



WESTMINSTER UNDER SCHOOL
POLICY ON ANTI-BULLYING

Key Personnel & Contact Details

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The Independent Listener: Reverend Graham Buckle (tel. 020 7834 1300)

Telephone Numbers of support organisations:

Childline – 0800 11 11

NSPCC – 0800 800 500

Kidscape – 0207 730 3300

Westminster Children's Social Care – 020 7641 4000

Introduction

Westminster Under School ('the School') seeks to encourage intellectual curiosity and foster a lifelong love of learning. Every Boy has the right to enjoy their education, and this policy seeks to insure that all boys are able to do so, free from bullying.

Bullying is unacceptable anti-social behaviour that affects everyone in the community. The School seeks to promote mutual respect and care throughout the School Community. However, the school recognises that there is always a risk of bullying occurring.

Aims

The principle aims of the School's 'Policy on Anti-Bullying' are therefore:

1. To foster a supportive, caring and safe environment in which pupils can live and learn without fear of being bullied.
2. To enable all boys to fully benefit from the opportunities available at the School.
3. To make quite clear to the whole community of pupils, staff and parents that bullying is unacceptable at the School and that any instance of it will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter, investigated and dealt with appropriately.
4. To fulfil the Schools obligations under the 'Education and Inspections Act' (2006) and to have regard for the DfE Guidance *Preventing and tackling bullying - advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies*, the Children and Families Act (2014) and the Equality Act (2010), which makes provision for the new Public Sector Equality Duty (2011).

What is bullying?

Bullying can take many forms. In the broader sense, it is unkind and usually persistent behaviour intended to assert the power of one person over another, usually by frightening or humiliating them.

Bullying makes the lives of its victims a misery: it undermines their confidence and self-esteem, destroys their sense of security and causes psychological damage. Once a victim is sensitised, a threatening look alone may reinforce their fearfulness. Bullying – which is often fuelled by ignorance or prejudice – may take the form of verbal, physical or emotional abuse or harassment.

A victim may be targeted because of gender, race, religion, culture, physical appearance or disability, sexual orientation, an additional educational need – or for no obvious reason at all.

Examples of Bullying

Depending upon the circumstances, any of the following could constitute bullying and could even amount to a criminal offence:

- a. Punching, hitting, pushing, spitting at, throwing things at another person.
- b. Damaging or throwing property around, invading rooms, bags, boxes or lockers or hiding belongings.
- c. Whispering, name-calling, teasing, writing unkind or obscene letters, emails or texts, making anonymous calls, spreading malicious rumours, writing offensive graffiti or using social media inappropriately.
- d. Making inappropriate sexual advances, sexual harassment.
- e. Isolating someone, intimidating someone, using threatening language or gestures.
- f. Making racist, sexist/sexual or homophobic comments to other pupils (sometimes encouraged by unpleasant films or websites) claiming that the victim regards them as 'a joke'.

- g. Using a mobile phone, smart phone, email or the Internet to cause distress/insult to another person, whether on personal, racial, religious, cultural, sexual/sexist or other grounds.

Cyber-bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside the School. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

The wider search powers included in the 'Education Act' 2011 give teacher's stronger power to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones.

For more information on how to respond to cyber-bullying and how pupils can keep themselves safe, please refer to the Childnet International (www.childnet.com) and Beatbullying (www.beatbullying.org) websites.

Impact of Bullying

Bullying impacts the victim's attendance and attainment at the School, marginalises those groups who may be particular targets for bullies and can have a life-long negative impact on some young people's lives. Bullying can cause psychological damage and, at worst, has been a factor in pupil suicide. Bullying also has a hugely detrimental effect on those who instigate it.

In light of this, although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws that apply to assault, harassment and threatening behaviour – including over the Internet or by SMS.

A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection (CP) concern when there is 'reasonable' cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm (see Safeguarding Policy).

Prevention and intervention

Through the '*Policies on Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions*' and the '*Anti-Bullying Policy*', the School intends to have transparent and clear guidelines so that, in the event of bullying, parents, pupils and staff know how a case will be dealt with and that it will be dealt with quickly.

Staff are encouraged to be proactive in their gathering of information about issues between pupils that might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place. Staff briefings and meetings provide regular opportunities for staff to raise concerns or share information regarding their concerns for pupils.

