

Anti-bullying Policy

Withington Girls' School

September 2017

1 Policy statement

- 1.1 **Scope:** This policy applies to all pupils and staff at Withington Girls' School irrespective of their age and whether or not a pupil is in the care of the School when or if bullying occurs. While this policy focuses mainly on the bullying of pupils by other pupils, it is recognised that other forms of bullying may occur and this is addressed in section 5.2.3.
- 1.2 **Publication:** This policy is provided to all parents, summarised for pupils in the pupil planners, provided to all staff in the Staff Handbook and is also available on request in the School office. In addition, the policy is published on the School's website. This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.
- 1.3 **Government guidance:** This policy has been drawn up with assistance from guidance issued by the Department for Education (**DfE**), *Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies* (July 2017) and will be reviewed against any new government guidance issued from time to time.
- 1.4 **Policy aims:** Through the operation of this policy we aim:
- to actively promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils at the School;
 - to maintain and drive a positive and supportive culture among all pupils and staff throughout the School where all members of the community can thrive and in which learning and teaching can take place in a relaxed and secure atmosphere;
 - to prevent bullying, detect it when it occurs, and respond to it appropriately on a case-by-case basis; and
 - to comply with the School's duties under the Equality Act 2010 and The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulation 2014.
- 1.5 Bullying is always unacceptable and will not be dismissed as being normal, as "banter" or simply "part of growing up". Bullying will not be tolerated by the School because:
- it is harmful to the person who is bullied, and to those who engage in bullying, and those who support them, and can in some cases lead to lasting psychological damage and even suicide;
 - it interferes with a pupil's right to enjoy her learning and leisure time free from intimidation; and
 - it is contrary to all our aims and values, our internal culture and the reputation of the School.
- 1.6 This policy will also apply to bullying outside of the School of which the School becomes aware.

2 Bullying

- 2.1 Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally¹. Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups. Bullying may be:

¹ DfE guidance: Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies (July 2017)

- **Physical:** hitting, kicking, pushing people around, spitting; or taking, damaging or hiding possessions
- **Verbal:** name-calling, taunting, teasing, insulting or demanding money
- **Exclusionary Behaviour:** intimidating, isolating or excluding a person from a group
- **General Unkindness:** spreading rumours or writing unkind notes, mobile phone texts or e-mails;
- **Low- level disruptive behaviour:** 'banter' and 'horseplay' over a prolonged period of time; or
- **Cyberbullying:** bullying that takes place using technology (see section 2.2 below).

Bullying may also be:

- **Sexual:** talking to or touching someone in a sexually inappropriate way
- **Sexist:** related to a person's gender or gender reassignment
- Racist, or regarding someone's religion, belief or culture
- related to a person's sexual orientation (homophobic bullying)
- related to pregnancy and maternity
- related to a person's home circumstances; or
- related to a person's disability, special educational needs, learning difficulty, health or appearance.

A girl who is being bullied may:

- Change her usual routine
- Be unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- Become anxious and withdrawn
- Attempt or threaten suicide
- Cry herself to sleep at night or have nightmares
- Feel ill or feign illness in the mornings
- Truant
- Show an unexpected decline in standards of work
- Come home or arrive in school with damaged equipment, e.g. clothes, books
- Have possessions 'go missing'
- Ask to borrow money or steal money
- Continually 'lose' pocket money
- Have unexplained cuts, scratches or bruises
- Become withdrawn, lack confidence
- Become distressed or depressed

Staff and pupils should be aware of the above but the presence of one or more of these signs and symptoms is not in itself proof of bullying.

- 2.2 **Cyberbullying:** Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using technology. This may include bullying through the use of mobile electronic devices, social media or gaming sites. An incident of cyberbullying will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures in this policy. See Appendix 1 to this policy for guidance for pupils about cyberbullying. The School's separate Acceptable Use Policy for Pupils sets out the School rules about the use of technology including mobile electronic devices.
- 2.3 **Intention:** Not all bullying is deliberate or intended to hurt. Some individuals may see their hurtful conduct as "teasing" or "a game" or "for the good of" the other person. These forms of bullying are equally unacceptable but may not be malicious and can often be corrected quickly with advice and without disciplinary sanctions. If left unchallenged or dismissed low level disruption can have a wearing and significant impact on targeted individuals exposed to such behaviour.
- 2.4 **Responsibility:** It is everyone's responsibility to ensure, whatever the circumstances, that no-one becomes a victim of bullying. A person may be vulnerable to bullying because of her age, physical appearance, nationality, colour, gender, sexual orientation, religion, culture or learning difficulty, disability, home circumstances or because she is new in the School, appears to be uncertain or has no friends. She may also become a target because of an irrational decision by a bully.
- 2.5 **Legal aspects:** A person who makes a physical or sexual assault on another, or who steals or causes damage to the property of another, commits a criminal offence and also a civil wrong known as a "tort" for which there can be legal consequences outside the School. Bullying may also be regarded as threatening behaviour or harassment which can be either a criminal

offence or a civil wrong. Misuse of electronic communications could also be a criminal offence, for example it is an offence to send an electronic communication (such as a text message or e-mail) to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety.

