Anti Bullying Policy

Approved by:	Behaviour, Attitude and Personal Development	December 2023
Next review due by:	Spring 2026	

Statement of Intent

At West Kirby Grammar School, our unwavering commitment is to cultivate a nurturing, friendly, and secure environment, fostering optimal conditions for student learning. The unequivocal stance of our school is that any form of bullying is entirely unacceptable. In the unfortunate event that bullying occurs, every student must feel empowered to disclose incidents, assured that such matters will be promptly and effectively addressed.

This anti-bullying policy aligns with the values that underpin the workings of West Kirby Grammar School. It integrates with the initiatives of our pastoral team, drawing inspiration from our holistic approach encompassing the school's behaviour policy which includes our rewards and sanctions framework.

Aims

Ensuring Safety and Security: Our foremost objective is to ensure that all individuals within the school community, both children and adults, can work and thrive in an environment that is not just physically secure but also emotionally safe. This involves freedom from any form of humiliation, harassment, or abuse.

Discouraging Bullying: We aim to make it unequivocally clear to every member of the school community that bullying, is utterly unacceptable. Our collective responsibility is to actively discourage, challenge, and report any such behaviour, fostering a positive and supportive atmosphere.

Promoting Awareness: This policy seeks to ensure that all stakeholders—students, parents, staff, governors, and others—are not only aware of its existence but also understand that robust and appropriate action will be taken in response to any reported incidents.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is a complex and multifaceted issue, characterised by repeated behaviour that intentionally makes others feel uncomfortable or threatened. It is fundamentally an abuse of power, leaving victims feeling powerless. The forms of bullying encompass various dimensions, including emotional, physical, verbal, cyber, racist, sexual, homophobic, transphobic, and faith-based, among others.

Possible Signs of Bullying

Indicators of bullying may manifest as changes in behaviour, such as heightened shyness, feigned illness, or displays of defiant behaviour. Deterioration in schoolwork, lack of concentration, or instances of truancy may also serve as potential signs of bullying.

Encouragement to Tell (Disclosure by Students Being Bullied)

Creating an open and trusting atmosphere within the school is of paramount importance. Students being bullied must feel not only listened to but also confident that their concerns will be addressed with promptness and sensitivity. Disclosure, whether direct or indirect, is encouraged, with the understanding that reporting is instrumental in putting an end to bullying.

Responsibilities

Students:
Students are provided with clear guidance on their rights not to be bullied. They are encouraged not to feel ashamed if they become victims and to report any incidents promptly. The emphasis is on understanding that watching and doing nothing implies support for the bully. Students are urged to tell a trusted adult immediately, seeking advice and help from parents or teachers. The message is clear: keep speaking up as long as bullying continues.

Parents and Carers:
Parents are equipped with guidance on how to watch for early signs of bullying, actively listen and take seriously any comments their child may make about bullying, reassure their child about the importance of reporting incidents, and, when needed, promptly contact the school. Collaboration with the school to develop supportive strategies for their child, both inside and outside of school, is emphasised.

Staff:

Form Tutors
Form tutors, engaging with students daily, play a crucial role in being the initial point of contact for young individuals. They remain vigilant in identifying behavioural changes indicative of bullying.

Heads of Year
Heads of Year respond to suspected or reported bullying incidents, ensuring events are recorded on MyConcern. Strategies include contacting parents, restorative meetings, applying sanctions, and arranging support.

Thrive
The Thrive team offers support based on referrals from the pastoral team, assisting both victims and perpetrators of bullying.

Other Staff
All staff members, irrespective of their role, share the responsibility to be vigilant for signs of bullying, addressing it when observed, and ensuring appropriate reporting and resolution processes are followed.

Governors:
Governors at WKGS play a vital role in anti-bullying efforts, overseeing the policy's regular review, ensuring a designated Senior Leadership Team member handles anti-bullying, and monitoring the policy's effectiveness.

Preventative Measures

WKGS adopts a preventive approach to bullying, conducting assemblies and workshops across all year groups. Collaborations with external agencies provide relevant information and strategies to discourage bullying.

Tolerance and equality are taught within the curriculum. It is strategically leveraged to raise awareness about bullying behaviour, disseminate information about the school's anti-bullying policy, challenge attitudes, and actively contribute to building an enduring anti-bullying ethos within the school.

