

## **Winchester House School**

### **Anti-bullying Policy**

#### **Key Facts**

- Definition of bullying
- Aims of this document
- How Winchester House deals with bullying proactively and reactively
- Types of bullying
- Restorative processes and punishments for dealing with bullying
- Information on cyberbullying

This policy involves the whole School community and should be read with, and considered an extended part of, the School's Child Safeguarding Policy. It applies to the Early Years Foundation Stage in its principles and many of its practices. In respect of the latter, however, as appropriate to the age of the children involved, the Head of Pre-Prep and EYFS coordinator may use their professional judgement to make some suitable adjustments.

This policy is also adopted by the boarding community as appropriate and supports the communal ethos therein. This policy also has regard to the Preventing and tackling bullying\_ Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies (July 2017).

Version 1

Responsible Governor: n/a

Last reviewed: 6th May 2019 (DJ)

25th June 2021 (AVM)

Adopted by Governors: n/a

Next review due: 25th June 2022(AVM)

## **Definitions**

Winchester House adopts the following definition of bullying:

*Bullying is behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.*

*['Preventing and Tackling Bullying', DfE, 2017, p.8]*

A 'bullying-type behaviour' is a behaviour which, left unaddressed and repeated over time, would become bullying. For a fuller definition of what bullying is, refer to the 2017 government guidance referenced above.

It should be noted that this policy should be read in conjunction with Winchester House School Safeguarding Policy as under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern where there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'.

The School will 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.

## **Aim**

The aim of the anti-bullying process is to repair hurt and restore relations. This will be done through supporting, reassuring and consoling the child(ren) targeted and through educating the bully(-ies) and the wider peer group through open restorative processes where deemed appropriate or a more tailored approach as may fit the individuals concerned and the particular situation.

## **Starting point**

Winchester House subscribes to the notion that no school can truly say that, over any meaningful period of time, it is free of bullying-type behaviours. Bullying-type behaviours of various sorts will naturally manifest themselves in a wide range of children as they test and learn social boundaries and principles and as their gradually maturing brains allow them to try to manage impulsive urges and, for example, help them to cope with a blow to their self-esteem without reacting negatively towards others.

Within the definition of bullying itself, however, two notable words are 'repeated' and 'intentionally'. There are all sorts of ways in which a child can upset another; they do not all constitute bullying. They will, however, all be taken seriously.

Winchester House is a learning community and this guides our approach to dealing with instances of bullying-type behaviours and bullying. First and foremost will be the needs of the child(ren) who has been hurt and upset. Parallel with this, however, and vital in preventing future repetition, is the educating and learning of the alleged bully(-ies) and the wider community of their peers. For this reason, the Winchester House approach to dealing with bullying and bullying-type behaviours – as laid out below – is a collaborative and restorative educational process which should be as open as circumstances and staff's judgement allow. Where felt appropriate, the 'No Blame' Meeting approach can work well in aiming to achieve these ends as a first measure. See Appendix 2.

## **The duty and power to deal with bullying**

The School staff as a whole has a duty to deal with bullying-type behaviours and bullying that may occur at School, in line with this policy. This includes non-teaching staff, who should intervene to interrupt any

such behaviour as appropriate, ascertain the names of those involved and pass all information on to the nearest available member of teaching staff.

If serious matters arise, members of staff have the duty to report these to a member of the Leadership Group immediately, preferably the Deputy Head (Pastoral) or the Head.

Bullying behaviour is not just found within school. Bullying can be perpetuated outside of school (including cyber bullying), which might then impact on school life. Section 89(5) of the *Education and Inspections Act 2006* gives head teachers of maintained schools the specific statutory power to regulate pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and to discipline when appropriate. This legislation does not apply explicitly to independent schools. However, in an age where technology is making it easier to cyberbully and to extend bullying into previously protected areas of a child's day and life, the School will do all that it can to support parents and children alike, wherever and whenever any bullying behaviour occurs.

**Types of bullying** – these can be found as Appendix 1.

### **The Anti-bullying process**

In involving the whole community in educating against bullying, opportunities should be regularly taken in; assemblies, tutor periods, Circle Time, PSHE lessons, meetings of boarders, meetings of the School Council and designated times of the year such as 'anti-bullying week' to raise awareness of the issue of bullying.

