



WESTMINSTER UNDER SCHOOL

Policy on Anti-Bullying

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Key Personnel & Contact Details

Master

Mrs Kate Jefferson (kate.jefferson@westminster.org.uk)

Deputy Master and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

Michael Woodside (michael.woodside@westminster.org.uk)

Assistant Master, Pastoral (DDSL):

Eleanor Marr (eleanor.marr@westminster.org.uk)

Other Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL):

Rupert Candy, Assistant Master, Teaching and Learning (rupert.candy@westminster.org.uk)

Hayley Wellman, Head of Junior Department (hayley.wellman@westminster.org.uk)

The School Counsellor:

Lois Adams (lois.adams@westminster.org.uk)

The Independent Listener:

Reverend Graham Buckle (tel. 020 7834 1300)

Telephone Numbers of support organisations:

- Childline – 0800 11 11 (Primarily children)
- NSPCC – 0800 800 500 (Children and adults)
- Kidscape – 0207 823 5430, WhatsApp 07496 682 785, email parentsupport@kidscape.org.uk (Primarily adults)
- Westminster Children’s Social Care – (tel. 020 7641 4000), primarily if you are worried about a child

Introduction

Westminster Under School (‘the School’) seeks to encourage intellectual curiosity, to foster a lifelong love of learning and for boys to be the best versions of themselves, both while they are with us at School and as they become adults. Every boy is different and has their own strengths, personality and interests. Boys frequently and spontaneously celebrate these differences and having niche interests is often seen as ‘cool’.

It is absolutely clear that every pupil in the School has the right to enjoy their education. This policy seeks to ensure that all boys are able to do so, free from any form of bullying, which is unacceptable anti-social behaviour, and affects everyone in the community as well as the ethos of the entire School. We instead seek to promote mutual respect, tolerance and care throughout the entire School community.

To aid this, the School has a comprehensive set of policies which aims to give 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 and seriously. As well as in this policy, further information on unacceptable behaviour is contained in the Policy on Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions and the e-Safety Policy.

Aims

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

1. To make it clear to all members of the community that the School both expects and will foster a supportive, caring and safe environment in which pupils can attend and learn without fear of being bullied.
2. For all members of the School community to understand what bullying is, the different forms it can take and to know what to do about it, should it happen. It is imperative that anyone who is, or feels like they are, being bullied can bring this up and have their concerns taken seriously.
3. To make it 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, in line with our existing procedures.
4. To fulfil the School's obligations under The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (2014) and to have regard for the:
 - DfE Guidance 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying – Advice for Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies' (2017)
 - The Children and Families Act (2014)
 - The Equality Act (2010)

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, or group of people, over another, usually by frightening or humiliating them or by making them deliberately feel uneasy.

Everyone connected to the School should be clear that bullying is serious – it makes the lives of its victims a misery, it undermines their confidence and self-esteem, destroys their sense of security and can cause psychological damage. Once a victim is sensitised, even actions such as a threatening look or an innocuous comment alone may be enough to reinforce the sense of fear, intimidation or to 'trigger' another negative response or feeling.

Bullying, is often fuelled by ignorance, prejudice or the desire to feel a sense of power and may take the form of verbal, physical or emotional abuse or harassment. Bullying may not always be obvious and is often subtle with smaller repetitive comments or actions, often taking place away from where adults are usually present.

Bullies often do not look or act in an intimidating way when they do not need to and they may not obviously be perceived as bullies – in fact, often the majority of people will not think of the perpetrator(s) as a bully.

Where bullying takes place outside the school, the School will investigate and act according to this policy to such an extent as is reasonable. This is likely to require significant cooperation from parents.

Reasons for Bullying

A victim may be targeted because of their:

- Gender;
- Race;
- Religion or belief, or non-religious belief or worldview;
- Culture or perceived differences in culture;
- Physical appearance;
- Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND);
- Sexual orientation;
- Transgender status;
- Accent or having English as an Additional Language (EAL);
- Difference, or perceived difference in personality;
- Not ‘going along with’ a group’s expectations;
- No obvious reason at all.

