



# ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

*This policy refers to both Wellington Senior School and Wellington Prep School*

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## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

At Wellington School, our community is based upon respect, good manners and fair play. 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 his/ her 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.

Wellington School prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents/ guardians have an important role in supporting Wellington School in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that School and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together.

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.

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated and bullying on the grounds of a protected characteristic will be taken particularly seriously. We 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.

This policy applies to all day and boarding pupils in the School, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage/Nursery.

This policy should be read alongside the following policies:

- Promoting Good Behaviour Policy;
- Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures;
- Taking, Storing and Using Images of Children Policy;
- E-Safety Policy
- Learning Support Policy;
- Exclusions Policy;
- Equality Policy;
- Complaints Procedure.

## **DEFINITION OF BULLYING**

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" (Guidance on Preventing and Tackling Bullying, Department for Education).

Put another way, bullying is the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person by physical (including any threat of or use of violence of any kind), sexual, verbal (including via email, social media and SMS or other instant messages), and emotional (including by excluding, being sarcastic, name-calling, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours) means. It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone, or actions that fall short of direct participation, 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 and intimidatory.

Bullying may involve actions or comments that are sexual or sexist, homophobic, racist, which focus on religion or cultural or family background, special educational needs, disabilities 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.

**Emotional bullying** is when a victim is taunted, mocked, excluded from groups or the subject of hurtful and untruthful gossip and rumours. Often, he/she who engages in this form of behaviour does not consider it to be bullying, but considers it to be 'a joke'. If the victim does not find teasing or taunting funny, then it is not. Emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical.

**Physical bullying** should not be seen merely in terms of a pupil being physically assaulted. It can include damage done to the victim's property, clothing or school work.

**Verbal bullying** is name-calling or making insulting remarks which can be sexual/sexist, racial or homophobic in nature.

'Initiation ceremonies' – painful, humiliating or anxiety-causing rites of passage to mark acceptance into, e.g. boarding houses, are not tolerated at the School.

## **DEFINITION OF CYBERBULLYING**

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" (Belsey, <http://www.cyberbullying.org/>). It is an aggressive, intentional act carried out repeatedly over time, often against a victim who cannot easily defend himself/herself.

Cyber-bullying could involve communications by various electronic media, including for example:

- Texts, instant messages or calls on mobile phones;
- The use of mobile phone camera images to cause distress, fear or humiliation;
- Posting threatening, abusive, offensive or humiliating material or comments on websites (including blogs, personal websites and social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or YouTube);
- Using e-mail to message others in a threatening or abusive manner; or

- Hijacking/ cloning e-mail accounts.

## **THE SCHOOL'S RESPONSE TO BULLYING**

At Wellington 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, and will not be tolerated.

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.

Bullying which occurs on school trips or outside of the school's premises will not be tolerated any more than bullying on school premises. Teachers will, where appropriate, discipline pupils for misbehaviour outside school premises and outside school hours.

## **SIGNS OF BULLYING**

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

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

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**

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

### **Pupils**

- All new pupils (including boarders and our youngest pupils) are briefed thoroughly on the School's expected standards of behaviour. They are told what to do if they encounter bullying. We guarantee that those who report bullying in good faith will not be punished and will be supported;
- We use appropriate assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying. Our Chapel and PSHE programmes are 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;
- Other lessons, particularly RS, English and Drama 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;
- All our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know or suspect that bullying is taking place;
- All boarders know how to report anxieties to their Housemaster/mistress or to another member of the pastoral team;
- All pupils are made aware of online and telephone support through Childline. At [childline.org.uk](http://childline.org.uk) pupils can instigate a '1-2-1 counsellor chat' or telephone in confidence to speak with a Childline counsellor on 08001111.
- All boarders have the telephone number of the School's confidential listener.
- We operate a peer counselling scheme, whereby trained older pupils are encouraged to offer advice and support to younger pupils;
- Our Medical Centre and all our boarding houses and day house rooms display advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of additional confidential help lines and websites connecting to external specialists, such as Kidscape, Get Connected, and the Samaritans;
- We operate a dedicated email account that allows pupils and parents to email any concerns they may have about bullying: [stopbullying@wellington-school.org.uk](mailto:stopbullying@wellington-school.org.uk);
- We operate a dedicated email account that allows pupils and parents to email any concerns they may have about e-safety, which might include elements of cyber-bullying: [studentnet@wellington-school.org.uk](mailto:studentnet@wellington-school.org.uk);
- The School Diary contains advice on what to do if you are being bullied;
- We provide leadership training to our School and House Captains which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable pupils; and
- We have banned peer-group "initiation ceremonies" designed to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation and all House Masters/ Mistresses remain alert to such actions.

