



# ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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

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Website	Yes

## **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, including sexual violence and any form of harassment that would constitute bullying, including sexual harassment, racial harassment, cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying, 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, cyberbullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination due to prejudice 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 and applies to actions undertaken both inside, and outside of the School.

This policy should be read alongside the following policies:

- Promoting Good Behaviour Policy;
- Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures;
- PSHEE and RSE Policy
- 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 (including the sharing of nudes/semi-nudes), verbal (including cyberbullying via email, social media, gaming, SMS or other instant messages, and can include the use of images and video), 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 intimidating, and often involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator(s) and the victim(s) whether that be a physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), or intellectual imbalance, or by the perpetrator(s) having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate the victim(s).

Bullying can sometimes amount to peer on peer abuse, which is defined as abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil. It can be standalone or as part of wider abuse and can happen both inside and outside of school, and online. Further information about peer on peer abuse, including the procedures to follow when an incident on peer on peer abuse is reported can be found in the School's [Child Protection / Safeguarding policy].

Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, and may involve actions or comments regarding a person's race, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, special education needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions, or because of a child's familial circumstances, such as they are adopted, in care or that they have caring responsibilities. Bullying may be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. For example, bullying can still be homophobic if directed towards a child that is perceived to be gay, whether or not this is the case.

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. When incidents of bullying do occur, they are dealt with quickly and taken seriously. The School will never dismiss or downplay bullying as banter or horseplay, and all reported incidents of bullying will be dealt with by staff in accordance with this policy. Staff will reassure any target(s) that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

The School understands that bullying can be so serious that it causes physical, emotional and psychological damage, such as eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide. Stopping violence and ensuring the immediate physical safety of pupils is the School's first priority, however, the School acknowledges that emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical bullying, and therefore staff will use their discretion when dealing with an incident of bullying within the parameters of this policy and the Promoting Good Behaviour Policy. Whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment, sexual violence and assault, sexting, the sharing of nudes/semi-nudes (in certain circumstances), upskirting and to violent and threatening behaviour. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying: everybody has the right to be treated with respect.

The School recognises that children with SEND or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges and may be more prone to peer on peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children. The School also recognises that certain children may face additional barriers to reporting an incident because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation.

Pupils who are targets of bullying will always be supported and will be reassured that they will be kept safe. Pupils who have engaged in bullying behaviour will be subject to appropriate Anti-Bullying Policy – October 2021 v.2

disciplinary sanction and will also, where possible, be supported in learning different ways of behaving and offered support for their own circumstances, where appropriate.

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 online, 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 in accordance with this policy (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**

- The School promotes an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat each other with respect at all times, inside and outside of school;
- All new pupils (including boarders and EYFS 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, will be taken seriously and will be supported and kept safe;
- We use appropriate assemblies to explain the School's policy on bullying. Our Chapel and PSHEE 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. It focuses on the importance of equality and diversity and pupils are encouraged to avoid prejudicial and exclusionary language;

- 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 are being bullied, or if they know or suspect that bullying is taking place. They are reassured that they will be taken seriously and will be supported and kept safe;
- All pupils can report bullying using the Firefly (the School's virtual learning platform – VLE), by using the 'Report any concern, including bullying' function on the student homepage in Firefly;
- All boarders know how to report anxieties to their Head of House or to another member of the pastoral team;
- All pupils are made aware of and have access to 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 Independent Listener.
- We operate a peer mentoring scheme whereby trained older pupils are encouraged to offer advice and support to younger pupils;
- Our Medical Centre and all our boarding houses and class rooms display advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of additional confidential help lines and websites connecting to external specialists; this is also contained in the student planner;
- The student planner contains information on what to do if you are being bullied and how to report bullying;
- We provide leadership training and safeguarding training to our School and House Captains which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable pupils;
- Peer-group "initiation ceremonies" or hazing type violence or rituals designed to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation are strictly forbidden; all staff 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 incidents of bullying from arising or escalating and also details of sources of further support;
- The School recognises that certain children may be more at risk of bullying than others and may require additional support when dealing with an incident of bullying, for example children with SEND and/or certain health conditions, and LGBTQ+ pupils. The School will ensure that staff receive appropriate training to be able to understand the specific needs of our pupils, and to enable all staff to provide an inclusive environment for all pupils;
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents. Records of any incidents are kept securely in MyConcern, the School's safeguarding management software in order that patterns of behaviour can be identified and monitored;
- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team of Tutors, Heads of Year, Heads of Section, and Heads of House who support the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and who are alert to possible signs of bullying and will know when to apply our Safeguarding policy and Child Protection Procedures to bullying incidents;
- Our pastoral team gives support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both the targets and the bullies. Staff training sessions are held regularly;
- Our trained School Mental Health Lead is an important part of our pastoral support service, providing specialist skills of assessment and therapy. The Mental Health Lead

is available to give confidential advice and support to pupils who can refer themselves to the Mental Health Lead when they have social, emotional, or behavioural concerns. A member of our pastoral team can refer a pupil to the Mental Health Lead as appropriate;