Our strategy will encompass:

**Education**  
**Vigilance**  
**Discussion**  
**Planning / Implementation**  
**Monitoring**  
**Reporting/Recording**

#### **Education**

In order to address it effectively, it is crucial that children at the School develop a good understanding of what constitutes bullying and the many different factors that can both contribute to it happening (e.g. peer pressure) and help to prevent it happening (e.g. understanding others' feelings, knowledge of and compassion towards diversity in society, and what to do if they are bullied or witness someone else being bullied). The PSHE curriculum and Circle Time lower down the School are the lead vehicles for this education. Tutor time and specific assemblies and meetings also provide opportunities to raise awareness of bullying and how to respond to it.

Notices providing advice on what pupils can do if they are being bullied and providing contact information for services to which they can turn are placed in numerous locations around the School site. The Circle of Support model is also published in the student diaries so they are aware of the different avenues for support.

Staff training is carried out during Professional Development Days. Training needs may be identified through Performance Management, through changes in policy or as the Pastoral Management Group or Leadership Group identifies the need.

### **Vigilance & Discussion amongst staff**

Staff are naturally vigilant in the course of their duties within and outside the classroom. It is our policy, as class teachers and tutors, to consider all children within the context of our anti-bullying policy before each staff meeting and to raise any concerns as a result, however minor, in particular with the child's tutor, Head of Year and the Deputy Head (Pastoral) / Head of Pre-Prep (as appropriate). Time is devoted at Pre-Prep and Upper School staff meetings to discuss any such concerns. Any significant antisocial behaviour is likely to be addressed jointly, as soon as possible after the event, with the child, the appropriate member of staff and the parent.

### **Planning/Implementation**

It may be that, following discussion, it is deemed that the only further action necessary will be to continue to monitor and report back to future meetings until staff are agreed that the matter is completely resolved.

When a concern is proved to have substance, a plan is agreed to correct the situation and to lay positive foundations for the future. The agreeing and implementing of such a plan must be a priority for those staff involved. In the first instance, and in the absence of it being stated otherwise, the Tutor of the victim will usually take the lead in any actions / communications given below:

- The trust of the victim must be secured and they must be happy for the bully/ies to be approached in order to help resolve the situation.
- Which staff are involved in devising the plan of action depends on the seriousness of the case in hand. At all times, the Form Teachers/Tutors of the children directly involved must be involved in agreeing such a plan.
- Other staff who might be involved in the first instance include the Head of Pre-Prep, Heads of Years, a Houseparent, the Deputy Head (Pastoral). (This is not an exclusive list.)
- The wider staff body will be consulted on drawing up a plan of action as appropriate.
- Any such plan of action will be communicated to those staff needed to help implement (e.g. those on lunch duty, Games takers, relevant subject teachers) as soon as it is agreed and to the staff as a whole at the next staff meeting.
- Parents of the victim and bully/ies will be informed of the plan at this point and their support enlisted. It should never be that only one set is informed. When the parents are informed should be agreed by the staff involved with the plan of action. The Tutors of the respective children will coordinate their telephone calls so that if the parents make contact with each other independent of the school, information has been shared uniformly.

If a problem persists, the parents of victim and bully/ies *will* then be informed (if they have not already been). Depending on the nature of the situation and reasons for the problem persisting, this may be done by the respective Tutors, Head of Year or Deputy Head (Pastoral). The parents' support will be enlisted as part of an integrated second stage to the original plan and a copy of the plan (revised as necessary) provided for them.

The integrated approach must, above all, be presented to all concerned as a positive exercise with a defined aim. Any punishment deemed appropriate will be the responsibility of the School and will be implemented promptly by the Head / Head of Pre-Prep Dept. at the time of discovery.

### **Reporting/Recording**

The school Portal offers the opportunity for incidents of bullying to be recorded as pastoral concerns, for all children involved to be cross-referenced, and for actions taken to be dated. This should be the main record of bullying concerns. This may be supplemented by any related letters, minutes of staff meetings, any additional records of phone conversations (to be kept by the Tutor) and any other file notes. Any agreed plans of action will be recorded as 'Follow Up Action' on the Portal as appropriate. Plans of action will be shared with parents as described above and if they request them having not formally been involved in the plan originally.

It is important that copies of the different types of bullying-related correspondence listed above are emailed to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) who will keep a separate central log of bullying incidents to facilitate the finding of relevant information on the portal.

### **Monitoring**

Those staff agreeing a plan of action should also agree when the success of the plan will be reviewed and this will not be more than a few days following implementation. If a plan is not having swift success, then it is not meeting the victim's needs. In the meantime, the Tutors of those children directly involved should support and monitor their tutees' views on the ongoing success of the plan informally and daily.