- 2.6 **Safeguarding:** Bullying may be of such a nature that safeguarding concerns are raised. Such behaviour may include hazing behaviour, initiation rituals or any form of sexual harassment. See the School's Child Protection Policy for the School's approach to peer on peer abuse. Concerns about a pupil's welfare because they are the perpetrator or victim of bullying must be reported in accordance with the Child Protection Policy and appropriate action taken, taking into account the Local Safeguarding Children Board's threshold document.

3 **Anti-bullying culture**

- 3.1 **Ethos:** Our expectation of all members of the School community is that:

- everyone will uphold the School's Golden Rule of Respect for Self and Respect for Others which is reflected in the School's Anti-Bullying Statement and underpins the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy in order to ensure an open, positive, friendly and caring atmosphere which promotes positive self-images and encourages appropriate behaviour in all areas;
- a pupil or a member of staff who witnesses or hears of an incident of bullying will report it;
- a complaint of bullying will always be taken seriously;
- no-one will tolerate unkind actions or remarks or stand by when someone else is being bullied.

- 3.2 **Equal opportunities:** In School and in every year group:

- discriminatory and offensive words and behaviour are treated as unacceptable;
- positive attitudes are fostered towards people who are disabled and towards ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic groups within and outside the School; and
- positive attitudes are fostered through the curriculum and form time.

- 3.3 **Staff:** Through their training and experience, members of staff are expected to promote an anti-bullying culture by:

- celebrating achievement;
- anticipating problems and providing support;
- disciplining perpetrators fairly, consistently and reasonably, taking into account any special educational needs or disabilities of the pupil, taking into account the motivations and any underlying safety concerns of the perpetrator and providing support as appropriate;
- making opportunities to listen to pupils; and
- acting as advocates of pupils.

- 3.4 **Governing Body: The Governing Body, as proprietor,** has overall responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of pupils at the School, ensuring that those in leadership and management positions actively promote pupil well-being. This includes ensuring that policies and procedures are in place and implemented effectively to:

- minimise the risk of bullying at the School so that pupils and staff feel safe and secure;
 - intervene early in low-level disruption to prevent negative behaviours escalating; and
 - deal swiftly with allegations and incidents of bullying at the School so that pupils and staff feel confident that all incidents will be dealt with appropriately.
- 3.5 **Parents:** The School will take active measures to promote an anti-bullying culture and convey the message to parents that bullying amongst pupils or towards staff will not be tolerated in the School.
- 3.6 **Pupils:** Through our pastoral care systems, pupils are informed and taught that bullying will not be tolerated in the School. They are encouraged:
- to celebrate the effort and achievements of others;
 - to hold and promote positive attitudes;
 - to feel able to share problems with staff;
 - to turn to someone they trust, if they have a problem;
 - not to feel guilty about airing complaints;
 - to be kind, considerate and tolerant towards others;
 - to treat lunch as a pleasant social occasions;
 - to make good use of their free time;
 - to challenge their peers if they are unkind to others;
 - to be aware of the impact their behaviour can have on others; and
 - to use technology safely and securely and to be aware of the risks and impact of the use of technology on themselves and others.

4 Anti-bullying systems

- 4.1 **Approach:** Our systems for detecting and dealing with bullying are designed to operate:
- horizontally, within year groups and in the classroom and other activities
 - vertically, through all year groups

Our anti-bullying systems are implemented and driven in the way described below.

- 4.2 **Vigilance:** Members of staff and volunteers are vigilant at all times but particularly:
- at the start and end of the school days when pupils arrive and leave the site;
 - before lessons, at morning break and at lunchtime
 - in the queue for the dining room and in the dining room itself
 - when on their weekly duty
 - in School corridors
 - on School transport / School trips

- 4.3 **Meetings:** Bullying is discussed in the following meetings:

- members of the Senior Management Team
- Heads of Year
- Heads of Year and Form Tutors
- Heads of Year/Form Tutors with pupils in their year/form group/Peer Support team
- Deputy Head and Assistant Head of Sixth Form with Peer Supporters
- Weekly staff meetings
- Junior School staff meetings
- School Council

The result of these meetings is to feed back information about pupil welfare and behaviour, friendship patterns, particular incidents, any pupil who seems to be isolated, any growing 'power base' and any known conflict between a member of staff and a pupil, or between pupils so that strategies can be developed to prevent bullying incidents.