- The School Chaplain will give support and guidance to pupils of all faiths who are able to refer themselves to them 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 at all times;
- In boarding houses, there are strong teams of tutors supporting the Heads of House and the Matrons, who act in loco parentis. Staff are aware that boarding houses provide more opportunities for bullying and are therefore always vigilant and alert to signs of issues with or between boarders. 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. The School will comply with its obligations as set out in the National Minimum Standards at all times;
- 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, online or that otherwise occur outside of school. The School has the right to take disciplinary measures in respect of such acts. Disciplinary measures will be taken in accordance with the School's Promoting Good Behaviour Policy and will be applied in a fair, consistent, and reasonable manner, taking into account the needs of pupils with SEND and certain health conditions, and vulnerable pupils; and
- Staff will always consider the motive behind bullying behaviour and whether it raises any concerns for the welfare of the perpetrator(s). If staff reasonably suspect that a pupil may be suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, they should follow the procedures set out in the School's Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures and discuss their concerns with the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay.

#### Parents

- This policy is readily available on the School's website or, on request, in hard copy for reading at the School office, so that parents are clear on the School's approach to bullying and what to do if their child experiences bullying;
- We encourage close contact between the Tutors, Heads of Year and parents/guardians, and will always make contact if we are worried about a pupil's well-being;
- If parents know or suspect that their child, or another pupil, is being bullied, they should contact the School without delay. All concerns will be taken seriously; and
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures and all other aspects and implementation of this anti-bullying policy, informally and through questionnaires.

#### **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 often carried out repeatedly over time, and often against a victim who cannot easily defend themselves. The School acknowledges that cyberbullying may take place inside School, outside of School and at any time of the day.

Cyberbullying 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, sexual, discriminatory, 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 acknowledges that cyberbullying may take many different forms including: cyberstalking, exclusion or peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorised publication of private information or images, encouraging derogative comments on online platforms, sharing nudes/semi-nudes, upskirting, and sexting.

The School has a role to play in teaching pupils about the underpinning knowledge and behaviours that can help them to navigate the online world safely and confidently regardless of the device, platform, or app. In taking this forward, the School has regard to the DfE's non-statutory guidance on *Teaching online safety in school* (June 2019).

### **Prevention of cyberbullying**

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 monitor pupils' use;
- May impose disciplinary sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse, of the internet;
- Issues all pupils 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
- Ensures its pupils are aware of the various forms in which cyberbullying can take place, that it can have severe and distressing consequences, and that participation in cyberbullying will not be tolerated;
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details private and secure;
- Does not allow the use of mobile phones in classrooms (except under the explicit instruction of a teacher), public areas of the School, or where they may cause annoyance, humiliation or distress to others;
- Does not allow the use of cameras/mobile phone cameras in toilets, washing and changing areas or in the bedrooms of boarding houses.

## **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 wellbeing 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 Year/Head of Section and/or the Deputy Head (Pastoral) will convene a strategy meeting as soon as possible with appropriate staff of all parties to determine who will take responsibility for which elements of the investigation;
4. The target will be interviewed on his/her own (the pupil's tutor, Head of Year or other suitable adult will be present for support) and may be asked to write an account of events if appropriate;
5. The alleged perpetrator, and all others who were involved, will be interviewed as soon as possible (the pupil's tutor, Head of Year, 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/Head of Year and/or Deputy Head (Pastoral) are confident they have sound knowledge of the issue, parents of both alleged victim and alleged perpetrator 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 perpetrator. The Deputy Head Pastoral or Head of Section will also ensure communication with all relevant staff of both victim(s) and perpetrator(s). In very serious incidents, the Head will be informed.
8. The target will be interviewed again at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the alleged perpetrator. They will be offered support to develop a strategy to help them. It will be made clear to them why revenge or retaliation is inappropriate;
9. The alleged perpetrator will be interviewed again at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the target, and it will be made clear why their behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. They will be offered education, guidance and support on modifying their behaviour.
10. In deciding what action to take towards the perpetrator, the School will listen carefully to the views of the target. The School will endeavour to gain the support from 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 perpetrator 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 and/or Exclusions which 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 perpetrator does not result in the modification of behaviour to an acceptable level.
11. When the course of action towards the perpetrator is decided upon, the Head of Section or Deputy Head (Pastoral) will write to the parents of the perpetrator 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 Head 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

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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 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. Parents of boarders and of EYFS children should be aware that they have the right to refer a complaint directly to Ofsted, if they are unhappy with the way in which their complaint has been handled (the Complaints Procedure explains how to complain to Ofsted).

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The School will record all incidents of reported bullying in accordance with this policy.

The Headmaster or a designated member of the Leadership Team will review all incidents of reported bullying to help identify patterns of behaviour, so that the School can take appropriate steps to address bullying behaviours within the School. Records of bullying incidents will also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the School's anti-bullying procedures, and to highlight any necessary amendments.

This policy is reviewed and updated at least annually, by the Deputy Head Pastoral.