Updates to the staff will be given via weekly staff meeting and parents will be contacted as necessary as laid out above.

### **Further incidents**

Should it become clear that initial discussions, agreed plans of action and, where they have been applied, punishments have failed to resolve the situation and that bullying continues, then the following procedures will be adopted:

- The bully/ies will be spoken to by the Head/Head of Pre-Prep to make it clear that the issue is now more serious and that more stern sanctions now take effect. A second member of staff should be present and the bully may have a friend with him/her.
- At the same time, parents of the bully/ies are to be informed that their children have had the position explained to them. This can be done in person, by telephone or, if necessary, by e-mail or mail. (Parents will already be aware of the situation's development through their involvement in the integrated plan of action.)
- A meeting between parents, Head/Head of Pre-Prep and bully/ies can be called at this stage. A second member of staff should be present. Any relevant documentation should be available to all at the meeting. The meeting should be minuted and copies made available to all present.

**It is essential at this stage that both parents and bullies are made aware of the consequences of a further incident of bullying.**

- Another incident is likely to result in one week's suspension from the School, following which further bullying is likely to result in permanent exclusion from the School.

### **Punishment**

Any punishment deemed appropriate will be the responsibility of the School and will be implemented promptly by the Head / Head of Pre-Prep at the time of discovery. Appropriate punishments for bullying are covered in Appendix 3.

## **Appendix 1 - Types of Bullying**

Bullying can be:

### **Verbal**

Name calling, offensive comments about looks / colour / shape / nationality / family / skills / intelligence; teasing, sarcasm, spreading rumours, mocking, imitating;

### **Physical**

Hitting, pushing, pinching, kicking, punching, any physical contact which causes discomfort or distress, gestures;

### **Indirect**

Exclusion, subject to malicious rumours or gossip, hiding or taking belongings;

### **Sexual**

Unwanted physical contact, sexually abusive comments, focusing on the issue of sexuality;

### **Gender, sexual orientation and homophobic**

Remarks, written or spoken, inferring personal criticism based on the above. eg "You're such a girl!" to a boy; "You're gay!" etc;

### **Cyber**

Threats / unpleasant comments via text messages, e-mail, social networks and websites (e.g. Instagram, Facebook). Posting photos or video clips against wishes. **(See Appendix 4 for more details on cyberbullying;)**

### **Racial**

Gratuitous and offensive remarks about race, ethnicity or nationality (even those not directed personally at an individual but intended to hurt or discriminate);

### **References To Disability**

References to those with disabilities intended to hurt, humiliate or exclude.

## **Appendix 2 - 'No Blame' Meetings**

It can be unhelpful to label children 'victim' and 'bully' insofar as they might conclude that this is how they are being defined. Consequently, in the process below, Child A will be used for the child or children being targeted and Child B for the child or children doing the targeting.

In the first instance of a particular combination of children showing/experiencing bullying-type behaviour or bullying, the following steps may be taken, usually by the tutor of Child A, if the situation – in the judgement of those staff dealing with it – might be suited:

### **Education and restoration**

- 1) The trust of Child A in the support available and the forthcoming process should be gained. 2) The children involved, including any who have witnessed the behaviour, should be ascertained. 3) Child A, Child B and any witnesses to the behaviour should be brought together at the earliest opportunity for a 'no blame' meeting.

#### The 'No Blame' Meeting:

- At a 'no blame' meeting, staff should allow the children to speak *uninterrupted* by others. The meeting should be used as an educational opportunity. In most instances, the meeting need take no longer than 5 minutes.
- i) Child A is asked to express and explain the problem and how it makes them feel. They should do this using 'I' statements as much as possible. e.g. rather than saying, 'You always exclude me from playground games and call me unkind names,' they say, 'I'm very upset because I'm being excluded from playground games and being called unkind names.'
  - ii) The member of staff summarises/repeats Child A's words and checks the summary is correct.
  - iii) The other children (any witnesses and Child B) are openly invited to suggest a solution to the problem. The emphasis should be on addressing Child A's feelings, not on what has or hasn't happened. Feelings cannot be denied. The member of staff may have to gently guide this, but it's important the children should lead as much as possible. Through this part of the process what the witnesses have seen and any blame will largely remain implicit. Once an agreement has been reached, the member of staff clearly repeats the agreed solution back to the children. If the solution involves an apology being made, this should be done before the children are allowed to leave.

