



# Anti Bullying Policy

**Review cycle:** Annually

**Last Review Date:** Sept 2026

**Next Review Date:** Sept 2027

**Staff responsible:** Headmaster, DSL

**Committee responsible:** Pastoral Committee

**(This policy applies to the whole School including EYFS)**



## ANTI BULLYING POLICY

This policy is linked to the [Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#)

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

*The Willington Anti Bullying Policy has been drawn up with regard to the guidelines set out in the DFE publication 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2017', The 'Merton Anti Bullying Strategy 2025-2027' and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2026.' This is in adherence to the [Independent School standards Regulations 2014 \(specifically Section 3\)](#). It applies to all year groups including the EYFS.*

### Objectives of this Policy

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, children and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school's policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All children and parents should know what the school's policy is on bullying and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. children and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated in our school.

1. At Willington Prep, our community relations are based upon respect, good manners and fairness. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment, so that every one of our pupils can develop their full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed but orderly atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other.

2. The School prides itself on its values of kindness, respect, honesty and humility. Parents have an important role in supporting the School in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and home have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they cooperate closely together.

3. This policy is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils on our website and on request. It is also communicated to all staff and pupils.

4. Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We seek to treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to respect the staff, the School and each other, in return. All forms of bullying are unacceptable at our School and any instances will be recorded and, where appropriate, will result in disciplinary action.

5. This policy applies to all pupils in the School, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

6. We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our children so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all children should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly, severely and effectively. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to inform members of staff.



## DEFINITION OF BULLYING

7. Bullying can be defined as "behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time\*, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally".

\*Staff will rigorously respond to isolated incidents of 'bullying' behaviour to avoid a recurrent pattern of such behaviour becoming entrenched.

8. Bullying can be, but not limited to:

- Emotional: Derogatory name calling of an insulting and/or personal nature. Demanding money, material goods or favours by means of threat or force.
- Physical: Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence because of some perceived physical, economic, sexual, intellectual, cultural or racial difference.
- Racist: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual: Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic: because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality. Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying is unacceptable
- Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, abuse and threats. Ridiculing an individual.
- Cyber: All areas of the internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse. Mobile threats by text messaging & calls. Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities

It can involve manipulating a third party to tease, torment or isolate someone, or actions that fall short of direct participation, for example where someone encourages others to bully, or joins in with laughing at a victim. Bullying is often hidden and subtle, it can also be overt.

9. Bullying may involve actions or comments that are sexual or sexist, homophobic (including LGBT+), racist, which focus on religion or cultural or family background (including young carers), special educational needs, disabilities, gender identity or physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). It may also be unpleasant in other ways.

Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve anyone - pupils, other young people, staff and parents.

## DEFINITION OF CYBERBULLYING

10. Cyberbullying can be defined as "the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others". It is an aggressive, intentional act often carried out repeatedly over time. It is often, but not exclusively aimed towards a victim who cannot easily defend himself.

11. Cyber-bullying could involve communications by various electronic media, for example: Texts, instant messages or calls on mobile phones, including:

- a. The use of mobile phone camera images to cause distress, fear or humiliation;
- b. Posting threatening, abusive, offensive or humiliating material or comments on websites (including blogs, personal websites and social networking sites);
- c. Using e-mail to message others in a threatening or abusive manner; or
- d. Hijacking/ cloning e-mail accounts.



## THE SCHOOL'S RESPONSE TO BULLYING

12. At Willington School, we always treat bullying very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the School's social and moral principles and potentially with its policy on equal opportunities. It will not be tolerated.

13. Bullying can be so serious that it causes physical, emotional and psychological damage, eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide. Whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and to violent and threatening behaviour. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying: everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are victims of bullying will be supported. Pupils who have engaged in bullying behaviour will be subject to appropriate disciplinary sanction and will also, where possible, be supported in learning different ways of behaving.

14. Bullying which occurs on School trips or outside of the School's premises will not be tolerated any more than bullying on School premises and, where appropriate, this policy will continue to apply.