Examples of Bullying

Clearly any list is not exhaustive and other actions (or inactions) can be considered to have a bullying intent. Depending upon the circumstances, any of these actions, done on more than one occasion, and therefore persistently, could constitute bullying and may even amount to a criminal offence.

Importantly, single incidences of these actions are equally unacceptable and will be dealt with in line with the School’s Policy on Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions.

- Punching, hitting, pushing, spitting at, or throwing things at another person;
- Damaging or throwing property around, invading personal space, damaging belongings such as bags, rucksacks or belongings inside lockers. Deliberately hiding or moving belongings;
- 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;

- Making inappropriate sexual advances, sexual harassment;
- Isolating someone, intimidating someone, using threatening language or gestures;
- Making racist, sexist/sexual or homophobic comments to other pupils. These could be accompanied by the fact that this language is ‘a joke’;
- 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;
- Publishing media, e.g., photos without someone’s permission and posted to elicit a negative response.

Any of the above may be done in front of others, making them witnesses or ‘enablers’, which is considered to an aggravating factor in any case of bullying.

Incidences of unkind or unpleasant behaviour where one particular boy is repeatedly targeted but by different individuals or groups will also be considered bullying.

Additionally, with boys in the School from the ages of 7 - 13, bullying in different year groups can take different forms and have different effects. Younger boys, for example, may not understand when an action is or is not bullying. Therefore, any follow-ups or actions are clearly contextual to the boys involved and the age and/or year group of these boys, including any age difference.

Cyberbullying

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. Cyberbullying is a different and potentially more serious form of bullying as:

- It can happen out of School at all times of day, including during the holidays. For the victim there may be no escape.
- Bullying behaviour can be seen by a much wider group of people, from different year groups and by pupils in and out of the School.
- Unkind messages or media can be forwarded quickly to a wide group of people at the click of a button.

The School has a comprehensive e-Safety policy which is renewed annually and takes into account new trends and any additional problems with technology.

Importantly, where technology is suspected to be involved with any bullying, the device will be confiscated where it is used in School. This will be passed to the Master to make a decision about what happens to the items, and all decisions will be carried out under the principles set out in the Government guidance on [Searching, Screening and Confiscation](#). If there is evidence that a crime has been committed, this technology may need to be passed to the police for them to investigate.

More information and advice on how to respond to cyber-bullying and how pupils can keep themselves safe, can be found on the Childnet International (www.childnet.com) and

Beatbullying (www.beatbullying.org) websites.

Impact of Bullying

Bullying severely impacts a victim, especially when it takes place over a longer period of time. The effects it can have vary, but some of these may include:

- Falling attendance, lateness or school avoidance;
- Trying to avoid certain parts of School, routes home, etc.;
- Falling attainment;
- Questioning of self-worth;
- Confusion of why the victim is being targeted;
- Lack of trust;
- Change in mood and personality, e.g., becoming withdrawn;
- Psychological damage (which at its worst has been a factor in pupil suicide).

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.

Bullying as a Safeguarding Matter

A bullying incident by one pupil on another pupil should be treated as a Safeguarding concern when there is ‘reasonable’ cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm and therefore could be classed as peer-on-peer abuse. Examples of this include physical assaults and initiation rituals and/or violence from pupils to other pupils. In this case the Designating Safeguarding Lead (or in their absence, the Deputy Designating Safeguarding Leads) should be involved at the earliest opportunity. Further information can be found in the School’s Safeguarding Policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

Each member of the School community has a specific role to play in ensuring that bullying is seen by everyone as absolutely unacceptable and does not have any chance to thrive.

Members of the Senior Management Team, including the Master, Deputy Master and the Assistant Master, Pastoral

- Set the overall tone of the School, i.e., that bullying is not, in any shape or form, acceptable at Westminster Under School, will not be tolerated and will lead to severe consequences.
- Write policies in line with the Independent School’s Inspectorate (ISI) guidelines outlining the School’s policies and procedures with regard to Anti-Bullying.
- Disseminate information related the School’s Anti-Bullying Policy and ethos, including the unacceptable nature of bullying, to staff, pupils and parents (see Whole School Awareness of Bullying and Anti-Bullying, below).

