



Westward House School

Qualifications are important. Self-esteem is life changing

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The aim of this policy is to give clear advice and guidance on how to deal with bullying at Westward House School and has been written with regard to the National Assembly Circular 23/03 'Respecting Others: Anti Bullying Guidance 2003.'

Bullying is a deliberate, conscious, wilful desire to demean, humiliate, intimidate and hurt others. Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour that is often repeated over a period of time. There is often an imbalance in the bully/victim relationship – the victim will have difficulty in defending him or herself. It can be carried out by an individual or a group and may be physical and/or emotional.

We define bullying as any behaviour which makes another person feel hurt, threatened or frightened. It can take the following forms:

- Physical abuse
- Verbal abuse
- Deliberate damage to another person's property or theft
- Forcing someone to do something against their will
- Sexual harassment
- Racial harassment
- Homophobic harassment because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- Exclusion from social groups
- Ignoring
- Making unkind remarks
- Removing/hiding items of property

The issue of bullying provides a challenge to all schools as well as to society as a whole. We realise that bullying is an aspect of pastoral care that needs continued attention and that Westward House cannot be complacent.

Our aim is to foster an environment of mutual respect and courtesy where bullying has no place. Through a programme of total commitment from students, staff and parents, we believe that we can keep Westward House a 'bully-free' zone.

We hope that our school ethos of high expectations for good behaviour and respect for others will deter any form of bullying totally. These expectations reflect those outlined in our Behaviour Policy.

Instances of bullying may occur at Westward House – we recognise that these usually take place away from staff and that it is often difficult to establish the true facts of an incident. As soon as a member of staff becomes aware of a bullying problem, the incident will be acknowledged by that member of staff, a written record made and the information passed on to the Proprietor or Lead Teacher. We will regularly review where and how bullying incidents have occurred and look to alter places and practices which may leave children vulnerable and open to bullying.

The Consequences of Bullying

- Bullying may lead to physical injury.
- Children who are bullied suffer great psychological stress and there are a number of well-known symptoms. These include confusion, illness and nervousness. Children may feel powerless, rejection and isolation. Some children suffer from impaired concentration, sleep difficulties and depression – they may become withdrawn and suffer from a loss of self- esteem and a negative self image.
- Children who are bullied may play truant or suffer from school phobia. The amount and quality of their work may suffer.

It is vital that staff, pupils and parents are made aware of these consequences and make known any suspicions or observations as soon as possible.

A Whole School Policy

There are three main factors that reduce and remove bullying:

1. Fostering an attitude amongst pupils that bullying is unacceptable and that it should always be reported.
2. Emphasising the idea that the school will not tolerate bullying and will take action when it occurs.
3. Encouraging staff to be aware, concerned and vigilant.

We seek to tackle bullying in a variety of ways:

- Students are encouraged to talk about any instances of bullying of which they have experience, or in which they have previously been involved. Bullying is mentioned in school assemblies or as a topic for class discussion in appropriate lessons.
- Students are made aware that all cases of bullying will be investigated and taken seriously. They realise that the school will act promptly and firmly to combat bullying whenever and wherever it occurs.
- All students with problems are encouraged to approach a member of staff and will be offered opportunity and a private space in which to talk in confidence.

- Parents are encouraged to contact staff if they have concerns about bullying.
- Written records of suspected or actual incidents are made.

Response to Incidents of Bullying

However serious, any response to incidents of bullying should:

- Be clear, honest and direct.
- Be immediate, with possible follow-up in the longer term.
- where appropriate involve recording what has happened, who was involved and what action was taken.
- Involve the family at an early stage.
- Provide opportunities for the students to discuss with one another ways of resolving the problem.

The Lead Teacher or Proprietor will inform parents in writing of the outcome of any investigations and of any immediate sanctions or threatened sanctions should there be a recurrence.

Education and Prevention

- 1.Pupils may be a positive resource in countering bullying.
- 2.Pupils will be encouraged to talk and listen to each other.
- 3.The school's approach to bullying will be emphasised during PSE and during specially designated events and opportunities within conversation and discussion times.
- 4.The school's approach to bullying will be communicated across the curriculum.
- 5.Pupils will be encouraged to help shy children or newcomers feel welcome and accepted.

