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*"Providing safe and happy places to learn is essential to achieving school improvement, raising achievement and attendance, promoting equality and diversity, and ensuring the safety and well-being of all members of the school community." (DfE, 2007).*

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## **Statement of Intent**

Welling School is committed to ensuring that students learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment, without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will pupils be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at school.

## **What is Bullying?**

Bullying is any behaviour, which is deliberately hurtful, sustained over a period of time, by an individual or group, which makes another person feel uncomfortable or intimidated. Serious, isolated incidents will be dealt with under the Behaviour Policy.

## **Bullying can be:**

- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
- Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic – because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber – all areas of online technology, such as social media and mobile app misuse. Mobile threats by text messaging and calls. Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities.
- Disability/SEN – because of, or focusing on a disability or special educational need
- Home circumstance – targeting individuals who are looked after children or because of a particular home circumstance.

Bullying can therefore constitute any of the above activities within the context of the definition provided. Bullying may occur to anyone and this policy is inclusive of the bullying of school staff, whether by pupils, parent/carers or other staff.

## **School Objectives**

- To prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour
- To react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way
- To safeguard the student who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support
- To apply disciplinary consequences to the student causing the bullying and ensure they learn from the experience, possibly through multi-agency support.

## **How we tackle bullying at Welling School**

Our school community acknowledges that bullies may have complex reasons for their behaviour and may well need help. The pastoral teams offer support for all pupils involved in any reported incident of bullying. We must have a culture of vigilance within to ensure that all pupils feel safe and comfortable here. Pupils

who behave in a bullying manner towards others will be challenged promptly as the consequences of being allowed to 'get away with it' can be detrimental to the bully as well as to their victim.

### **Staff, student and parent/carer reporting procedures**

The school has one reporting procedure for allegations of bullying. This reporting system can be used by students, staff and parent/carers. A copy of this form can be found on Welling School's Anti-Bullying Website. This website can be accessed via our main website. The 'Anti-Bullying' link is within the Parent tab. On Welling School's Anti-bullying website the form can be found under 'Contact Us'. There are two options: **I Need Help** and **Someone Needs Help**. Below is also a link to these options:

<https://sites.google.com/wellingschool-tkat.org/antibullying/contact-us>

In school students should feel that they can also approach any adult directly if they are concerned about being bullied. This member of staff will make a note of the child reporting the concern, a brief summary of the concern and the name/s of the student/s causing harm. The member of staff will then complete the Anti-Bullying Form.

1. All reported incidents will be taken seriously and dealt with as quickly as possible. The first step will be to make sure that the relevant Head of Year has a clear account of the incident.
2. The Head of Year will investigate the incident by interviewing all concerned and record outcomes on the files of those involved. The Head of Year will also consult the school bullying log before deciding next steps.
3. Form Tutors and Subject Teachers will be kept informed and asked to monitor the behaviour of the students concerned where appropriate.
4. 4. Parents will be kept informed and are discouraged from taking matters into their own hands and should not approach a suspected student but speak to a member of staff.

Each incident of actual or alleged bullying will be unique in its representation and its level of impact on the individuals concerned. Therefore, it is important that the school is given the opportunity to tailor a strategy to address the situation and to support the bullied student according to the particular incident/s.

### **School staff response in individual incidents**

Head of Years (or other named staff) dealing with the incident need to ascertain the level of seriousness of the alleged bullying and decide on the next steps to take. If the incident is serious, or a repetition of a previous occurrence, it may be appropriate to go straight to steps 3, 4 or 5. For each child involved a record of the steps taken must be added to Bromcom.

In the first instance, it is important to make clear to the victim that revenge is not appropriate, and to the bully that their behaviour is unacceptable and has caused distress.

#### Step 1

Simple disagreements between two pupils/ groups of pupils which can be discussed calmly with all parties concerned can be resolved with the adult listening to both sides of the situation and the 'guilty' party accepting their blame, apologising and suggesting how any damage is repaired.

Verbal expectations around future conduct will be given. This step will be carried out by the Head of Year (or member of the Pastoral Team).

#### Step 2: The 'No Blame' Approach

When the disagreement is more complex, with the perpetrator unable to accept their role in the situation, the "No Blame" approach involves using group dynamics to understand, improve and solve the problem of bullying. The emphasis is on stopping the bullying by confronting the bully/ies in a non-threatening environment. By addressing the situation (not the perpetrator) publicly and exploring reasons surrounding

why it has been happening and the consequences of actions, combined with responses from other peers the bully/ies are more likely to be made to question, and justify, their own actions without blame being allocated. Responsibility for solving the problem can then be passed to the group, under supervision, who suggest positive strategies to move the situation forward (e.g. reintegrate the victim, prevent further incidents of bullying occurring, etc.). The member of staff who is supervising this session, needs to ensure that suggestions are workable, that all parties agree to the decisions made and that opportunities are created to monitor the situation.

