

Widford Lodge

PREPARATORY SCHOOL



10a

Anti Bullying

This policy applies to all pupils at Widford Lodge School including those in the EYFS

**Reviewed and Approved by the Proprietor November 2025
Next Review November 2026**

This policy takes account of the Non-Statutory DfE advice 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (2017) and 'Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff' (2014).

We will not tolerate anti-social behaviour or bullying at Widford Lodge School. We treat both physical and emotional bullying seriously and take every measure to eradicate it. We understand that bullying can cause psychological damage. We are committed to providing a caring, friendly atmosphere and safe environment for all our pupils so that they can learn in a secure and supportive environment.

It is recognised that bullying in all its forms can take place in all schools. However, we believe that bullying is rare at Widford Lodge: staff are committed to identifying any that occurs as quickly as possible in order to take the necessary steps to eliminate it.

We recognise our responsibility to react appropriately to incidents of bullying occurring outside school that are reported to us. We understand the need to treat a bullying incident as a child protection concern where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is a priority, but we recognise that emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical and that we have to make judgements about each specific case.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group physically or emotionally. It can happen anywhere, both in and out of school. We will, however, respond appropriately to a single incident and record it to enable us to monitor patterns.

Bullying can take various forms and may occur directly or through cyber technology (social media, websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email). It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, including protected characteristics, for example:

- Racial/Religious/Cultural – where someone is made to feel inferior because of their background, culture, religion.
- Sexual/sexist – bullying based on something specifically linked to gender.
- Bullying based on sexual orientation/LGBT.
- SEND – any exploitation of a particular aspect of a child's disability and/or special educational needs.
- Family circumstances - because a child is adopted, is in care or is a carer.

Bullying on the basis of protected characteristics will be taken particularly seriously by Widford Lodge and will be documented as such in our records, to help us monitor our success with instilling values of tolerance and respect and actively promoting the wellbeing of pupils.

Bullying can include name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, pushing, taking belongings, inappropriate touching, producing offensive graffiti, spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours or regularly excluding someone from groups or games. It is also bullying when a young person is pressured to act against their will by others

or is harassed by unwanted conduct, which violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile and degrading or humiliating environment.

Bullying can have a negative life-long impact both physically and emotionally. It can make it difficult for children to learn and can have a lasting detrimental effect on their lives. Young people who have been bullied can become anxious and withdrawn, depressed or aggressive. Some turn to substance misuse as a way of dealing with it emotionally and, at worst, bullying has been a factor in suicide. (Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.)

Cyberbullying is generally criminal in character and the Communications Act (2003) and the Protection from Harassment Act (1997) make instances of cyberbullying offences. Examples of cyberbullying include via the internet, mobile phones, emails, social networks, gaming, texts, use of images and video.

Perpetrators of bullying can have control over the relationship with the victims which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. This imbalance of power can be physical, psychological, derive from an intellectual imbalance or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate.

We recognise that low level disruption and the use of offensive language can have a significant impact and that, if left unchallenged or dismissed as banter, it can lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. We therefore aim to intervene early to help set clear expectations of behaviour that is and isn't acceptable to help stop negative behaviour escalating.

We have considered the guidance on sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and have made staff aware of how such instances could constitute bullying and therefore fall within the remit of this policy.

Signs And Symptoms Of Bullying

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a child:

- Is unwilling to go to school
- Is frequently absent from school
- Regularly has homework which is not done or lost
- Changes his or her usual routine
- Becomes anxious, withdrawn or is lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries him or herself to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to achieve less well in school work
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions which are damaged or 'go missing'
- Asks for money or other money continually lost
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises

- Changes eating patterns
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous or jumpy when a cyber message is received
- Is evasive or gives improbable excuses in relation to any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems or circumstances, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Prevention Strategies

The school promotes good citizenship and respect for everyone within its community in the following ways:

