

WINCHBURGH ACADEMY

PREVENTING & MANAGING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR



Information for Staff, Pupils and Parents

Rationale:

As a Secondary School in West Lothian Council, Winchburgh Academy is committed to the promotion of positive relationships and positive behaviour in line with WLC policy framework. In Our Academy we believe that all children and young people have the right to an educational environment where they feel respected, safe and which is free from harassment and bullying.

This policy and framework is implemented in partnership with staff, pupils and parents and is founded on Our Academy values. We believe that we all have a responsibility to treat others as we would like to be treated.

In addition, at Winchburgh Academy, we take very seriously our role in working towards becoming a Rights Respecting School and in promoting the rights of the child in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which states that:

Children's education should develop each child's personality, talents and abilities to the fullest. It should encourage children to respect others' human rights and their own and other cultures. It should also help them learn to: live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people. (Article 29 Goals of Education)

We regard bullying of any form as unacceptable. It is important that all members of our community are able to identify these types of behaviour and know how to tackle them.

Scope of the policy:

Through this policy we recognise that there is a spectrum of behaviour which can cause hurt; from thoughtless teasing, to targeted and sustained attack, whether verbal, physical or through social media. Within this spectrum of hurtful behaviour there is a sub-set that can be defined as bullying behaviour. This policy outlines how we deal with behaviour that is perceived, reported and defined as "bullying behaviour."

Definition of Bullying Behaviour

There are many definitions and theories about what constitutes bullying. For clarity we have taken our definition of bullying from what our pupil consultations reported and from Scotland's anti-bullying service Respectme.

Bullying is a mixture of behaviours and impacts; behaviours that can impact on a person's capacity to feel in control of themselves. That is what we term as their sense of "agency". Bullying takes place in the context of relationships; it is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened or left out, it strips a person of their capacity for agency.

The behaviour can include:

- Being called names, teased, put down or threatened
- Being hit, tripped, pushed or kicked
- Having belongings taken or damaged
- Being ignored, left out or having rumours spread about you
- Receiving abusive messages, threats or comments on social media sites
- Behaviour which makes people feel like they are not in control of themselves
- Being targeted because of who you are or who you are perceived to be

This behaviour can harm people physically or emotionally and incidences of bullying behaviour can take place in person or on-line. Although the actual behaviour may not be repeated, the threat may be sustained over time, typically by actions: looks, messages, confrontations, physical interventions, or fear of these behaviours.

Expectations

Responsibility of the School:

- To promote, praise and reward positive, respectful and kind behaviour
- To build and maintain a community in which everyone feels valued, respected and safe and where individual differences are encouraged, appreciated, understood and accepted
- To promote a secure and happy, caring environment where kindness and helpfulness are expected and respected

- To provide a safe, supportive inclusive environment for all young people, including prevention of all forms of hurtful and bullying behaviours, as far as is reasonably practicable
- To build caring relationships and treat all members of our community with respect
- To encourage and support all staff to be responsible for addressing challenging behaviour
- To work with and educate young people to encourage them to take responsibility for the impact of their behaviour and to repair harm done
- To inform all members of our community of the school's high expectations and how everyone can play a role in eradicating bullying
- Become an accredited Rights Respecting School, working towards gold status

Responsibility of the Pupil/Young Person:

- To display positive, kind and respectful behaviour towards all members of our community at all times
- To act responsibly and treat others with respect; treat others as they would like to be treated
- To avoid any behaviour that could be defined as bullying and or unkind/insensitive behaviour through their actions, words and use of social media
- To participate fully in all activities that promote positive behaviour and raise awareness of what constitutes bullying behaviour
- To protect fellow members of our community by reporting bullying behaviour to a responsible adult
- To act as a role model and positive influence on peers

Support & Partnership Working with Parents/Carers/Families:

- To support the school to build and maintain a community in which everyone feels valued, respected and safe and where individual differences are appreciated, understood, accepted and celebrated
- To work with young people to encourage them to take responsibility for the impact of their behaviour and to repair harm done
- To reinforce the school's high expectations and stress how everyone can play a role in eradicating bullying behaviour – 'it takes a village to raise a child'
- To encourage their child to report any incidents of bullying behaviour to a member of school staff (In most cases this would be the Pupil Support Teacher)
- To discourage their child from becoming involved in any behaviour (through their actions, words and use of social media) that could be defined as bullying
- To monitor their child's use of technology and social media
- To report any incidents of cyber-bullying to the appropriate authorities through the "CEOP Report Abuse" facility on most social network sites or to the police (Child Exploitation and On-line Protection Agency)

Prevention of Bullying Behaviour:

We believe that if we work together as a community to encourage positive behaviour, we will create a caring environment where every individual feels respected and safe. Without a doubt prevention is always better than the cure, so we work tirelessly to ensure that all of our children and young people are protected from bullying behaviours before they take place. This involves all staff taking a pro-active approach to bullying prevention and challenging hurtful behaviour at the earliest opportunity.