The School aims to foster good behaviour, respect and care and makes clear its zero-tolerance approach to bullying in a number of ways:

1. It is embedded in the School's Rules and Code of Conduct, which is discussed at the beginning of every academic year in form time and throughout the year as part of the PSHEE curriculum.
2. The discussion of related topics in assemblies, through projects, drama lessons, stories, and current affairs.

3. Pupils are given a copy of the School's Anti-Bullying leaflet as well as the leaflet "Advice to stay safe". Both these leaflets are displayed in all form-rooms.
4. The Master outlines *the 'Anti-Bullying Policy'* to all pupils during assemblies and to all staff (e.g. via regular Child Protection INSET).
5. All staff are reminded to remain vigilant inside and outside the classroom taking action to reduce the opportunity for bullying at all times.
6. The School Counsellor is introduced to new pupils in Years 3 and 4 in small groups and to the new pupils in Year 7, by class, in their first term to offer support to those who might feel unhappy or in distress.
7. The School seeks to promote a culture in which both the victim and anyone else who witnesses an incident are prepared to "tell". The School will embed that culture by constantly reiterating that helping one's peers and friends is a positive action. In so doing, the School recognises that for a victim to "tell" can be a very difficult thing to do, not least for fear of alienating all those around him. In recognising that possibility, the School strives to ensure that repercussions of that kind are not allowed to occur. Information posters are put around School with advice on what to do and how to seek help.
8. The School provides information evenings for Parents on the subject of Bullying and Cyber-Bullying in particular.
9. Teachers must always be prepared to stop bad behaviour, as this can lead to bullying, and to report patterns of behaviour, as this may indicate bullying. Teachers are expected to arrive in good time for class, to be a vigilant presence around the School and to report anything they feel concerned about to the Form Teachers¹ or the Assistant Master Pastoral or the Deputy Master or the Master.

What to do?

If pupils are being bullied, or know someone who is being bullied, they are advised and encouraged to confide in the person with whom they feel most comfortable. It could be:

- a. Their parents
- b. Their Form Teacher or Class Teacher
- c. Any other Teacher
- d. The Assistant Master Pastoral or the Deputy Master or the Master

Any member of staff who has been made aware of bullying must pass on this information immediately, as appropriate. Parents who have concerns about their children should always contact the Form Teacher, Head of Year, Assistant Master Pastoral, Deputy Master or the Master, at the earliest opportunity, so that the matter can be promptly investigated.

Dealing with bullying

The School makes it clear to pupils who bully what consequences will follow in order to demonstrate clearly that their behaviour is wrong and will not be tolerated. Disciplinary measures will be applied fairly, consistently, and reasonably taking account of any additional educational needs or disabilities that those involved may have (including the needs of vulnerable pupils). It is also important to consider the motivations behind bullying behaviour and whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is the case the children engaging in bullying may need support themselves. The Form Teacher should follow the processes laid out in the *'Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy'*. There is then no fixed or absolute course of action; it will depend on the circumstances, but will always be fair and proportionate. Parents of both victim and bully will always be informed and involved.

¹ Form Teachers are known as "Class Teachers" in Years 3 and 4 and "Form Tutors" in Years 5 to 8.

Courses of action will vary from case to case but it might be appropriate to:

- a. Monitor the situation closely, by Form Teacher in consultation with all other subject teachers, and see if anything further occurs. (This response is usually only appropriate if the incident appears to be a ‘one-off.’)
- b. Arrange for the victim and the bully to talk. The bully may be totally unaware that he is bullying. The situation will then be closely monitored.
- c. Sanction the bully, both making it clear that this must never happen again and encouraging the bully to see the victim’s point of view. In cases of group bullying the Form Teacher, Head of Year, Assistant Master Pastoral, Deputy Master or the Master may need to talk to the form or group. Those mainly responsible need to be addressed individually to make them understand their responsibility in the affair. Sanctions will be judged on a case-by-case basis and in consultation with all parties concerned. It may range from a warning or detention to temporary or permanent exclusion, depending on the specific circumstances.

Bullying by/of a member of staff, or by/of a parent, will be regarded as a very serious matter and dealt with by the Master.

Record-keeping and reporting

The Heads of Year (HOY) are responsible for tracking all actions in cases of bullying, and for keeping a written record of each incident and how it is resolved; this record will be used to monitor the situation and any possible patterns. The Assistant Master Pastoral will manage the School’s response in cases of bullying. Any records will be kept in the pupil’s school file. All incidents of bullying, which come to light, are reported to the Master. The Master will directly deal with any severe incidents and certain types of bullying might attract a suspension or School exclusion.