- The school has a clear policy which is available to parents on the school website and helps parents feel confident that the school will take any complaint about bullying seriously
- At the beginning of every school year, pupils are reminded how to deal with bullying if it occurs and of the part they play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders
- Staff and older pupils are expected to create an environment of good behaviour and respect, where they offer support and encouragement
- The school recognises and rewards evidence of respect and kindness within the school community e.g. Politeness and Courtesy Cup, house tokens and golden stars, Wenley Cup and 'Special Mentions' etc. Celebrating success is an important way of creating a positive school ethos
- The school's HEART values (honesty, empathy, acts of kindness, respect and tenacity) are embedded into school life via assemblies, class rules, Heart to Heart teas and praise
- The school uses curriculum activities such as PSHEE, stories, drama and literature to help children to understand the issues surrounding bullying
- Whole school assemblies at Widford regularly explore issues concerning respect for others
- Assemblies, PHSEE lessons, wellbeing lessons and discussions about the differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice based language
- The school will use opportunities during the year e.g. Anti-Bullying Week to promote a supportive environment
- The school community is organised in such a way as to minimise opportunities for bullying
- The staff will not use any teaching materials or equipment which might give a negative view of any group because of their ethnic origin, religious beliefs, gender, special needs/disabilities etc
- Staff will receive appropriate training to raise their awareness of the issue of bullying, including cyberbullying, so that they are better equipped to take action to reduce the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely. Staff understand their legal responsibilities and there are procedures in place so that it is easy to report bullying and the action to be taken to resolve and prevent problems is defined. Staff are also aware how to obtain support and the school would invest in specialised skills to understand the needs of pupils as necessary
- Disciplinary sanctions are implemented that reflect the seriousness of an incident and convey a deterrent effect

- By signing the parent contract, parents agree to the partnership between school and home with regard to reducing incidents of bullying and to reinforce the value of good behaviour at home
- Pupils know that they are listened to and incidents are followed up.

Cyberbullying

Additional preventative measures in addition to those detailed above;

- Our Computing lessons include making pupils aware of what is available on the internet and the associated risks
- The school provides age appropriate information to pupils about grooming, inappropriate websites and sharing information and photographs
- Parents are invited to attend internet safety presentations at school to support their understanding of cyber issues
- Parents and pupils sign an internet safety agreement
- The school limits children's access to technology by ensuring: they are always supervised whilst using computers and devices; there are adequate filters; and pupils do not bring their own phones or devices to school. Children are introduced to cyber etiquette through the use of the school's virtual learning environment (Microsoft Teams)
- The school has a separate policy covering the use of mobile phones, cameras and devices by staff, pupils and parents
- We regularly evaluate our approach to take account of developments in technology.

Please see our e-Safety policy, available to parents on the school website.

Records of Early Stages of Potential Bullying and Bullying Incidents

Staff keep records of concerns or incidents which could potentially be early stages of bullying, on our electronic system CPOMS. Records of incidents of bullying are logged and recorded on the sheets attached as Appendices to this policy. All of these records are kept and monitored by senior leadership so patterns of behaviour can be identified and addressed as necessary.

The Role of Staff When Reacting to a Case of Bullying

It is essential that all members of staff contribute to creating a school ethos which does not tolerate bullying and minimises the likelihood of incidents ever occurring.

- Staff must ensure they have read and understand this policy and know their legal responsibilities
- Staff will be aware of and exploit aspects of the curriculum and wider aspects of school life where they can embrace the topic of bullying, including its dangers, how to prevent it and steps to take when it occurs
- Any incidents of bullying will be dealt with in line with our Policy for the Promotion of Good Behaviour and Sanctions for Misbehaviour
- Teachers in our school take all forms of bullying seriously and are aware of the school policy, through training on how to intervene to prevent incidents from taking place
- We will deal quickly, firmly and fairly with any complaints about bullying. The incident is recorded using the anti-bullying report sheets found at the end of this policy

Statements/report forms for the victim(s), witnesses, alleged bully and the investigating member(s) of staff must be completed by the respective individuals

- This provides evidence of the event(s). All documentation is reviewed by the Headteacher. All reported incidents are logged in the school 'Bullying Incidents Folder'
- If teachers witness an act of bullying, they do all they can to support the child who is being bullied
- Staff are aware of the possible need to refer to the school's safeguarding policy for incidents of bullying
- Staff will respond to reports of bullying incidents occurring outside school as well as inside school
- Staff understand that some children are more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others, including those with special educational needs or disabilities and that they need to be alert to this potential issue.

Records of bullying are kept and monitored so patterns of behaviour can be identified and the effectiveness of the school's approach can be evaluated.

The Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will be informed of any incidents of bullying and will ensure that all incidents are thoroughly investigated and properly logged. The Headteacher will then work with the staff to ensure an investigation takes place in every case and each situation is treated seriously. At the end of any investigation the Headteacher will hold separate discussions with the child making the allegations and the alleged bully about what has happened and how the school will support them moving forward. These discussions will always be held with another member of the school leadership team present. If appropriate, a further discussion with both children together will take place to summarise and support the move forward. If bullying is found to have definitely occurred, the parents of any children involved will be contacted and informed of what action the school is to take by the Headteacher. Sanctions imposed will reflect the seriousness of the incident and convey a deterrent effect but will be kept confidential.

The Headteacher will ensure that all staff undertake appropriate training in taking action against bullying.