- The Assistant Master, Pastoral will always be involved in any incidents that are classed as, or could be considered, bullying.
- The Deputy Master as DSL will always be involved in any incidents that are classed as, or could be classed as, peer-on-peer abuse.

Form Tutors, Form Support Tutors, Heads of Year and other Pastoral staff

- Investigate and follow-up on any incidences of poor or unkind behaviour towards any other boys: either behaviour which appears to be a one-off or any that appears to be sustained, repeated or part of a pattern and which therefore could be considered bullying.
- Record the results of any investigations and/or follow-up actions on the School's Management Information System (WUSMIS).
- Inform relevant other members of staff, which may be the entire staff body where appropriate, of incidences of bullying or suspected bullying, with the expectation that all members of staff monitor interactions between different boys, either within the classroom or elsewhere within School, such as locker areas, or outside, such as in Vincent Square.
- Where bullying is found to be taking place or is suspected to be taking place, liaise with the Assistant Master, Pastoral as soon as possible, but certainly within twenty-four hours.

All members of Staff

All staff are encouraged not to have a high threshold for unpleasant or unkind behaviour.

Staff should not accept small incidences of unpleasant behaviour or behaviour passed off as a 'joke' or a 'burn' or as a natural part of growing up. Staff are reminded to remain vigilant inside and outside the classroom, taking positive action to reduce the opportunity for bullying.

All staff therefore should:

- Intervene immediately in any unkind or unpleasant behaviour, either that witnessed or reported. Ensure the behaviour has stopped and, in the case of lower-level behaviour, let the perpetrator know of the unacceptability of the behaviour. Ensure the behaviour is addressed in line with the School's Policy on Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions.
- Ensure the victim is removed from the situation and has support. Depending on the level of any unkind behaviour, this may range from having the support of friends and continuing to go about their usual business, to support from key members of staff, such as the Form Tutor.
- Notify Form Tutors and Heads of Year of any unpleasant behaviour, normally through WUSMIS. Follow-up conversations within School may need to take place to provide greater insight into what has happened.
- If bullying is suspected then the Assistant Master, Pastoral will also be notified (using the notification element in WUSMIS).
- If bullying is of a level that could constitute a Safeguarding issue because there is reasonable cause to suspect that a pupil is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, then the Deputy Master, as the Designated Safeguarding Lead, should be informed. Further information can be found in the Peer-on-Peer Abuse section of the School's Safeguarding Policy.

Pupils

If pupils are being bullied themselves, or suspect someone else is being bullied, they should confide in a person with whom they feel most comfortable as soon as possible. This could be:

- a friend
- their parents
- their Form Tutor
- any other teacher
- the School Counsellor, using a drop-in session
- the Assistant Master, Pastoral, the Deputy Master or the Master

Critically, pupils should never be comfortable to witness unkind or unpleasant behaviour, no matter how small, and not act on it. Boys should not be comfortable being bystanders or, worse, enablers. Boys witnessing unacceptable behaviour should feel able to bring it to the attention of any member of staff. The School recognises that reporting this can be difficult; how to report such behaviour is therefore brought up as part of the whole-school awareness of bullying.

Parents

If a disclosure of bullying is made to parents, or they suspect someone at School is being bullied, they should bring this up with their child's Form Tutor in the first instance, who will report the matter as soon as possible in line with the procedures explained above.

Whole-School Awareness of Bullying and Anti-Bullying

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

To staff

At appropriate points in the School year, reinforcement of our policies, procedures and expectations takes place:

- At INSET sessions at the start of a new academic year or a new term.
- Each term, Safeguarding updates take place which may include a focus on, for example, peer-on-peer abuse.
- When policies are updated staff will be informed, either at INSET sessions or other staff meetings, such as whole-school staff meetings, weekly briefings or pastoral meetings chaired by the Assistant Master, Pastoral, or the relevant Head of Year.
- New members of staff are expected to read and understand the School's most important policies, including the Policy of Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions and the Anti-Bullying Policy. Examples of what may constitute bullying, and what to do, are dealt with in induction sessions.