## SIGNS OF BULLYING

15. Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- a. Unwillingness to return to School;
- b. Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet;
- c. Failure to produce work, or producing unusually poor work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others;
- d. Books, bags, money and other belongings suddenly go "missing", or are damaged;
- e. Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary);
- f. Diminished levels of self confidence
- g. Frequent visits to a doctor or the School Matron with symptoms which may relate to stress or anxiety, such as stomach pains or headaches;
- h. Unexplained cuts and bruises;
- i. Frequent absence, erratic attendance or late arrival to class;
- j. Choosing the company of adults rather than peers;
- k. Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact;
- l. Difficulty in sleeping or experiencing nightmares; or
- m. Talking of suicide or running away from home or school.

16. Although there may be other causes of some of the above symptoms, a repetition or combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers and reported/recorded as appropriate (see below).

## BULLYING - PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

17. We take the following preventative measures in order to ensure that bullying does not become a problem which is associated with Willington School:

- a. Pupils
  - (1) All new pupils are to be briefed thoroughly on the School's expected standards of behaviour. They are to be told what to do if they encounter bullying. We guarantee that those who report bullying in good faith will be supported;
  - (2) Pupils can report incidents of reported bullying in the following way:
    - By informing any teacher
    - By informing their friends

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- By informing Matron
  - By Informing their parents
  - By putting a note in the School Council/worry Post Box.
  - By speaking to any of the safeguarding team.
- (3) We use appropriate assemblies to explain the School policy on bullying. Our PSCHEE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the School. The programme is structured to enforce messages about community involvement and taking care of each other;
- (4) Other lessons, highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by developing social skills and by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable;
- (5) All our pupils are encouraged to tell a trusted member of staff at once if they know or suspect that bullying is taking place;
- (6) Notice board displays advise on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential helplines and websites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline, the NSPCC, 111 services and Citizens Advice;
- (7) Any "initiation type ceremonies" which might cause pain, anxiety or humiliation are banned.
- (8) Supporting initiatives e.g. Anti Bullying Week.

b. Staff

- (1) Upon induction, all new members of staff are to be given guidance on the School's anti-bullying policy and on how to react to and record allegations of bullying at Willington School. All School staff are required to understand the principles of the School policy, their legal responsibilities, actions to be taken to resolve and prevent problems and sources of further support;
- (2) All reported incidents are to be recorded and investigated at once. Records of any incidents are to be kept securely in order that patterns of behaviour can be identified and appropriately monitored;
- (3) All staff are to be alert to possible signs of bullying and are to handle any incidents as an immediate priority;
- (4) Our leadership team gives support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies. INSET sessions are held regularly
- (5) A trained School emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA) is an important part of our pastoral support service, providing specialist skills of assessment and counselling. The ELSA is available to give confidential advice and support to pupils when they have social, emotional or behavioural concerns. A member of staff may refer a pupil to a specialist Counsellor as appropriate;
- (6) Members of staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour;
- (7) The School has the right, and duty, to investigate incidents of bullying involving our pupils which take place outside School hours, on School visits and trips or that otherwise occur outside of School. The School has the right to take disciplinary measures in respect of such acts.

c. Parents

- (1) We encourage close contact between the School and parents/ guardians, and will always make contact if we are worried about a pupil's well-being; and
- (2) We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures and all other aspects and results of this anti-bullying policy.



## CYBERBULLYING - PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

18. For the prevention of cyber-bullying, in addition to the measures described above, the School:

- a. Expects all pupils to adhere to its [Digital Technologies - Pupil acceptable use policy](#).
- b. The school's filtering and monitoring system, Lightspeed, under the management of the Online Safety Officer, will block sites that may be harmful to pupils; this is monitored by the SLT and IT Department;
- c. May impose disciplinary sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse, of the internet;
- d. Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in PSHCEE lessons, which covers blocking, removing contacts from "friend" lists and sharing personal data;
- e. Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe;
- f. Does not allow the use of mobile phones in any part of the school;
- g. Does not allow the use of cameras/mobile phone cameras in any part of the school.
- h. Does not allow smartphones to be used by those children walking to school.

## PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH REPORTED BULLYING

19. Willington School seeks to ensure that all instances of or concerns about bullying and cyberbullying on and away from School premises are easy to report and that they are recorded properly. Records of instances of bullying and allegations of bullying will be kept in order to enable the School to identify patterns of behaviour and to evaluate the effectiveness of our anti-bullying policy.

20. If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedures will be adopted:

- a. The member of staff to whom it was reported, or who first discovers the situation, should control the situation, reassure and support the pupils involved;
- b. Any bullying incident which involves a physical altercation will be dealt with in accordance with the school's [behaviour policy](#) with specific reference to section 5.
- c. He/she should inform an appropriate member of the leadership team and Form teachers(s) as soon as possible;
- d. The victim should be interviewed on their own (or, if appropriate, with a suitable person present for support) and asked to write an account of events;
- e. The bully/bullies, and all others who were involved, should be interviewed individually (or, if appropriate, with a suitable person present for support) and asked to write an account of events;
- f. The incident should be recorded by the staff member on the Bullying Incident Report form. The person recording the incident must add their name and the date of recording \*. The person recording the incident must then email the Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer (DSL) to alert them to the incident. This is then recorded in detail on the School's Information System (ISAMS) by the Safeguarding Team. The DSL is responsible for coordinating records of bullying. The Anti Bullying log is kept securely in the DSL's office;

\*Recording the incident should not delay the process of containing the situation and /or immediately alerting the leadership team.

- g. The DSL will inform the form tutors, of both the bully/ bullies and the victim[s] as soon as possible. In all incidents, the Headmaster will be informed;
- h. The victim should be interviewed again at a later stage by a member of the leadership team, separately from the alleged perpetrator(s). They should be offered support to develop a strategy to help. It should be made clear to them why revenge or retaliation is inappropriate;

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- i. The alleged bully / bullies should be interviewed again at a later stage by a member of the leadership team, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why their behaviour caused distress and was inappropriate. They should be offered guidance on modifying their behaviour. The School's Behaviour Policy may also be invoked. Sanctions under the Behaviour Policy might include, for example, detention, withdrawal of privileges or suspension from School. The School may exclude a pupil, either temporarily or permanently, in cases of severe or persistent bullying or in the event that the support put in place for the bully does not result in the modification of behaviour to an acceptable level.
- j. The parents/ guardians of all parties will be informed and may be invited into School to discuss the matter. Their support will be sought;
- k. A way forward, including where appropriate disciplinary sanctions and counselling, should be determined, and where possible agreed with all parties. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for pupils who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with disciplinary measures in accordance with the School's Behaviour Policy;
- l. As part of this process, a meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, may be convened to help develop a strategy which enables all concerned to close the episode;
- m. A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place and put on record;
- n. The threshold for dealing with an issue of pupil behaviour or bullying is subject to local specifics as in any other case when there is a 'reasonable cause' to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Any such abuse will be referred to local agencies. It would be an expectation that in the event of disclosures about child on child abuse that all children involved whether perpetrator or victim are treated as being at risk.
- o. In very serious cases it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to Social Services. However, in many cases it should be possible to resolve such issues internally under this policy and the School's Behaviour Policy.
- p. If the school feels the children involved are mature enough, we may initiate the Support Group Method outlined in appendix A
- q. In line with KCSIE 2026, all staff recognise that children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) are more vulnerable to bullying and child on child abuse. The school acknowledges that children with SEND can be marginalised and subjected to hurtful comments and physically hurt. The school proactively promotes inclusion and neurodiversity.

#### EYFS CHILDREN

21. The youngest children at Willington School are encouraged to behave towards each other with kindness and consideration. They are encouraged to learn to look after their own possessions and to respect others' possessions. We expect them to be honest, helpful and polite, to work hard and to listen to others. They should respect everyone and learn to value differences and diversity.

