Westlea Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Our whole school aim:

"At Westlea Primary School we learn together to achieve success for all, based on high expectations and equality of access for all. We nurture the growth of the whole child – academically, artistically, socially, emotionally, morally and physically – celebrating all achievements in a safe, caring, inclusive and creative environment. The whole team works together to bring learning 'alive' and extend pupil experience…

…so that they are well prepared for the next steps in their education."

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Statement of Intent

Westlea Primary School is committed to providing a supportive, caring and safe environment in which all children are free from the fear of being bullied. As a school we take bullying and its impact seriously. Bullying of any form is not tolerated in our school, whether carried out by a child or an adult.

Staff, children and parents or carers will be made aware of the school's position on bullying. Bullying behaviour is unacceptable in any form. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a member of staff. Any child who is a victim of bullying will be dealt with in a sympathetic manner. If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the class teacher. If incidents continue to occur, a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will become involved. All staff will be informed so that close monitoring of the victim and bully can begin. Parents of both parties will be informed.

What is bullying?

We recognise that many children and young people will experience conflict in their relationships with other children and young people and as a school we are committed to developing empathy and the skills to manage relationships in a peaceful way that does not harm others. In Westlea Primary School, our definition of bullying is: "The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online.

Bullying is not …

It is important to understand that bullying is not the odd occasion of 'falling out'. Children are naturally sociable; it is vital for them to select and build friendships. The making and breakdowns of friendships are an important part of growing up.

When children 'fall out' they can say and do things because they are upset. It is essential to teach children the skills to repair relationships and enable them to utilise these. If as adults we intervene too readily to help rebuild our children's friendships on their behalf, our children may not develop the necessary social skills.

Occasionally situations go beyond broken friendships or minor differences and, on these occasions, adult intervention may be necessary. It may not be bullying when people of roughly the same strength (including social strength) have a disagreement or physical altercation. It is not bullying when a member of staff corrects a child in line with school policies, vision aims and values.

Why is it important to respond to bullying?

There is considerable evidence to show that bullying has both short term and longer-term impact on pupils. Bullying impacts on pupils' wellbeing, can impact on attendance and become a significant barrier to learning. Bullying is associated with lower levels of school engagement and achievement both in primary and secondary schools and can lead to mental health concerns such as anxiety and depression. Bullying is unacceptable.

Our school will respond promptly and effectively to reported incidents of bullying.
In our school community:

- Everybody has the right to be treated with respect.
- Everybody has the right to feel happy and safe.
- No-one deserves to be a target of bullying.
- Pupils who bully need to learn different ways of behaving.

National research has shown that some groups of pupils are particularly vulnerable to bullying these include pupils with SEND, looked after children, pupils from minority ethnic groups or faiths, young carers, LGBT pupils and those perceived to be LGBT.

Types of bullying behaviour

Bullying can take many forms:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, threatening behaviour
- Verbal - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, use of derogatory language
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Extortion - demanding money/goods with threats
- Online – use of social media, messaging and calls. Misuse of associated technology e.g photos and videos.
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact, sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic or biphobic - bullying because of sexuality or perceived sexuality
- Transphobic – because of gender identity or perceived gender identity

Cyberbullying

Cyber-bullying takes place online, such as through social networking sites, messaging apps or gaming sites. Like other forms of bullying, it is the repetitive, intentional harming of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power.

Preventing and addressing cyber-bullying E-safety practice is advocated at all times in school.

At Westlea Primary School the following will take place:

- To help prevent cyber-bullying, we will ensure that pupils understand what it is and what to do if they become aware of it happening to them or others.
- We will ensure that pupils know how they can report any incidents and are encouraged to do so, including where they are a witness rather than the victim. The school will actively discuss cyber-bullying with pupils, explaining the reasons why it occurs, the forms it may take and what the consequences can be.
- Teaching staff are also encouraged to find opportunities to use aspects of the curriculum to cover cyber-bullying. This includes personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, and other subjects where appropriate.
- Cyberbullying will be addressed at least termly through assemblies. It will be revisited informally through the year.
- All staff, governors and volunteers (where appropriate) receive training on cyber-bullying, its impact and ways to support pupils, as part of safeguarding training.
- Information for parents will be put on Safeguarding newsletters – these are published weekly.
- All incidents of cyberbullying must be reported to the Headteacher.
- In relation to a specific incident of cyber-bullying, the school will follow the processes set out in the school behaviour policy. Where illegal, inappropriate or harmful material has been spread among pupils, the school will use all reasonable endeavours to ensure the incident is contained.
- The DSL will consider whether the incident should be reported to the police if it involves illegal material, and will work with external services if it is deemed necessary to do so. Whilst the school recognises that cyberbullying may take place out of school hours, it will wherever possible step in to mediate a suitable solution.