Boys

- Examples of positive and negative behaviours are embedded in the School Rules and the

Code of Conduct. These are discussed at the beginning of every academic year in assemblies and form time, and throughout the year as part of:

- a. form time
 - b. assemblies and church addresses
 - c. special events, e.g., Anti-Bullying Week
 - d. the PSHEE curriculum
 - e. In a cross-curricular way, e.g., in Drama and Computing lessons, stories and discussion of current affairs, etc.
 - f. On an as-needed basis where there may have been incidences of unpleasant behaviour or bullying as part of a class or year group.
- Pupils are given a copy of the School's Anti-Bullying leaflet, as well as the leaflet entitled Advice to Stay Safe which is based on the Safeguarding Policy. Both these leaflets are displayed in form rooms. The Anti-Bullying leaflet is shown in Appendix 1.
 - 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. The School Counsellor is available on an informal, drop-in basis for any boy to visit.
 - There is a worriedatwus@westminster.org.uk email address which automatically forwards any messages received to the DSL and the DDSLs

Parents

- Expectations of behaviour, including what constitutes bullying, is provided with information before any boy joins the School.
- Expectations of behaviour, including what constitutes bullying, is provided to existing parents at the beginning of each school year during Curriculum Evenings.
- The School provides regular seminars and talks for parents, which include the subject of Bullying and Cyber-Bullying.

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 Special Educational Need and/or Disabilities (SEND) or English as an Additional Language (EAL) needs. All members of staff should follow the processes laid out in both this and the Policy of Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions.

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.

There is no fixed or absolute course of action for bullying; it will depend on the circumstances, including any aggravating factors, but will always be fair, proportionate and in line with existing procedures as stated in the Policy on Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions. Parents of both the

victim and bully will always be informed and involved.

It might, for example, be appropriate:

- a) For the Form Tutor to monitor the situation closely, in consultation with all other relevant teachers, to see if anything further occurs. This response is usually only appropriate if a relatively minor incident appears to be a 'one-off'.
- b) To record the incident on WUSMIS, marking the incident as bullying (or possible bullying).
- c) To arrange for the victim and the bully to talk, following the restorative process in the Policy on Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions. The bully may be totally unaware that he is bullying. The situation will then be closely monitored and members of staff informed to monitor the situation carefully, reporting back any further concerns.
- d) To sanction the bully, 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 Tutor, Head of Year or a senior member of staff 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 in line with the School's Policy on Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions and in consultation with all parties concerned. It may range from a warning or detention to a fixed-term 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. This may constitute a Safeguarding matter and, in the case of a member of staff bullying or potentially bullying a pupil, would be dealt with by the Master liaising with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Record-keeping and reporting

Heads of Year (HoYs) are initially responsible for tracking all actions in cases of behaviour and 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 any bullying or suspected bullying. Any records will be kept in the pupil's school file on the School's Management Information System (WUSMIS).

All incidents where bullying is confirmed are reported to the Master by the Assistant Master, Pastoral.

Appendix 1 – Anti-Bullying Guidance for Pupils



A PUPIL GUIDE ON ANTI-BULLYING



Bullying is unkind and repeated behaviour that is designed to hurt someone either emotionally or physically. It can happen to anyone, and it can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online.

WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF BULLYING?

Bullying can take different forms. It could include:

- **Physical bullying:** hitting, slapping, kicking, punching, pinching, pushing or any other physical action that is intended to hurt someone.
- **Verbal bullying:** name calling, gossiping, using words to tease someone or threatening someone.
- **Non-verbal bullying:** hand signs or text messages
- **Emotional bullying:** threatening, intimidating or humiliating someone
- **Exclusion:** ignoring or isolating someone
- **Undermining:** constant criticism or spreading rumours
- **Controlling or manipulating** someone
- Making silent, hoax or abusive calls

HA HA!



The following types of bullying are also hate crime:

- Racial, sexual, transphobic or homophobic bullying
- Bullying someone because they have a disability



WHAT IS CYBERBULLYING?