4.4 **Education:** Measures are taken throughout each year to educate pupils about bullying and this policy. These measures include:

4.4.1 **PSHCE:** sessions across Years 3-11 which cover:

- What bullying is; what to do if bullying occurs; Anti-Bullying statement
- The School community; Friendships; personal identity; work around self-esteem
- Cyberbullying; sessions led by Childnet
- Healthy relationships; resolving conflict
- Abuse in relationships (Year 10)
- Online safety is a key aspect of all areas of the curriculum. Parents are informed about online safety issues and the School's strategies to safeguard pupils through correspondence, guidance in student planners and occasional events held at the School. See the School's Computer Use and e-Safety Policy for further information about the School's online safety strategy.

4.4.2 The display of the School's Anti-bullying Statement (written and designed by School Council) around the School

4.4.3 Anti-bullying messages in assemblies and other assemblies which encourage mutual respect and understanding and celebrate success

4.4.4 The 'Personal Responsibility, Behaviour and Discipline', 'Pupil Guidelines - Who Can Help You?' and 'Online Safety' sections in the Pupil Planner

4.4.5 The training of our Peer Supporters in how to be alert to and respond to bullying

4.4.6 Organising activities to mark national Anti-bullying week

4.4.7 Taking other opportunities to address the topic of bullying across the curriculum for example, in Drama, English Literature, History, Religious Studies

4.4.8 Setting up a system of Bus Buddies

4.5 **Staff guidance and training:** Staff guidance and training in all aspects of care is arranged on induction and at regular intervals thereafter to ensure that staff and volunteers have the necessary professional skills, especially:

- have an understanding of the groups who may be more vulnerable to bullying;
- awareness of the risks and indications of child abuse and bullying, and how to deal with cases
- there is adequate staff presence and supervision
- staff are actively involved with pupils when they are on duty
- measures are taken to avoid boredom and lack of purpose among pupils
- there is space available for pupils' quiet withdrawal
- good behaviour and discipline is maintained
- counselling skills (including bereavement)
- awareness of the risks of peer-on-peer abuse and how bullying may give rise to safeguarding concerns.

4.6 **Pupils' responsibilities:** We emphasise with senior pupils the role which is expected of them in setting a good example and being helpful to younger pupils and each other. This is particularly encouraged through the House System, Peer Support System and involvement of older pupils in helping to run Religious Societies and some extra-curricular activities.

4.7 **Record keeping and monitoring:** It is the responsibility of all teaching and pastoral staff to maintain records of the welfare and development of individual pupils in line with the School's policy on record keeping. In addition, every complaint or report of bullying must be reported by the Heads of Year to the Deputy Head and entered in the Incident File. Heads of Year and the Deputy Head keep the Incident File up-to-date. The Deputy Head monitors the Incident File at the end of each half term in order to enable patterns to be identified, both in relation to individual pupils and across the school as a whole and to evaluate the effectiveness of the School's approach. In the Junior School there is an Incident Concerns Sheet in each class file which is kept up to date by the Head of Juniors. There will be a full review of the policy at least annually. See paragraph 6 below.

4.8 **Why incidents might not be reported**

4.8.1 **Victim:** There are many reasons why a pupil who has suffered bullying may be reluctant to report it. She may become demoralised and may say, for example:

- it is telling tales. They won't believe me because the person I am complaining about is popular and I am not, and I will become even more unpopular;
- the things they are saying and doing are too embarrassing to discuss with an adult;
- it is all my fault anyway for being overweight / too studious etc;
- there are too many of them; there is nothing the staff can do;
- it will get back to my parents and they will think less of me;
- I will just try and toughen up and grow a thicker skin;
- I will lie low and not audition for a part in the school play etc.;
- The perpetrator's behaviour may become worse if I report it; or

- this is a normal part of growing up and going to school.

4.8.2 **Witnesses:** There are also reasons why a pupil who has witnessed or learned of bullying may not want to make a report. She may say:

- it is "grassing" and I will become unpopular;
- she is worried the perpetrator may turn on her;
- it is not my concern anyway; or
- I don't like the victim and I would find it embarrassing to be associated with her.