Peer on Peer Abuse

This school recognises that children sometimes display harmful behaviour themselves and that such incidents or allegations must be referred on for appropriate support and intervention.
Such abuse is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

This abuse could for example include:

- sexual violence and sexual harassment
- 'up-skirting'
- initiation/hazing type violence
- all forms of bullying
- aggravated sexting
- physical violence (e.g. hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, etc)

To prevent peer-on-peer abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate pupils about abuse, its forms and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum, assemblies and PSHE lessons.

The school will also ensure that pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum in PSHE lessons, RSE and group sessions. Such content will be age and stage of development specific, and tackle issues such as the following:

- Healthy relationships
- Respectful behaviour
- Gender roles, stereotyping and equality
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- Prejudiced behaviour
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong
- Addressing cultures of sexual harassment

All staff will be aware that pupils of any age and sex are capable of abusing their peers and will never tolerate abuse as "banter" or "part of growing up" Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2026.

All staff will be aware that peer-on-peer abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting and gender issues, such as sexual assault and hazing/initiation type of violence which aims to cause physical, emotional or psychological harm.

All staff will be made aware of the heightened vulnerability of pupils with SEND, who are more likely to be abused than their peers. Staff will not assume that possible indicators of abuse relate to the pupil's SEND and will always explore indicators further.

LGBT children can be targeted by their peers. In some cases, children who are perceived to be LGBT, whether they are or not, can be just as vulnerable to abuse as LGBT children. The school's response to boy-on-boy and girl-on-girl sexual violence and sexual harassment will be equally as robust as it is for incidents between children of the opposite sex.

Pupils will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled – this includes the process for reporting concerns about friends or peers. If a child has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care services (CSCS).

Managing disclosures

- Victims will always be taken seriously, reassured, supported and kept safe.
- Victims will never be made to feel like they are causing a problem or made to feel ashamed.
- If a friend of a victim makes a report or a member of staff overhears a conversation, staff will act – they will never assume that someone else will deal with it. The basic principles remain the same as when a victim reports an incident; however, staff will consider why the victim has not chosen to make a report themselves and the discussion will be handled sensitively. If staff are in any doubt, they will speak to the DSL.

- Where an incident has occurred or specific risks are identified, the details will be added to a safeguarding or behaviour record for the children concerned and an investigation conducted by the DSL.
- A written risk assessment will be undertaken by the DSL in order to minimise the risk of further harm and to ensure the safety of all staff and pupils.
- The DSL will be informed of any allegations of abuse against pupils with SEND. They will record the incident and, working with the SENCO, decide what course of action is necessary, with the best interests of the pupil in mind at all times.
- Parents or carers of the children involved will be informed as soon as it is appropriate to do so.
- Support will be offered to the alleged victim, the child or young person accused and any other children involved by different adults in school (to avoid a possible conflict of interest).
- A referral to any relevant outside agency will be made e.g. Police or Social Care.

Confidentiality

- The school will only engage with staff and agencies required to support the victim and/or be involved in any investigation.
- If a victim asks the school not to tell anyone about the disclosure, the school will not make this promise.
- Even without the victim's consent, the information may still be lawfully shared if it is in the public interest and protects children from harm.
- The DSL will consider the following when making confidentiality decisions:

  Parents will be informed unless it will place the victim at greater risk;
- If a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger or has been harmed, a referral will be made to Social Care.
- Where a crime has been committed, reports will be passed to the police.

Preventing Bullying

We foster a clear understanding that bullying, in any form, is unacceptable. We believe that preventing bullying is the responsibility of our whole school community and when there are incidents of bullying we will work together to deal with the situation and to learn from what has happened.

In our school we do this by:

- Using assemblies to ensure that pupils understand the differences between relational conflict and bullying.
- Building a positive ethos based on respecting and celebrating all types of difference in our school.
- Creating a safe and happy environment, with consequent positive relationships that have an impact on learning and achievement.
- Having a positive ethos that all pupils, staff and parents understand.
- Work in school to develop empathy, social skills and emotional understanding e.g. PSHE
- Provide assurances to child that concerns have been listened to and action will be taken.
- Consider who else is involved and what roles they have taken.
- Send clear message that the bullying must stop.
- Work with both parties to find solutions. Identify the most effective way of preventing re-occurrence and any consequences.
- Reflect and learn from bullying episodes –consider what needs to happen next to prevent future bullying e.g. PSHE, training etc.
- Raising awareness of online bullying through regular e-safety lessons.
- Ensuring playground and midday staff are trained and we have a range of activities at lunchtime to promote positive play.
- Offering training to all school staff around bullying, including specific guidance on those groups who are most likely to be bullied.