### **Staff**

- Upon induction, all new members of staff are given guidance on the School's anti-bullying policy and on how to react to and record allegations of bullying at Wellington School. All school staff understand the principles of the School policy, their legal responsibilities, actions to be taken to resolve and prevent problems and sources of further support;

- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents. Records of any incidents are kept securely in the office of the Pastoral Deputy Head in order that patterns of behaviour can be identified and monitored;
- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team of Tutors, Heads of Section, and House Master/Mistresses who support the Pastoral Deputy Head and are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and who are alert to possible signs of bullying;
- Our pastoral 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;
- The School Chaplain will give support and guidance to pupils of all faiths who are able to refer themselves to her whenever they wish (for example at a time of family break-up, sickness or bereavement). The Chaplain will provide confidential advice and seek to encourage the development of tolerance, understanding and respect for others in a multi-faith community;
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site, particularly areas where bullying might occur. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour;
- In boarding houses, there are strong teams of tutors supporting the House Master/Mistress and the Matrons, who act in loco parentis. The informal house environment is important in reinforcing a pupil's standards and values, providing the opportunity for friendly, informal discussion of matters of concern to the individual pupil outside the formal classroom. A member of the boarding house staff is always on duty to supervise the pupils; and
- 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.

### Parents

- We encourage close contact between the Tutors/House Master/ Mistress and parents/guardians, and will always make contact if we are worried about a pupil's well-being; and
- 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, informally and through questionnaires.

### **CYBERBULLYING - PREVENTATIVE MEASURES**

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

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its E-Safety Policy. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department and Designated Safeguarding Lead monitors pupils' use;
- May impose disciplinary sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse, of the internet;
- Issues all pupils in years 5-13 with their own personal school email address;
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in
  - PSHEE lessons, which covers blocking, removing contacts from "friend" lists and sharing personal data;
  - Through the student led E-Welfare Committee

- Regular E-Safety Assemblies
- Whole school E-Safety days
- Inviting external speakers to address pupils and parents
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe;
- Does not allow the use of mobile phones in classrooms, public areas of the School, or where they may cause annoyance to others; and
- Does not allow the use of cameras/ mobile phone cameras in toilets, washing and changing areas.

## **PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH REPORTED BULLYING**

Wellington School ensures 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 on the Pastoral Deputy Head's files, and also on pupil files and files relating to safeguarding where appropriate, in order to enable the School to identify patterns of behaviour and to evaluate the effectiveness of our anti-bullying policy.

The School distinguishes in its records any incidents of bullying which are based on protected characteristics. This enables the School to monitor its success in instilling values of tolerance and respect and actively promoting the well-being of pupils. “

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

1. The member of staff to whom it was reported, or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the pupils involved;
2. He/she will inform an appropriate member of the pastoral team soon as possible;
3. The Head of Section and/or the Deputy Head (Pastoral) will convene a strategy meeting as soon as possible with the Housemaster/mistress of all parties to determine who will take responsibility for which elements of the investigation;
4. The victim will be interviewed on his/ her own (the pupil's tutor, housemaster/mistress or other suitable adult will be present for support) and may be asked to write an account of events if appropriate;
5. The bully/ bullies, and all others who were involved, will be interviewed as soon as possible (the pupil's tutor, housemaster/mistress or other suitable adult will be present for support) and may be asked to write an account of events if appropriate;
6. The incident should be recorded by completing a signed and dated 'Bullying Reporting Form' which is then given to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) who is responsible for keeping all records of bullying and other serious disciplinary offences securely.
7. Once the basic facts have been established and the Head of Section and/or Deputy Head (Pastoral) is confident they have sound knowledge of the issue, parents of both alleged victim and alleged bully should be informed without delay, ideally by telephone. It is good practice to inform parents of the next steps in concluding the investigation and the possible outcomes for the alleged bully. The Deputy Head Pastoral or Head of Section will also ensure communication with all relevant staff of both victim(s) and bully/bullies. In very serious incidents, the Headmaster will be informed.
8. The victim will be interviewed again at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the alleged perpetrator. He/ she will be offered support to develop a strategy to help him or herself. It will be made clear to him/ her why revenge or retaliation is inappropriate;