4.9 **Culture:** Any of these responses would be contrary to our culture at the School. When we drive and implement this policy we encourage every pupil to understand that:

- every complaint of bullying will be taken seriously;
- members of staff will deal with a complaint correctly and effectively in accordance with their experience and the training they have received;
- there is a solution to nearly every problem of bullying;
- a pupil who complains will receive support and advice and in many cases the problem can be dealt with on a no-names basis;
- the primary aim will be for the bullying to cease, not the punishment of the bully unless this is necessary; and
- we may need to support the bully as well so we can address the causes of bullying.

5 Procedures

5.1 **Guidelines:** The following procedures are a guideline except where expressed in the terms "should" or "must". The best guide is the experience and training of the staff.

5.2 Reporting bullying complaints

5.2.1 **Pupils:** A pupil who is being bullied, or who is worried about another pupil being bullied, should complain without delay and can do so in several ways. She can:

- tell her parents, her Form Tutor, Head of Year, the School Nurse, Peer Supporter, Deputy Head, Head of Juniors, Headmistress or any other member of staff or responsible older pupil
- place a note in the Worry Box (outside the School Nurse's room) or Chatterbox (outside the Junior Office)
- contact Childline (0800 1111)
- contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (Majella O'Hagan, 0161 203 2393) for advice.

5.2.2 **Parents:** Parents who are concerned that their child is being bullied should inform their child's Form tutor or Head of Year without delay.

5.2.3 **Staff:** This policy focuses mainly on the bullying of pupils by pupils although it is recognised that a staff member could be a victim and on occasion may be perceived to be guilty of bullying. The School has a zero tolerance of the bullying of staff whether by pupils or other colleagues. Staff members who are concerned about being bullied or harassed should refer to the guidance which is set out in the Staff Handbook (Grievance Procedure). Pupils and parents who feel that a member of staff is bullying should report this in accordance with the procedures set out above.

5.3 **Initial complaint:** Any member of staff who learns of alleged bullying should:

- (a) firstly, respond quickly and sensitively by offering advice, support and reassurance to the alleged victim. The member of staff should:
 - (i) listen carefully and keep an open mind;
 - (ii) not ask leading questions; and
 - (iii) reassure the child but not give a guarantee of confidentiality;
- (b) report the allegation to the Head of Year of the victim and the alleged bully as soon as possible.

5.3.2 The Head of Year must inform the Deputy Head and contact the relevant Form Tutor and other Head of Year (if applicable) to agree on a strategy, for dealing with the matter.

5.3.3 If the alleged bullying raises a safeguarding concern, the matter should be reported in accordance with the School's Child Protection Policy before further investigation is carried out.

5.4 **Assessment:** The pupil's Head of Year will normally see the victim and (unless the case is very serious) any witnesses without delay and form an initial view of the allegation. The assessment will consider:

- the nature of the incident(s) - physical? verbal? exclusionary? etc
- is it a "one-off" incident involving an individual or a group?
- is it part of a pattern of behaviour by an individual or a group?
- has physical injury been caused? Who should be informed? Parents? The School's child protection officer? Social Services? The police?
- can the alleged bully be questioned without disclosing the victim's identity?
- what is the likely outcome if the complaint proves to be correct?

At this stage, the possible outcomes for an incident which is not too serious include:

- there has been a misunderstanding which can be explained sympathetically to the alleged victim with advice to the alleged bully
- the complaint is justified in whole or in part, and further action will be needed (see Range of Action, below).

5.5 **Serious incident:** If at any stage the alleged bullying raises a safeguarding concern, the School's Child Protection Policy should be followed before further investigation is carried out.

Otherwise, in cases where the pupil's Head of Year believes that serious bullying:

- has occurred involving a pupil in his / her year
- has recurred after warnings have been given to the "bully"

he / she must inform the Headmistress and the School's Designated Person for Child Protection (currently Jen Baylis, Deputy Head (Senior School), Kathryn Burrows, Head of Junior School (Junior School)) The Designated Person will then:

- interview the alleged victim, bully and any witnesses separately, in order to establish the facts of the case. She may decide to ask the Head of Year to be present; and
- give a summary of her findings to the Headmistress and relevant Heads of Year.

5.6 Together with the Headmistress, the Deputy Head will decide on the action to be taken in accordance with the Range of Actions set out below The Headmistress will notify the parents of the victim and bully giving them details of the case and the action being taken. Such action may include further investigation in accordance with the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy and Expulsion, Removal and Review Policy.