Reporting bullying

In our school pupils are encouraged to talk to staff when they are unhappy or have concerns. Pupils in our school understand that they have a right to feel and be safe and a responsibility to support others to feel and be safe.

We actively promote our school rules:

- We take care of ourselves.
- We take care of each other.
- We take care of our school and community.

Pupils are encouraged to report bullying to:

- A trusted adult
- Their class teacher/TA
- Children are taught that it is important to talk to a trusted adult if bullying is taking place outside of school. Parents are also encouraged to report concerns. This is normally the class teacher in the first instance.

Procedures

When a disclosure of bullying is made, it will always be treated seriously, with appropriate discretion and carefully investigated.

The procedure for dealing with bullying is set out below:

- Where bullying is reported or suspected, the class teacher will initially talk to all children involved to examine the issues. Once the behaviour is identified as bullying the incident will be reported to members of the SLT (Assistant Headteachers, Deputy Headteacher and Headteacher).
- If a pupil is injured, they are immediately taken to see a first-aider.
- The victim, alleged bully and witnesses should all be spoken to separately.
- A witness (adult) should be used for serious incidents.
- Written records are made of all interviews on CPOMs
- The victim's story should be listened to and the pupil reassured that s/he has done the right thing by reporting the situation. Victims of bullying often feel powerless and vulnerable. They may end up believing that they deserve to be bullied. Everything should be done to re-establish the victim's self-esteem and self-confidence.
- The alleged bully should be spoken to and the reasons why s/he has bullied identified. The bully should be helped to recognise his/her unsociable behaviour and given support if necessary to address that behaviour.
- On some occasions it may be possible to sit victim and bully down together to discuss their feelings and the reasons why the situation has developed. The problem could then be resolved amicably and/or a compromise reached.
- In all instances, the parents of both parties should be contacted and informed of the situation and the action taken. If appropriate, they should be invited into the school to discuss the matter.
- Follow up meetings with the victim should be arranged to find out whether the solution has been effective or not, and the situation should be monitored. At the end of this monitoring period, parents will again be contacted to check that all is well. If there is a recurrence, the class teacher will again talk to all children concerned and contact with parents will again be made as above.
- A written record is made of incidents
- Members of SLT check behaviour records each Friday and speak to children (low level behaviour incidents). More serious incidents must be dealt with promptly by the class teacher in the first instance.
- Class teachers will be responsible for passing on relevant information to teachers on duty and to midday supervisors so that vigilance can be maintained.

All members of the school community, including pupils, staff, parents and governors, are expected to treat everyone with dignity respect at all times. This includes both face-to-face contact and online.

Sanctions

Sanctions will be applied fairly, proportionately, consistently and reasonably, taking account of any special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities that pupils may have and taking into consideration the needs of vulnerable children.

Disciplinary penalties have three main purposes namely to:

- Impress on the perpetrator that what he/she has done is unacceptable;
- Deter him/her from repeating that behaviour; and
- Signal to other pupils that the behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from doing it.

Sanctions for bullying are intended to hold pupils who bully to account for their behaviour and ensure that they face up to the harm they have caused and learn from it. They also provide an opportunity for the pupil to put right the harm they have caused. In most cases the school will therefore follow the Behaviour Policy when enforcing sanctions. Special consideration will be given to the nature of the behaviour when determining the sanctions and involving parents at the earliest opportunity.

Sanctions could include:

- Writing an explanation or apology for the incident
- Withdrawal of break or lunch time privileges so that 'repair' work can be undertaken with the class teacher or member of SLT
- Discussion with parents with monitoring of behaviour –this could be the perpetrator being placed on a behaviour report for a period of time. During this time, school will liaise with parents and when deemed appropriate (behaviour has been modified), the child will be removed from the report.
- Monitored play-times

In extreme circumstances or instances of persistent bullying situations, it may be that the serious clauses within the behaviour policy come into action in terms of fixed term or permanent exclusions. These will be taken on a case by case basis.

The Headteacher (or member of the SLT in the Headteachers absence) has the discretion to sanction an internal exclusion depending upon the nature of incidents. An internal exclusion is one in which the perpetrator will be taught outside of the classroom and away from their peers. In addition, they will have separate break and lunch from their peers. Restorative conversations will take place during this time.