Communication

Throughout a case of bullying, good communication is vital, especially with those pupils involved. Where appropriate the Lead teacher and Proprietor will make clear to parents of victims and bullies the actions being taken, why they are being taken and what parents can do to help. It is important that pupils and parents know that the school is taking matters of bullying seriously.

All pupils are aware of who to turn to at Westward House School and to whom they can talk in confidence. They understand their concerns will be listened to and acted upon discreetly and sensitively.

Westward House School follows Restorative Practice

The aim of restorative practice is to create a context where pupils engage actively in learning about their social behaviours, rather than acting as passive recipients of rules and sanctions.

Restorative practice creates the conditions to promote the development of self-managing behaviours and positive attitudes to learning

Pupils are encouraged to develop an understanding of social responsibility and given the responsibility to make things right. Where a pupil changes their behaviour in this context, it isn't because of the threat of punishment. It's because they are buying into the relationships they have with other pupils and teachers. This develops pupils who can make good choices regardless of whether a teacher, and the accompanying menu of sanctions, is present. These are transferable skills that pupils can take with them through their lives.

Physical Intervention in the case of physical bullying

Physical intervention is only used where it is necessary in order to prevent personal injury to the child, other children, and an adult or to prevent serious damage to property. Any incident of this nature is recorded and stored on the pupils individual digital file, with parents being informed of the incident on the same day.

How bullying is managed in terms of sanctions

Behaviour as described in the definition of bullying at the start of this policy is categorised into three stages:

In all cases the perpetrator is expected to make every reasonable effort to repair the harm and apologise to the harmed.

Stage 1

These are considered minor and are dealt with swiftly and effectively. They include being a little unkind to others etc.

Parents are not normally informed of Stage 1 incidents.

Restorative Practices are carried out to try and make the perpetrator understand the impact of his/her actions and every attempt is made to establish a way forward and a positive outcome

Stage 2

These behaviours are considered more serious in nature and are usually formally recorded.

Restorative Practices are carried out to try and make the perpetrator understand the impact of his/her actions and every attempt is made to establish a way forward and a positive outcome.

Parents are mostly informed of any Stage 2 incidents so that they can support the work of the school at home. Sanctions may include, writing apology letters (if deemed appropriate), or working in another classroom.

Examples of Stage 2 incidents include:

- Minor physical assault towards another pupil(s)
- Any form of bullying which involves STOP (several times on purpose)

Stage 2 incidents are reported to the Lead Teacher or Proprietor and are recorded in a pupil's folder. As well as logging the incident, staff should complete an ABC (antecedent, behaviour and consequence) form on the Google Drive.

Stage 3

These incidents are the most serious in nature and are always formally recorded in the ways previously mentioned. Stage 3 incidents are reported to the Lead Teacher and Proprietor. Parents will be informed so that they can fully understand the nature of the incident and the impact it has had on others. All sanctions will be discussed with the parents.

Any mitigating circumstances leading up to Stage 3 incidents will be thoroughly investigated, and recorded.

Examples of stage 3 incidents include:

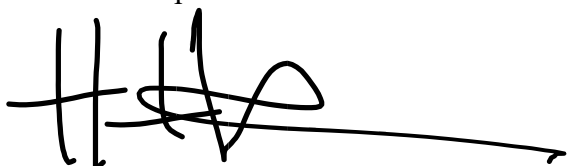
- Extreme verbal abuse to other children and/or staff
- Serious physical assault, biting, kicking, punching, other children and/or members of staff
- Serious cases of bullying and harassment to children and/or staff

Stage 3 incidents are taken very seriously and the most probable outcome is fixed term exclusion in line with the school's exclusion policy.

However, the school understands, and considers very closely, that a parent/carer has the right to make a claim of disability discrimination to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales (SENTW) if she or he thinks that the exclusion is because of a disability their child has.

Stage 3 incidents are dealt with in the same way as other incidents following restorative practice principles and the same attempt made to repair the harm. The sanctions, however, are more serious when behaviours are more serious and which involves STOP (several times on purpose).

Ratified: April 2024

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Harriet Harrison', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Harriet Harrison

Review Date: April 2025

Reviewed and updated September 2024 to reflect new school site