22. We explain to children why some forms of behaviour are unacceptable and hurtful to others. We rarely need to impose sanctions with EYFS children; but sometimes we may remove a treat for hurtful behaviour. Occasionally, a child may be sent to see a senior member of staff, who will explain the inappropriateness of a particular action; but such instances are rare. Parents are always informed at the end of the day or through an email if an incident has occurred and a sanction or reproof is needed. Parents are asked to reinforce the message the pupil is given about unkind behaviour. In repeated instances of hurtful or inappropriate behaviour, parents are invited into the School to discuss the situation with their pupil's teacher, to agree upon strategies to manage behaviour going forward.

23. Copies of our Behaviour Policy for EYFS children are provided for parents and their children to read together.

#### COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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24. If Parents or pupils feel that any concerns about bullying (or anything else) are not being addressed properly, they are encouraged to use the Parents' Complaints Policy (which is published on our website). Parents of EYES children should be aware that, if they are unhappy with the way in which their complaint has been handled, they have the right to refer a complaint directly to Ofsted or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). (Details of how to contact OFSTED or ISI may be obtained from the School Office).

**Recommended review period:** Annual

**Review by:** Headmaster/ DSL

## **Appendix A**

### **Responding to Incidents of Bullying – The Support Group Method**

Occasionally the incident may require intervention using the support group method.

This appendix outlines the restorative processes and approaches the school can (among other strategies) can take when responding to incidents of bullying. This appendix includes an outline of *The Support Group Method*.

#### **The Support Group Method – Introduction**

The Support Group Method, developed by Barbara Maines and George Robinson, was first outlined in *Educational Psychology in Practice* (1991). The approach addresses bullying by forming a support group of children and young people who have been bullying and/or have been involved as bystanders. It uses a problem-solving approach, without apportioning blame, giving responsibility to the group to solve the problem and to report back at a subsequent review meeting.

#### **Step one – talk with and listen to the target**

Aims of this step:

- To understand the pain experienced by the target
- To explain the method and gain permission to proceed
- To discuss who will make up The Support Group
- To agree what will be recounted to the group.

#### **Step two – convene a meeting with the people involved**

The facilitator arranges to meet with the group of children who have been involved and suggested by the target. A group of six to eight children works well. This is an opportunity for the facilitator to use their judgement to balance the group so that helpful and reliable children are included alongside those whose behaviour has been causing distress. The aim is to use the strengths of the group members to bring about the best outcome.

#### **Step three – explain the problem**

The facilitator starts by telling the group that s/he is worried about the target who is having a very hard time at the moment. By asking the group to listen to his/her own worries, the facilitator can divert some suspicion or irritation which might be directed towards the target.

The facilitator recounts the story of the target's unhappiness and may use a piece of writing or a drawing to emphasise the target's distress. At no time does the facilitator discuss the details of the incidents or allocate blame to the group.



#### **Step four – share responsibility**

When the account is finished the listeners may look downcast or uncomfortable and be uncertain about the reason for the meeting. Some may be anxious about possible punishment. The facilitator makes a change in the mood by stating explicitly that:

- no-one is in trouble or going to be punished.
- it is the facilitator's responsibility to help the target to be happy and safe but they cannot do it without the help of the group.
- the group has been convened to help solve the problem

#### **Step five – ask the group members for their ideas**

Group members are usually genuinely moved by the account of the target's distress and relieved that they are not in trouble.

Each member of the group is then encouraged to suggest a way in which the target could be helped to feel happier.

Ideas are owned by the group members and not imposed by the facilitator. The facilitator makes positive responses and does not go on to extract a promise of improved behaviour.

#### **Step six – leave it up to them**

The facilitator ends the meeting by passing over the responsibility to the group to solve the problem. S/he thanks them, expresses confidence in a positive outcome and arranges to meet with them again to see how things are going.

#### **Step seven – meet them again**

About a week later, the facilitator discusses with the target how things have been going. S/he then meets with the group to discuss how things have been going for them. This allows the facilitator to monitor the bullying and keeps the children involved in the process.