The various channels through which the curriculum addresses these objectives include assemblies, personal development lessons, form time activities, group work, befriending initiatives, mentoring programmes, mediation sessions, and assertiveness development.

Procedures

West Kirby Grammar School acknowledges the existence of bullying within its premises. When instances of bullying are identified by students or staff, a robust reporting, recording, and intervention process is promptly initiated for both the victim and the perpetrator. This encompasses a range of measures such as behaviour consequences, emotional support, restorative practices, and inclusion support. The reporting system involves the centralised recording of all incidents and potential signs of bullying on MyConcern. This proactive approach aims to detect patterns and address repeat incidents promptly.

While the specific actions may vary based on the unique circumstances, the overarching objectives remain consistent: bringing incidents to light, facilitating transparent discussions, devising strategies for resolution, and unequivocally condemning the bully's behaviour. Throughout this process, meticulous records are maintained, sanctions are applied, and a commitment to preventing retaliation is emphasised. The school actively engages with the parents of both the victim and the bully, providing necessary support for the victim and collaborating towards instigating behavioural change for the perpetrator.

Restorative Practice

At West Kirby Grammar School, a restorative approach is employed as a response to incidents, with a primary emphasis on repairing any harm caused by conflicts. This conflict resolution strategy involves all parties affected by the incident. Following a bullying episode, restorative justice meetings, facilitated by a member of the pastoral team when deemed appropriate, are conducted to contribute to the resolution of the issue.

Sanctions

When students do not respond to prevention strategies, it will be necessary to use appropriate sanctions, as detailed in the behaviour policy. The aim is not punitive but rather rehabilitative, fostering an environment where students understand the consequences of their actions.

Support

The school places a strong emphasis on supporting victims of bullying through a flexible and proactive approach, involving early engagement with parents. Various support measures are implemented, such as providing a safe space, peer support, referrals, and limiting opportunities for bullying by raising awareness among colleagues. Victims may also receive assistance from multi-agency partners or specialised programmes delivered within the school, addressing attendance issues, youth and family support, counselling, anger management, social skills, and more.

Simultaneously, the school is committed to supporting those responsible for bullying, aiming to prevent further incidents. This involves restorative discussions, appropriate sanctions aligned with the behaviour policy, encouragement to participate in extra-curricular activities, and collaboration with the Thrive team to enhance social skills. For repeated incidents, additional measures may be implemented, including parent involvement, targeted education programmes for students to understand the impact of bullying, and, if necessary, engagement with local authorities such as the police.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy and its accompanying procedures should undergo consistent monitoring and evaluation. The effectiveness is assessed through key metrics, including the number of students being bullied, the willingness of students to report incidents, the vigilance and response of staff to bullying behaviour, and the overall sense of security felt by students and parents regarding the school's approach to bullying.

Senior Members of Staff Responsible

This policy is overseen by Mr. S Clarke (Headteacher) and Mrs G Ravenwood, Senior Assistant Headteacher (Safeguarding/Pastoral). The governance oversight lies with Professor A Owen, Chair of Governors' Behaviour, Attitude and Personal Development Committee.

Supporting Organisations and Guidance

• Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

• Beat Bullying: www.beatbullying.org

• Childline: www.childline.org.uk

• DfE: "Preventing and Tackling Bullying. Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies", and "Supporting children and young people who are bullied: advice for schools"

• DfE: "No health without mental health"

• Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk

• Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk

• MindEd: www.minded.org.uk

• NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk

• PSHE Association: www.pshe-association.org.uk

• Restorative Justice Council: www.restorativejustice.org.uk

• The Diana Award: www.diana-award.org.uk

• Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk

• Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk

• Young Carers: www.youngcarers.net

Cyberbullying

• Childnet International: www.childnet.com

• Digizen: www.digizen.org

• Internet Watch Foundation: www.iwf.org.uk

• Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk

• UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk

LGBT

• EACH: www.eachaction.org.uk

• Pace: www.pacehealth.org.uk

• Schools Out: www.schools-out.org.uk

SEND

• Changing Faces: www.changingfaces.org.uk

• Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk

• DfE: SEND code of practice

Racism and Hate

• Anne Frank Trust: www.annefrank.org.uk

• Kick it Out: www.kickitout.org

• Report it: www.report-it.org.uk

• Stop Hate: www.stophateuk.org

• Show Racism the Red Card: www.srtrc.org/educationa