5.7 **Range of Actions:** When a complaint is upheld the range of responses will include one or more of the following:

- advice and support for the victim and, where appropriate, establishing a course of action to help the victim, including support from external services where appropriate;
- consideration as to whether the bullying incident should be addressed as a safeguarding concern and if so, the School's Child Protection Policy will be followed;
- advice and support to the bully in trying to change her behaviour. This may include clear instructions and a warning or final warning;
- consideration of the motivation behind the bullying and whether external services should be used to tackle any underlying issues of the bully which contributed to the bullying behaviour. If these considerations lead to any safeguarding concerns relating to the bully, the School's child protection procedures will be followed;
- a supervised meeting between the bully and the victim to discuss their differences and the ways in which they may be able to avoid future conflict (with the victims express agreement);
- a disciplinary sanction against the bully, in accordance with the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy. In a very serious case or a case of persistent bullying, a pupil may, after a fair hearing, be required to leave the School permanently in accordance with the School's Expulsion, Removal and Review Policy. Any disciplinary action will be applied fairly, consistently and reasonably, taking into account any special educational needs or disabilities and the needs of vulnerable pupils;
- action to break up a 'power base';
- confiscation of mobile electronic devices, increased monitoring procedures or limiting access to the School's internet and email facilities if cyberbullying (see also the School's Acceptable Use Policy for Pupils);
- moving either the bully or victim to another form after consultation with the pupil, her parents and the relevant staff;
- involving social services or the police;

- notifying the parents of one or both pupils about the case and the action which has been taken;
- such other action as may appear to the Headmistress to be appropriate; and/or
- liaison between Heads of Year, the outcome being recorded in the Incident File.

5.8 Supporting those severely impacted by bullying

- 5.8.1 The School recognises that removing bullied pupils from school is disruptive and can make it difficult to reintegrate. The school understands in some circumstances however, the consequences of being bullied may have had a severe impact on a pupil's social, emotional or mental health and may have impacted seriously on a pupil's ability to learn. It will do all that is reasonably possible to ensure bullied pupils continue to attend school and maintain their educational progression by putting in place proportionate short term alternative on-site provision plans where necessary.
- 5.8.2 In the rare situation, where reintegration is not possible, the School will make other arrangements for the pupil to continue their education in another school.
- 5.8.3 If the pupil is considered to have significantly greater difficulty learning than the majority of those the same age, because of the impact of the bullying the School will consider whether the pupil will benefit from being assessed for SEN.

5.9 **Monitoring:** The position should be monitored for as long as necessary thereafter. Action may include:

- sharing information with some or all colleagues and with some pupils so that they may be alert to the need to monitor certain pupils closely;
- ongoing counselling and support;
- vigilance;
- mentioning the incident at appropriate staff meetings;
- reviewing vulnerable individuals and areas of the School.

6 Monitoring and Review

- 6.1 This Policy will be reviewed by the Deputy Head and revisions made on an annual basis, or more regularly as required and taking into account any advice published by the DfE together with the centralised records of any bullying incidents. In undertaking the review the Deputy Head will take into account the results of the monitoring as set out at section 4.7 above, as well as any changes in legislation and / or statutory guidance and other relevant information gathered (such as through a bullying survey).
- 6.2 The Board of Governors will consider the revisions made as part of its collective responsibility to carry out an annual review of safeguarding.

Appendix 1 Cyberbullying - guidance for pupils

- 1 Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using technology.
- 2 Pupils should remember the following:
 - 2.1 Use the security settings;
 - 2.2 Regularly change your password and keep it private;;
 - 2.3 Always respect others - be careful what you say online and what images you send;
 - 2.4 Think before you send - whatever you send can be made public very quickly and could stay online forever;
 - 2.5 If you or someone you know are being cyberbullied, TELL SOMEONE. You have the right not to be harassed or bullied online. Tell an adult you trust - your parents, any member of staff or volunteer, or a helpline such as ChildLine on 0800 1111;
 - 2.6 Don't retaliate or reply online;
 - 2.7 Save the evidence - learn how to keep records of offending messages, pictures or online conversations. Ask someone if you are unsure how to do this. This will help to show what is happening and can be used by the School to investigate the matter;
 - 2.8 Block the bully. Most social media websites and online or mobile services allow you to block someone who is behaving badly; and
 - 2.9 Don't do nothing - if you see cyberbullying going on, support the victim and report the bullying.
- 3 You may find the following websites helpful:
<http://www.childnet.com/young-people>
<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>
<https://www.childline.org.uk/Explore/Bullying/Pages/online-bullying.aspx>
- 4 Please see the School's Acceptable Use Policy for Pupils which sets out the School rules about the use of technology including mobile electronic devices.