of the PSHCE programme.

Involvement of parents and carers

The parents or carers of pupils who bully and those who have been bullied will be informed of the incident and will be asked to support strategies proposed to tackle the problem.

Pupils who bully will be helped to understand the pain this causes to others and reminded of the possible consequences of bullying. The sanctions for repeated incidents will be explained clearly to them. Support will be agreed to ensure they do not repeat bullying behaviours and their behaviour may be monitored. This monitoring process will usually incorporate a reward for acceptable behaviour. Parents and carers will be involved in ensuring that the monitoring process runs smoothly, and in all other decisions designed to reduce bullying behaviour.

Parents and carers are reminded regularly, through letters and newsletters, that their children must tell someone if they experience bullying. If pupils keep information from the school, or from their parents or carers, the problem is unlikely to be solved and the period of suffering will be prolonged. The Westwood Academy believes that even one case of bullying is a case too many, and we know it is essential to keep this policy under continual review.

Information for Pupils

If you are bullied:

- Remember that it is not your fault. Nobody deserves to be bullied.
- Try to stay in a friendly group.
- Try to be confident even if you do not feel it, but remember walking away is not cowardly.
- If you are worried or frightened you can go to the Learning Support Centre at lunchtime.
- Keep a diary recording what happened, when, where, and with whom.

Who you should tell:

- Your Mentor
- Your College Director
- Any member of staff you feel happy to talk to, or feel you can trust
- Your parent, carer or anyone at home
- Your friend, if this helps
- In an emergency tell the nearest adult.

When to tell:

- **If you are afraid** – report the bullying as soon as you can.
- **Otherwise** – report the bullying when you are not in lessons – before school, at break, at lunchtime or after school. Staff will make time to listen to you.

Important!

- It does not help to keep the problem to yourself. You need support, and pupils who bully need help so that they can change their behaviour.
- The problems are unlikely to go away if you ignore them, and they could get worse.
- Take a friend with you if you are worried about telling someone – your friend may help you do this.
- Staff will listen to you in confidence as far as they can, but you must be aware that they may have to pass on certain information to get you the help you need. They will always tell you what they are going to do.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The policy has been developed in line with advice from the Local Authority and the DfES guidance contained in *Don't Suffer in Silence*.

Monitoring and evaluation of this policy forms a regular part of our self-review process. All policies are evaluated and reviewed with involvement from staff, pupils, parents and carers.