Ongoing actions to prevent bullying behaviour include:

1. High profile teaching staff

Staff meet pupils in the Atrium at the beginning of every lesson and dismiss them from the Atrium in an orderly manner to minimise opportunities for incidences of bullying behaviour.

2. Social times

- a. Lunchtimes are short (45 minutes) leaving sufficient time for eating lunch but less for mischief!
- b. There is a wide and varied programme of activities on everyday at lunchtime to keep pupils actively involved in the wider life of school.

3. Pupil Support (PS) Structure

Our PS system ensures that each young person in our community meets with their PSR teacher regularly, including every morning. This is the central point of contact for every pupil although other systems are available for young people to refer to another key adult whom they trust and are most comfortable with. Through this system, pupil issues can be dealt with swiftly and efficiently as we endeavour to avoid hurtful behaviour escalating and causing distress to any member of our community.

4. Health and Wellbeing- Responsibility of All

Primarily, Health & Wellbeing (HWB) lessons and assemblies/Pupil Briefings, repeatedly reinforce the values of our school and provide a clear message to pupils about our high expectations in every respect, including the message that bullying behaviour is not and never will be acceptable. In line with becoming an accredited Rights Respecting School, all other staff and curriculum areas have a responsibility to contribute regularly to educate all young people accordingly.

5. Assemblies & Pupil Briefing Sessions

Regular assemblies/briefings on a number of topics including relationships, expectations and personal safety take place in our school. Preventing bullying behaviour and on-line safety are topics that are explored through assemblies and special events including Police Scotland presentations on internet safety.

6. Peer Support System

We will be working in partnership with other local secondary schools to have senior students in our school who will also play an active role in preventing hurtful and bullying behaviour through their actions and support of younger pupils. We aim to offer peer support through seniors who are visible and on-hand to promote positive relationships and behaviour.

7. SLT & ELT Monitoring

Our SLT (Senior Leadership Team) and ELT (Extended Leadership Team), which includes the Headteacher, Depute Headteachers and Principal Teachers monitor corridors, the school atrium and the school grounds (and often out-with the school grounds) at intervals and lunchtimes. In addition, the SLT meet and greet all pupils as they arrive to school and supervise pupils at the end of the school day as they leave. These actions provide us with regular opportunities to speak to our pupils and to nip issues in the bud before they escalate.

Parents and pupils are actively encouraged to discuss with the school any concerns they might have, no matter how trivial, about their child's wellbeing or education. As a community we aim to:

- Encourage pupils who experience bullying behaviour and witnesses to speak up with anonymity if necessary;
- Treat all incidents appropriately, however trivial they may seem at first glance;
- Be alert to changes in behaviour, attitude and well-being, reporting these immediately to the appropriate member of the PS/Senior Leadership Team.

Responding to Bullying Behaviour:

Bullying is complex as is the relationship between hurtful behaviour and its impact on the other person. Bullying behaviour removes another person's agency and makes them feel helpless. To that end, staff dealing with alleged or actual incidents of bullying behaviour will use their professional judgement and accumulated experience to determine the strategy which they believe will work best to respond to the bullying behaviour. Staff recognise that every incident of bullying behaviour is different and therefore the response may vary.

The school response will be characterised by the following:

- Placing the child who is experiencing the bullying behaviour at the centre of the action and decision-making. Trying to give the pupil back their sense of agency is central; they should be allowed to feel some control again
- Concern and distress will be treated seriously – this involves listening without making a judgement
- The focus will be on getting the hurtful behaviour to stop and trying to ensure that it does not recur
- The details of incidents and agreed actions will be recorded on SEEMIS as appropriate (Pastoral Notes Sections and Bullying Incidents Sections (where required and appropriate))
- Arrangements for review and follow up will be made

All West Lothian Council establishments are encouraged to take a restorative approach when dealing with a concern unless there are circumstances which would make this inappropriate, for example, when this has already been attempted and the hurtful behaviour has continued, or immediate action is required to keep a child safe.

The procedures below provide a framework within which **most** cases will be dealt, though this might be amended, depending on the circumstances of a particular case and in the best interest of young people involved.

Actions:

Any pupil in our community, who feels they have been affected by bullying behaviour, should report this to their PSR teacher or another trusted adult/member of staff as soon as they can. They can report an incident of bullying behaviour to any member of staff in the school at any time. However, in most cases the Principal Teacher Pupil Support (PT PS) will be involved in supporting the pupils involved.

When bullying behaviour is witnessed by any member of our school community, this information is passed to the nearest teacher/adult. This member of staff should then intervene as appropriate to ensure the pupil is safe and free from harm. The details of the bullying behaviour should be passed to the PT PS for the relevant house group as soon as possible. PTs PS will follow up on allegations or reports of bullying behaviour.

The PS response may include some or all of the following:

- **Talk with the pupil who has experienced the bullying behaviour**

He or she will be treated sensitively and given the time and encouragement to talk, not just about the details of what has happened, but also about the impact. He or she should feel supported and confident that the information is being taken seriously. The PSR

teacher/trusted adult will listen without making judgement and agree action with the young person.