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place online. Unlike bullying offline, online bullying can sometimes be worse because the victim cannot easily get away from it.

Cyberbullying can happen via emails, social networks, gaming, mobile phones, apps and websites.

Cyberbullying can include:

- Sending threatening or abusive text messages
- Creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
- Trolling – the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- Excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups
- Shaming someone online
- Setting up groups about a particular child
- Creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass someone or cause trouble using their name



HOW ARE BULLIES CLEVER?

Bullies can use other people to relay messages and to say things for them. They might even encourage other people to copy their mean behaviour or do horrible things to someone, like leaving them out of a game. The people who help and encourage a bully are called **enablers**.

Bullies can also encourage people to watch them do or say something horrible. These people are present for the bullying, but don't take part in it, and they are called **bystanders**.

WHAT CAN I DO IF I SEE SOMEONE BEING BULLIED?



DON'T be an enabler.

Don't work with the bully – don't encourage them by laughing at what they do, or pass on messages for them.



DO be an **active** and **safe** bystander.

This means being aware of when someone's behaviour is inappropriate or threatening and choosing to challenge it. Before stepping in to help, try the **ACB** approach:



Assess the situation for safety; if you see someone in trouble, ask yourself if you can help safely in any way. Remember, your personal safety is a priority – never put yourself at risk.



Be in a group: it's safer to call out bullying behaviour or intervene when you are part of a group. If this is not an option, report the behaviour to others who can act (teachers, parents, Prefects). Don't be afraid that this could look like 'snitching' or 'dobbing' someone in – instead, you are looking out for someone. **The kindest thing you can do is to help.**



Care for the victim: talk to the person who you think may need help. Ask them if they are OK.

You can also email worriedatwus@westminster.org.uk to explain your concerns.

WHO IS AT RISK OF BULLYING?

Any child can be bullied for any reason. If a child is seen as different in some way, or seen as an easy target they can be more at risk. This might be because of their:

- Race or ethnic background
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Disability

Or it could be because they:

- Appear anxious or have low self-esteem
- Are shy or introverted

Popular or successful children are also bullied, sometimes because others are jealous of them. Sometimes a child's family circumstance or home life can be a reason for someone bullying them. People can also be bullied for no obvious reason at all.



WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF BULLYING?

There isn't always a single sign that shows someone is being bullied, but you can watch out for the following behaviours – you might notice these behaviours in your friend, or yourself:

- Belongings getting 'lost' or damaged
- Physical injuries
- Being afraid to go to school, being mysteriously 'ill' each morning, or skipping school
- Not doing as well at school
- Being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn
- Problems with eating or sleeping
- Bullying others



WHAT DO BULLIES LOOK LIKE?

Unfortunately, there isn't a defining feature of a bully – they don't wear T-shirts with a big 'B' on them, or walk around declaring themselves a bully. They can also be good at lots of things and can still be very popular.

WHAT CAN I DO IF I AM BEING BULLIED?

Don't wait for something bigger to happen or assume it is your fault. Neither of these things is correct.

Start by telling someone you trust. It could be:

- A friend
- An older pupil, someone in your House or a Prefect
- Your Form Tutor or Form Support
- Your Head of Year
- Any other member of staff
- Mrs Adams, the School Counsellor
- Your parents



Any member of staff will listen to you at any point and will take your concerns seriously.

If you are unsure if you are being bullied, speak to someone you trust and share your concerns.

You can also email worriedatwus@westminster.org.uk.

WHAT WILL THE SCHOOL DO IF I AM BEING BULLIED?

The School will listen to everything you say and will support you.

It will stop the bullying by speaking to you and by talking to the bully or bullies. We might speak to some other pupils who have witnessed any unpleasant incidents. We might speak to your parents or the bully's parents. You have nothing to worry about.

We will ask teachers to keep a close eye on you in lessons and between lessons, in places like Vincent Square, the Dining Room or in locker rooms.

The bully will also be dealt with in line with our policies. Everyone deserves a second chance but if things continue, then the bully can expect to receive a severe punishment.