Continued Support

As well as immediate short-term monitoring, the school will review, whether the action has prevented recurrence of the bullying and will ensure that the pupil being bullied feels safe again. Evaluation of school behaviour will form part of the school's ongoing self-evaluation processes.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for:

- Evaluating and reviewing this policy to ensure that it is not discriminatory.
- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring that the school adopts a tolerant and open-minded policy towards difference.
- Ensuring the school is inclusive.
- Analysing any bullying data to establish patterns and reviewing this policy in light of these.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Reviewing and amending this policy, accounting for new legislation and government guidance, and using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in previous years to improve procedures.
- Ensure records are kept of reported incidents, including which type of bullying has occurred, to allow for proper analysis of the data collected.
- Analysing the data in the bullying record at termly intervals to identify trends, so that appropriate measures to tackle them can be implemented.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff members.

Senior leaders are responsible for:

- Corresponding and meeting with parents where necessary.
- Providing a point of contact for pupils and parents, when more serious bullying incidents occur.

Teachers are responsible for:

- Being alert to social dynamics in their class.
- Being available for pupils who wish to report bullying.
- Providing follow-up support after bullying incidents.
- Being alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and that they inform the pupil's senior leaders of such observations.
- Refraining from gender stereotyping when dealing with bullying.
- Understanding the composition of pupil groups, showing sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying.
- Reporting any instances of bullying once they have been approached by a pupil for support.
- Contacting parents should an incident occur that the class teacher is aware of.

Parents are responsible for:

- Informing their child's teacher or member of the SLT if they have any concerns that their child is the victim of bullying or involved in bullying in anyway.
- Being watchful of their child's behaviour, attitude and characteristics and informing the relevant staff members of any changes.
- Supporting the school rules: Take care of yourself. Take care of each other. Take care of our school and community.
- Monitor children's online use when using technology outside of school.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Informing a member of staff if they witness bullying or are a victim of bullying.
- Not making counter-threats if they are victims of bullying.
- Walking away from dangerous situations and avoiding involving other pupils in incidents.
- Keeping evidence of cyber bullying and informing a member of staff should they fall victim to cyber bullying.

Relationships and respect with parents and the wider community

Westlea Primary will not accept any person in connection with our organisation, feeling intimidated by any other person or indeed using intimidating behaviour towards others (this includes potential cyber-bullying and inappropriate use for example of social media sites that may be used as a platform to attack individuals on a personal level or indeed the school).

The school will investigate any reports it receives of this nature and challenge such behaviours. The school will, if needed, request any such comments are removed whilst advising individuals to use the complaints procedure.

Anyone entering our property is expected to abide by the culture and ethos of our school community and speak and behave respectfully towards others. In all matters, we expect relevant parties to share views in a calm and respectful way using the complaints procedure if needed (see complaints policy).

The Headteacher is at liberty to exclude any person from the school premises as a result of intimidating or abusive behaviour, particularly if that behaviour is in the presence of children. In this respect the school will liaise with the LA and follow their guidance.

Review and Monitoring

This policy will be monitored by the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team and reviewed every two years by Governors and members of the School Leadership Team.

Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy has been drawn up to comply with statutory and legislative requirements and guidance that covers this aspect of pupils' learning including:

1.1.1. In England and Wales, under Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, maintained schools must have a policy in place to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. This includes when pupils are not on school premises and are not being supervised by a member of school staff.

1.1.2. In England and Wales, Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives head teachers of state schools the power to discipline students for bullying incidents that occur outside of school.

1.1.3. In England, the Department for Education (DfE) has produced guidance for headteachers, school staff and local authorities that outlines their duty to prevent and tackle bullying that occurs in and outside of school (PDF) (DfE, 2017).

1.1.4. The DfE has also produced guidance for schools on searching, screening and confiscation (PDF). In cases of cyberbullying school staff may use this guidance to search mobile phones (DfE, 2018b).

1.1.5. The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) and the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) have produced a guide for schools (PDF) on tackling race and faith targeted bullying that occurs face to face and online (UKCCIS and ABA, 2017)

1.1.6. The Home Office has developed the Online abuse and bullying prevention guide (PDF) for those who work with young people in England and Wales to help them understand the types of online abuse, its consequences and where to go for help. Topics covered include: threatening behaviour, cyberbullying, online grooming (Home Office 2015).

1.1.7. In England, the Department for Education has published a guide for headteachers and school staff on protecting themselves from cyberbullying (PDF) (DfE, 2014).