- **Talk with the pupil displaying the bullying behaviour**

Although details of what has happened will be needed, it is important to focus on the feelings which are at the heart of the issue. The student needs to be encouraged to consider and understand how their behaviour impacts on others. It might be appropriate to talk about his or her personal relationships with others in general. Ultimately, the young person displaying the bullying behaviour will be required to come to an agreement about how to behave in the future towards other members of our school community.

- **Set up a support group**

In some cases, a small group of students who have been affected by bullying behaviour may be brought together and provided with ongoing practical and moral support. This is useful in cases which prove difficult to resolve, perhaps because of the longevity of the problem. Members of this group will be encouraged to be solution-focused and activities will focus on building resilience and regaining a sense of agency. Programmes like the BEFRIENDS course can be used in these situations.

- **Use a Restorative Approach**

A restorative meeting may be set up with both pupils involved in an incident. This type of meeting is facilitated by an experienced member of staff. This is a useful strategy in some cases, but not all. If a pupil acknowledges that their behaviour is of a bullying nature then, they can gain a better insight into the hurt he or she has caused by entering into a restorative conversation. It can also help create a new relationship. These meetings will never be imposed upon a pupil who is not ready and pressure will not be put on them if they are nervous or worried about a face-to-face meeting with another pupil. A restorative meeting should end with an agreed set of actions/behaviours aimed at bringing an end to the bullying behaviour, regaining agency and restoring relationships.

- **Inform parents**

Unless it is thought necessary, parents will not be directly involved in handling the problem. Experience suggests that most incidents can be more rapidly solved between the pupils themselves. In most cases, a member of the PS team would discuss incidents of bullying behaviour with parents/carers. However, there are occasions when this is not in the best interest of the child and PS staff would respect the child's rights and wishes.

- **Conduct Follow-up discussion**

When an incident of bullying behaviour has been investigated, the incident and agreed actions will be noted in the pupils' Pastoral Notes. In most cases, follow up discussion or meetings will involve both parties. This meeting may be arranged, to confirm that the

problem has been solved. Where it has not been solved, further work will be done. The parents of either or both sides may be involved at this stage.

- **Complete Documentation**

A record will be kept by the teacher responsible for handling the case and appropriate notes entered into the pupils' Pastoral Notes and when appropriate on our management information system in the Bullying Incidents Section (SEEMIS).

- **Specialist Support**


There may be a situation when the PT PS feels it is appropriate to access specialist support for a pupils to deal with the impact of bullying behaviour or support to develop better relationships and improve their interactions with others. Support could be accessed through a referral to the Educational Psychologist or School Counsellor. In some cases, an issue of bullying behaviour in school could relate to more serious concerns outside school and could result in a child planning meeting (CPM) being set up in school to include other agencies like Social Work, Health or the Police.

Support:

The individual being accused of bullying behaviour needs the opportunity to acknowledge the problem, to understand the impact of their behaviour and the distress caused, and to recognise their ability to change this type of behaviour. Where a pupil is genuinely remorseful, and shows signs of having gained insight, an apology to the pupil affected together with a promise about future behaviour may suffice. Our under-pinning values of forgiveness and respect for all, will impact on how we deal with each individual case.

However, sanctions will be imposed where they are thought to be necessary and appropriate. This may involve a pupil being supervised during intervals or lunchtimes, removal from school excursions, loss of computer access at social times in school or parents/carers being invited into school and agreed action taken at home, eg removal of ICT equipment if the issue is related to cyberbullying. However, in order to ensure the safety of all members of our community, exclusion from school may be considered as a last resort after previous attempts at resolution have been thoroughly explored without success or where the severity of the incident warrants such action. School Exclusion is avoided in every sense as far as possible. The principal motive for exclusion will be the protection of the school community and the safety of pupils. If this happens, the school will follow the exclusion procedures as set out by West Lothian Council.

There may also be cases where the school or the parent/carer feel that the bullying behaviour should be referred to the police. Violence or threat of violence, in person or on-line, can have serious implications that involve legal action being taken.



However, we recognise that a young person being accused of bullying behaviour may already have a sense of alienation and anxiety, so sanctions imposed must aim to support and further educate the young person to adopt better forms of behaviour. Ultimately our aim is to stop the bullying behaviour, build relationships and give all involved the respect and support they require.

Recording of Incidents

The school will keep a record of concerns raised and action taken, normally in a child's Pastoral Notes and on SEEMIS in line (Bullying Incidents Section) with WLC guidelines.

References

Websites consulted:

<http://www.respectme.org.uk>

<http://www.sccyp.org.uk/rights/uncrarticles>

<http://www.unicef.org.uk>

<http://www.childline.org.uk/Explore/Bullying/Pages/Bull>

ying.aspx <http://www.ceop.police.uk>

<http://www.friendsforlife.org.nz>

Documents consulted:

- WLC Policy and Prevention Guidelines
- A National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People
- Better Relationships, Better Learning, Better Behaviour

Groups consulted:

- Pupils
- Parents
- Staff

Policy Updated

June 2022

DSM

Mrs. Oliver (Mr. Mitchell & Mr. Kerr)