Verbal expectations around future conduct will be given. This step will be carried out by a member of the Restorative Team.

### Step 3

If the "No Blame" approach fails, a designated member of staff will meet with the bully (ies) to explore the matter further and to discover why the bullying is continuing. At this stage, blame and responsibility are apportioned and a warning is given, thus giving the bully the opportunity to stop.

Parents/carers will receive a warning letter about their child's actions. Depending on the seriousness of the child's actions the school's behaviour may also be followed to issue an appropriate consequence. The member of staff carrying out this step will be a member of the Senior Leadership Team. In the meeting may also be a member of your child's Pastoral Year Team..

### Step 4

If bullying continues, some or all of the following actions may be taken by the adult investigating the situation:

- High level consequence issued to the perpetrator
- Parent/carer of the perpetrator informed
- Perpetrator put on a monitoring report
- Behaviour modification strategies/counselling for the perpetrator put in place.
- The parents/carers of both parties informed about the situation and how it has been dealt with. Further interactions between the students involved will be monitored over time.

### Step 5

Further incidents involving the same student(s) will be dealt with by the Deputy Headteacher responsible for Culture, Engagement and Attainment. This is Mr Hemsley. Mr Hemsley will gather the evidence and present their findings to the Headteacher. Action taken may result in the perpetrator/s losing their place at Welling School.

### **What support will be provided to the victim of bullying?**

At each step the victim's parent/carers will be kept updated by your child's Head of Year. If parent/carers are not satisfied with how a situation has been resolved they should direct their concerns to the Assistant Headteacher responsible for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Ms Reed is responsible for Key Stage 3. Mr Rouse is responsible for Key Stage 4.

Where there is a reported case and it is classified as bullying (likely to be stage 3 onwards) the victim's Head of Year will allocate a member of staff, chosen by the victim, to provide support on a continual process until such time that the student and the parent/carer are satisfied that conditions have returned to normal. As part of this support there will always be a documented 1to1 review meeting with the victim after 1 and 2 weeks. If it is clear that the bullying has stopped the case is closed. If it is clear bullying is continuing the next step (as outlined above) will be carried out by the school.

Once the appropriate step has been completed and where appropriate the victim has been allocated a member of staff to provide support, the Head of Year (or named member of staff) must complete an entry on the School's Bullying Log. This will record the names of those involved, the type of bullying (step 3 onwards) and actions taken.

### **Vulnerable students, including those with special educational needs or a disability**

We are especially vigilant about bullying in respect of our most vulnerable students. They are a diverse population of students at Welling School and can include students with complex health needs, students with SEND, students with disabilities and students with behavioural concerns. These students can also experience bullying in adult life. This makes developing a positive culture and one where bullying is proactively prevented even more important.

### **Prevention**

We use a range of proactive strategies to prevent bullying. These include:

- Effective school leadership that promotes an open and honest anti-bullying ethos
- Use of curriculum opportunities, in particular Tutor Time and Personal Development classes where issues of diversity are discussed and anti-bullying messages are drawn out.
- Use of opportunities throughout the school calendar and at certain times of the school day to raise awareness of the negative consequences of bullying e.g. Anti-Bullying Week in November of each year
- Whole school assemblies
- Pupil surveys.
- Poster campaigns
- Improved supervision in potential problem areas
- 6th Form Peer mentoring Schemes
- Assertiveness training to help students combat bullying
- Review of general and specific staff induction and continuing professional development to ensure staff training reflects the anti-bullying policy and practice of the school.

### **Working with parent/carers**

Parent/carers need to be involved in all aspects of our Academy bullying policy. This means:

- Always contact the school with any concerns
- Be aware of any changes in behaviour that could be linked to bullying
- Be reassured that the school will take action to deal with bullying
- Be assured we will deal with all incidents firmly but fairly
- If a child is thought to be bullying another child (stage 3 onwards) we will invite parent/carers into school to discuss the matter. Our aim is to achieve reconciliation and also offer support.

### **Monitoring**

The school will maintain a bullying log that records all incidents of bullying (as defined by this policy). Bullying will be reviewed regularly and appropriate actions taken. The reviews will particularly focus on identifying and addressing any emerging trends related to both perpetrators and victims. This information will feed into our equality and diversity planning as required. Incidents of bullying will be reported formally in the Headteacher Governor Reports.

The student body and parent/carers will be involved in reviewing the effectiveness of anti-bullying work, for example in annual questionnaires and student leadership activities.

**Links with other policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding Policy and related policies and procedure.

Due for Review: September 2023