Overview of Staff and Pupil Responsibilities

The following points must be reinforced frequently by all staff:

- a. To witness bullying and do nothing is to imply that one agrees with what is going on.
- b. An adult must be informed immediately of any incidents.
- c. The School will not tolerate bullies.
- d. There is no place for bullying in the School community, and the victim will always receive a sympathetic hearing and be supported.

In everything said or done within the School it must be made clear that intimidation of any kind, physical or verbal, or unkind exclusion from a group is unacceptable at the School. Relationship education, including bullying, will be included in PSHEE lessons in each year group. Behaviour, including the topic of bullying, will also be brought up in Assemblies. Staff will reinforce the message that bullying is unacceptable behaviour and will discuss the School’s Anti-Bullying Policy with the pupils.

Staff must always be vigilant, with Form Teachers in particular paying close attention to the group dynamics, rivalries, or any bad feeling in their forms. Any member of staff who suspects bullying must refer the matter to the Form Teacher/Class Teacher. If a pupil reports bullying, and it is clear that it is not a made-up or a trivial affair, it must be reported to the Form Teacher and a record made of what was said by the reporting pupil. The Form Teacher should speak to

the appropriate Head of Year, Assistant Master Pastoral, Deputy Master or the Master if the matter is considered serious.

Any incidents of fighting or aggression must be reported to the Form Teacher. Any boy involved in a serious fight may well be sent to their Head of Year, the Assistant Master Pastoral or the Master², but usually after discussion with the Form Teacher and the Head of Year. It is very important to have a clear record of events, for a boy may become a habitual offender, a fact that will not be clear unless there is consistent reporting.

The level of response to incidents will obviously vary according to their seriousness. Where a Form Teacher considers it appropriate, the following procedure has the effect of conveying to all parties how seriously bullying behaviour is taken.

- a. The victim should record the events in writing and the bully should do likewise.
- b. The incident should be reported to the Head of Year, Assistant Master Pastoral, Deputy Master or the Master who will record the discussion with both parties. Details will be kept on the pupils' files.
- c. The Assistant Master Pastoral keeps a "bullying log".

In addition to this, parents will be informed and invited to discuss the problem with the Master. Appropriate sanctions will be imposed on pupils who are bullies and may include exclusion from school.

Appendix A

Advice on Good Practice for those dealing with Bullying

The School aims to:

- a. **Involve parents** to ensure that they are clear that the School does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied. Parents must feel confident that the School will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child. The Parents must then be encouraged to reinforce the value of good behaviour at home.
- b. **Involve pupils** so that they understand the School's approach and are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders.
- c. **Regularly evaluate** and update our approach to take account of developments in technology, for instance updating 'acceptable use' policies for computers.

² See 'Behaviour, Rewards & Sanctions Policy' – May 2019

- d. **Implement disciplinary sanctions:** the consequences of bullying should reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable.
- e. **Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying,** such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender or sexuality. Also, children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities, may well have particular issues that need to be understood. The School will also teach children that using any prejudice-based language is unacceptable.
- f. **Use specific organisations or resources for help with particular problems:** draw on the experience and expertise of anti-bullying organisations with a proven track record and / or specialised expertise in dealing with certain forms of bullying.
- g. **Provide effective staff training** as anti-bullying policies are most effective when all staff understand the principles and purpose of the School's policy, its legal responsibilities regarding bullying, how to resolve problems and where to seek support.
- h. **Work with the wider community** such as the police and children's services where bullying is particularly serious or persistent and where a criminal offence may have been committed. The School will also work with other agencies and the wider community to tackle bullying that is happening outside school.
- i. **Make it easy for pupils to report bullying** so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on. Pupils should feel that they could report bullying, which may have occurred outside school, including cyber-bullying. E-safety will be addressed in ICT and PSHEE lessons. All pupils and staff are required to sign and follow the appropriate Acceptable Use Policy.
- j. **Create an inclusive environment:** create a safe environment where pupils can openly discuss the cause of their **bullying**, without fear of further bullying or discrimination.
- k. **Celebrate success,** which is an important way of creating a positive school ethos around the issue.