The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is part of the Senior Leadership team and is aware of the potential links between incidents of bullying and child protection concerns and of the thresholds for reporting bullying issues to external agencies, such as the police or Essex Safeguarding Children Board. A bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. The details completed by staff relating to concerns or incidents involving children are sent electronically by CPOMS to the Designated Safeguarding Lead whenever there are potential issues involving children being unkind to one another, in order that child on child abuse is considered.

The Role of the Senior Leadership Team

The main roles of the Senior Leadership Team in respect of bullying are:

- Managing and monitoring practices to ensure alignment with the school's anti-bullying policy and procedures
- Maintaining a clear overview of the incidence of bullying and the school's anti-bullying prevention and response strategies
- Liaison with the Headteacher and between all parties involved, including parents
- Ensuring that staff receive appropriate training regarding the school's anti bullying procedures and that, where appropriate, specialist help is secured to understand the needs of particular groups of pupils eg those with disabilities or LGBT pupils
- Ensuring that incident reports are completed by staff in all cases and that a copy is stored in the Bullying Incident file
- On a regular basis, analysis of the Bullying Incident file/CPOMS so that patterns and trends can be identified and the analysis used to improve policy and practice
- Promotion and co-ordination of anti-bullying initiatives and projects both within the curriculum and in the wider aspects of school life
- Deployment of appropriate strategies to ensure that bullies change their behaviour.

The Role of parents

- Look for unusual behaviour in your child
- Always take an active role in your child's education. Enquire how their day has gone, who they have spent time with and what they did at break times
- If your child tells you that they may have witnessed bullying, advise them to speak to a teacher. If they don't do this, contact a member of school staff
- If you feel your child may have been a victim of bullying, inform your child's form teacher immediately. Your concern will be taken seriously
- It is important that you advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse
- Tell your child that it is not their fault if they are bullied
- Make sure your child is fully aware of the school policy on bullying.

We support the victims in the following ways as appropriate:

- By offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience with their form teacher or another teacher of their choice
- Informing the victim's parents
- By offering continuing support when they feel they need it and suggesting counselling as appropriate
- Arranging for them to be escorted to and from the school premises
- By providing for a child's short term and long lasting difficulties that may arise from bullying
- We recognise that we need to do all we can to ensure bullied children continue to attend school and to feel safe there
- By taking one or more of the seven disciplinary steps described below to prevent more bullying.

Advice to children at Widford who consider they are being bullied

- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied and that it is wrong
- Be proud of who you are. It is good to be individual
- Try not to show that you are upset. It is hard, but a bully thrives on fear
- Stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers
- Be assertive. Walk confidently away
- Go straight to a teacher or member of staff and tell them what is happening to you. They will discuss strategies with you to help yourself and how to get support. The teachers will take you seriously and will deal with the situation in a way which will end the bullying
- Fighting back may make things worse.

Advice to children who witness bullying at Widford

- Take action. Watching and doing nothing can look as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and alone
- If you feel you cannot help on your own, tell a member of staff
- Do not pretend to be friends with the bully; make it clear that what they are doing is wrong.

We discipline and counsel the bullies in the following ways

Disciplinary steps (applied in accordance with the school's Policy for the Promotion of Good Behaviour and Sanctions for Misbehaviour and applied fairly, consistently and reasonably, taking into account any special educational needs or disabilities and the needs of vulnerable pupils)

- The bully/bullies will be warned officially to stop offending
- The parents of the bully/bullies will be informed of their behaviour
- They may be excluded from particular areas of the school or from the school premises at break/lunchtimes/after school activities
- They may be prevented from taking part in fixtures/trips/activities
- If they do not stop bullying they will be suspended for a minor fixed period (one or two days)
- If they continue to bully they will be suspended for a major fixed period (up to five days)
- If they continue to bully they will be excluded.

Counselling

- By talking about what happened, to discover why they got involved
- By working with the bully/bullies to encourage them to develop a more mature and respectful attitude towards others in the future
- To help them learn how they can take steps to repair the damage and harm they have caused.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed every year and/or whenever there is a serious incident of bullying.



PLEASE NOTE THIS FORM IS DOUBLE SIDED
Record of Interview with Alleged Bully

Name	Class	Date
Record of conversation		
Staff member responsible		
Recorded on CPOMS - date		



Record of interview with alleged victim

Name	Class	Date
Record of conversation		
Staff member responsible		
Recorded on CPOMS - date		



Record of Interview with Witness
Complete one for each witness

Name	Class	Date
Record of conversation		
Staff member responsible		
Recorded on CPOMS - date		



Record of action taken following discussions.

Action taken following discussions with all involved:

Parents contacted	Yes/No	Date	
Any follow up required:			
Any intervention or support required:			
Headteacher Signature		Date	