

Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy has been drawn up with regard to the DCSF Guidance – Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence and the DCSF Guidance – Safe to Learn: Embedding Anti-bullying Work in Schools.

WEST HOUSE SCHOOL DOES NOT CONDONE INTIMIDATION AND BULLYING UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES

It aims to provide a safe, caring and protective environment for all pupils. It recognises that every child has a right to an education free from bullying and condemns such behaviour for the following reasons:-

- It puts the educational and emotional development of the victim at risk.
- Bullying behaviour may encourage others to join up against the victim. Therefore, they, as well as the victim, may be harmed psychologically.
- Bullying adversely affects the atmosphere of a class in particular and the ethos of the school in general.

What is Bullying?

It is important that both teachers and pupils recognise bullying behaviour in order to be able to deal with it. The matter is therefore discussed on a regular basis in school assembly and in PSHE lessons. Here it is made clear that bullying can take many forms – physical, verbal or psychological – and that the distress caused is not acceptable.

- Physical bullying – hitting, kicking or other physical assault; taking possessions.
- Verbal bullying – name calling; insulting racist or homophobic remarks.
- Psychological indirect bullying – spreading nasty statements about someone; excluding someone from social groups.
- Cyberbullying – aggressive, intentional acts carried out using electronic forms of contact such as email, text messaging or chat rooms.

Strategies to prevent bullying

The school adopts a zero tolerance attitude to bullying and all matters relating to bullying are referred to the Headmaster. Pupils are made aware of the fact that such matters are dealt with at the most senior level and this is emphasised throughout assemblies during the year. Thus, pupils are taught to recognise the school's stance and this acts as a deterrent to potential bullies.

Furthermore, through the delivery of the SEAL strategy in PSHE lessons, matters relating to bullying are given significant attention during the year. All staff share a responsibility to deliver the SEAL unit 'Say no to bullying' and this again emphasises the united approach on behalf of the school.

Pupils entering the school are given a child-friendly information booklet designed at raising their awareness of the issue and therefore acting as a preventative measure.

The school is acutely aware of potential 'hot spots' and careful management of playtimes in relation to restrictions and staffing are in place to minimise the risk to an individual pupil. Throughout their schooling, pupils are actively encouraged to speak out and are reminded regularly that all incidents will be thoroughly investigated. A community culture opposed to bullying is thus created and maintained from the most junior to the most senior member of the school.

Instances of homophobic or racial bullying, involving either staff or pupils, will be governed by this policy and, in the case of pupils, the sanctions laid out hereafter will be employed appropriately.

Prevention of Cyberbullying

The potential for instances of cyberbullying have become increasingly apparent within educational settings during recent years. West House School adopts a zero tolerance approach to this form of bullying, in line with the approach to other forms of bullying. Pupils who are either perpetrators or victims of this form of bullying at school are treated in the same way as those involved in other forms of bullying.

However, mobile phones are prohibited other than on residential visits and the ICT room is only used under supervision. Therefore, the potential for instances of cyberbullying is slight within the school day. Nevertheless, should a case of cyberbullying be apparent, the sanctions outlined hereafter would be applied.

Where instances of cyberbullying occur outside school hours, pupils and parents are advised to save a record of the incident and bring it to the attention of the school.

In all cases of cyberbullying, the school will seek to advise and support perpetrators, victims and parents, principally through raising awareness. The school has incorporated the management of cyberbullying into the delivery of the SEAL Unit 3: Say No to Bullying, as part of the PSHE curriculum.

Procedure to deal with bullying at West House School

The following advice for pupils is read out to every class in the form lesson at the beginning of every term. It is also explained by the form teacher to any new pupils arriving mid-term. It emphasises the responsibility of the victim, other pupils and members of staff to stamp out bullying.

What to do if you are being bullied at school

- Try not to retaliate physically. A bully may stop being nasty if there is no response from you.
- Tell an adult what is happening, e.g. parents / form teacher, Matron, SENCO, Head of Pre-Prep & Nursery, Headmaster. Remember, it is not your fault that you are being bullied.

What to do if you see someone else being bullied

- Find an adult and explain what you have seen or heard.
- Do not ignore bullying, you have a responsibility to stop it (remember the school Code of Conduct).
- Do not get involved or join in any bullying.

When you report bullying

The school will:

- Take the report seriously and find out the facts of any incident.
- Support children who are being bullied.
- Take appropriate action against the bully in line with the staged sanctions outlined below.

Staff procedure for dealing with bullying

- The first priority is to calm and care for the victim.
- A member of staff should immediately investigate the facts. Should it become immediately apparent that there is some evidence of bullying behaviour the matter should be referred to the Headmaster who will undertake the investigation.
- Investigations will be recorded on the 'Incident of Intimidating or Bullying Behaviour' form.
- A sanction may be imposed (see below).

Sanctions

If a pupil or a group of pupils is found guilty of bullying, then the school will apply an appropriate sanction to be recorded on the 'Intimidating or Bullying Behaviour – Pupil Record' form. All members of staff will be informed.

The school does acknowledge that pupils bully for a variety of reasons and staff are trained in the psychology related to this behaviour. In dealing with an incident of bullying, the bully will be encouraged to admit to, acknowledge and apologise for his actions. If necessary, the bully will be counselled and set targets aimed at improving his behaviour.

Where a proven episode of intimidating or bullying behaviour is apparent, the following staged consequences/sanctions will be applied:

1. First stage:
 - A verbal warning that such behaviour will not be tolerated
 - Lunchtime detention
2. Second stage:
 - Playtime confinement for a period of one day and a general conduct report issued. Parents informed of this action, verbally
 - Counselling session with the Learning Mentor
 - Lunchtime detention
3. Third stage:
 - Playtime confinement for a period of one week and a general conduct report issued. Parents informed in writing
 - Counselling session with the Learning Mentor
 - Lunchtime detention
4. Fourth stage:
 - A Headmaster's Saturday detention – parents informed in writing (KS2 only)
 - Counselling session with the Learning Mentor
 - Home/School meeting arranged to discuss behavioural issues
5. Fifth stage:
 - Fixed-Term exclusion from school
 - Final warning
 - Counselling session with the Learning Mentor upon return

Each term, a child starts with a zero record. However, a fixed term exclusion brings with it a final warning, which is communicated in writing to the parents of the pupil concerned. A further episode of bullying behaviour will result in a permanent exclusion. This decision will be taken at the sole discretion of the Headmaster, once all evidence has been considered.

Members of the Senior Management Team are responsible for ensuring that sanctions are consistently applied and carry out an audit of written records on an annual basis.

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