### **Communicating to staff / recording**

- 4) The member of staff notes the meeting as a 'Pastoral' incident on the portal, under the name of Child A, linking in Child B, and the agreement is noted. If the member of staff feels it appropriate, an update on the situation can be provided at the next staff meeting.

### **Monitoring**

- 5) For approximately one week, Child A's Tutor will check daily with them on the progress of the agreement reached. For approximately one week, Child B's Tutor will check daily with them on the progress of the agreement reached. The Tutors should liaise over addressing any issues arising.

### **Any repetition after a 'No Blame' Meeting:**

On a repeated instance of a particular combination of children showing/experiencing bullying-type behaviour or bullying, or of Child B manifesting the same behaviour towards another pupil, procedures should be followed as in the policy above to draw up an integrated plan of action.



### **Appendix 3 - Appropriate Sanctions to Punish Bullying**

(These should be applied with regard to age of children and frequency of offence.)

- “Time out.” Sitting quietly, in isolation, to reflect on what went wrong. (How could I have avoided getting into this situation? How could I have handled this situation better? Did I mean to hurt him/her? How can I make him/her feel better?)
- The issuing of a Strike, Double Strike or Triple Strike (if very low level)
- Withdrawal from favoured activities, (to include some attention to the questions asked above)
- Loss of break-times for an agreed period (as above)

#### **In the case of persistent bullying / failing to respond to an agreed plan of action**

- A period of internal suspension (for one or more days, as deemed necessary)
- Suspension from boarding (if appropriate)
- 1 week’s formal suspension from school
- Permanent exclusion

**For details of sanctions for cyberbullying, see the last section of Appendix 4. 9**



## **Appendix 4 - Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying involves the use of one or more of any number of electronic devices / platforms, often involving the internet, to write – or possibly film and post online – unkind and hurtful comments about an individual.

Unlike other forms of bullying, cyberbullying can follow children and young people into their private spaces and outside school hours. Cyberbullies can communicate their messages to a wide audience with remarkable speed, and can often remain unidentifiable and unseen.

### **What the School will do to help prevent cyberbullying:**

Pupils, parents and staff will be made aware that protecting pupils against bullying via mobile phone or the internet is an important part of the School's anti-bullying policy; this policy will be regularly updated and the School will ensure it has sufficient knowledge to deal with cyberbullying.

Mobile devices are currently not permitted in school, save for a very small number of boarders who have special permission. Their phones are kept securely by the houseparents and so boarding staff are aware of when these boarders have them in their possession in the course of an evening.

Pupils will be made aware that cyberbullying committed outside School will be treated with the same seriousness as if it were in School.

Pupils will be made aware that cyberbullying can frequently involve breaking the law by 'publishing' inappropriate images or defamatory comments.

Serious sanctions will be used against cyberbullies: in addition to restricting their access to all forms of communications technologies in School, parents will also be asked to do the same at home.

All e-communications used on the School site will be monitored; all pupils will be required to sign a declaration that they will use the internet and communications technologies responsibly.

Internet blocking technologies against harmful sites will be put in place at School and continually updated. This may include social networking sites as deemed appropriate.

Through PSHE lessons, awareness raising sessions, and information to both pupils and parents, pupils will be taught about the risks of communications technologies, the consequences of their misuse, and how to use them safely. From time to time parents will be invited to workshop sessions.

The School will work with the police and other partners in education and child protection to a) raise awareness of cyberbullying b) take all reasonable steps to prevent it and c) impose appropriate sanctions if it is discovered.

### **Sanctions against cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying can be every bit as pernicious as other forms of bullying and in fact has the ability to reach children in places and at times when they would otherwise feel safe. It therefore has the potential to be even more invasive and affecting than other forms of bullying. These facts will be among the full circumstances taken into consideration when deciding upon an appropriate sanction.

The following points stand in addition to those sanctions available in the Behaviour Policy:

- In the majority of instances of cyberbullying, whether in or out of school,

parents will be informed and required to attend a meeting with their child to discuss the issues at stake and any punishment that may be deemed appropriate.

- Material used in cyberbullying, e.g. obscene images or messages, will usually be shown to parents with their child present.
- Access to all information technology at School will be denied for an indefinite period at the discretion of the Head. Parents will be requested to take the same steps at home.

Naturally, the full range of sanctions is available, although it is likely that more serious sanctions will be employed when dealing with cyberbullying.