9. The bully will be interviewed again at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why his/ her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. He/ she will be offered education, guidance and support on modifying his or her behaviour.
10. In deciding what action to take towards the bully, the School will listen carefully to the views of the victim. The School will endeavour to gain the support of all parties in deciding what action to take. Actions the School will consider, depending on the individual circumstances of the issue, include:
  - a. Restorative justice, where reconciliation is sought, education for the bully is instigated and disciplinary sanctions are not required. 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;
  - b. Disciplinary sanctions in line with the School's Promoting Good Behaviour Policy. Sanctions under the Promoting Good Behaviour Policy might include, for example, detention, withdrawal of privileges, gating, a contract of behaviour 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.
11. When the course of action towards the bully is decided upon, the Head of Section or Deputy Head will write to the parents of the bully providing an overview of the issue, what action has been taken and the likely disciplinary consequences of a repeat offence. The letter should also indicate the support, education and guidance the perpetrator will receive in helping direct their behaviour in the future.
12. The parents/ guardians of the victim will be informed in writing that action has been taken to stop any further bullying.
13. As part of the process, a meeting involving all parties, with close staff supervision, may be convened to help develop a strategy which enables all concerned to close the issue and move forwards;
14. A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place and put on record;
15. In very serious cases, and only after the Headmaster has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to Social Services and guidance set out in the Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures may need to be followed. However, in many cases it will be possible to resolve such issues internally under this policy and the School's Promoting Good Behaviour Policy.

## **NURSERY/EYFS CHILDREN**

Even the youngest children at Wellington 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, and to listen respectfully to others. The Nursery Practitioners help children to celebrate differences and diversity by exploring festivals and cultures such as Diwali. We also acknowledge and embrace differences with our own children within the setting. The Early Years' Practitioners, with the support of the Head of Early Years, are responsible for the management of behaviour in the Nursery Setting.

By directly teaching children about feelings and emotions we are able to equip them to deal with their own emotions when conflict occurs. Parents are always informed about an incident involving behaviour on collection and if appropriate are asked to sign an Incident or Physical Restraint form. In cases of repeated instances of hurtful or inappropriate behaviour, they will



be invited into the school to discuss the situation with their child's teacher or Key Person and the Head of Early Years, to agree a joint way of handling the difficulty.

Our Promoting Good Behaviour Policy for the Prep School is available on our website for parents and their children to read together.

### **PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY**

All relevant staff are trained to be alert to the specific needs of those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including young carers. Those with SEND may not outwardly show signs of being bullied or may have difficulties in communication about being bullied. Staff will support such pupils in expressing any concerns they may have and will be particularly vigilant to any signs or indicators of bullying related to these pupils.

Specifically, staff are trained to understand that:

- they must not make assumptions that indicators of possible bullying towards a pupil with SEND, such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability (and not a bullying concern) and must explore any concerns they have fully;
- these pupils are more prone to peer group isolation and bullying than other children;
- the potential for children with SEN and disabilities of being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs is significant;
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers are also risk factors.

The DSL meets regularly with the Head of SEND and monitors the development and wellbeing of SEND pupils. The School recognises that additional pastoral support is often needed by SEND pupils. This is provided by the SEND department (Learning Support at this school) and these pupils' pastoral teams. Pastoral and academic staff are made aware of the needs of individuals, at staff meetings, via the SEND register and on the School's information management system.

### **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

Parents and pupils are encouraged to use our Complaints Procedure (which is published on our website) if they feel that any concerns about bullying (or anything else) are not being addressed properly.