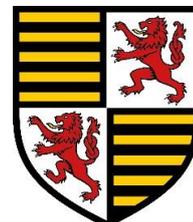


# WARMINSTER SCHOOL



1707

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Date of Issue: 1 September 2020

Date of Review: 31 August 2021

Responsible Person: Deputy Head

### **The aims and objectives of this policy are:**

- to embed a culture which is hostile to bullying
- to develop in the individual a sense of self-esteem which will encourage positive personal development
- to instil an awareness of the importance of tolerance and respect within a community of diverse nationalities, cultures and beliefs
- to react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way

It is therefore essential that neither physical nor verbal abuse of other people is acceptable at Warminster School and it is the responsibility of everyone to prevent it happening. Bullying of pupils is taken seriously; incidents are recorded and appropriate action taken.

This policy has taken regard of information in “Preventing and tackling bullying”, Advice for School leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies 2011 and KCSIE September 2020.

### **Definition**

Bullying may be defined as “behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally”. This definition covers bullying which is racial or racist, religious, cultural, sexual or sexist, homophobic, or relating to special educational needs, disability or cyber-bullying (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email). It is important to stress that it is the perception of the victim and not the perpetrator that matters; too often perpetrators pass off their behaviour as banter.

Bullying therefore includes:

- being called names
- being teased because of disability or special educational needs
- being pushed or pulled about, hit or attacked
- having your bag and other possessions taken and thrown around
- having rumours spread about you
- being ignored and left out
- being forced to hand over money or possessions
- having racial or racist remarks made about you
- having sexual or sexist remarks made about you
- being attacked or teased or called names because of your religion or culture
- being attacked or teased or called names because of your sexuality
- the use of social networking sites, text messages photographs or emails deliberately to cause distress

In order to support this policy it is essential that staff are robust in dealing with all incidences of bullying as soon as they are observed.

Bullying can cause psychological damage to the individual or group and is taken very seriously at Warminster School. It is considered as a form of abuse and a referral may be made to social services if the incident is deemed serious enough. There are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour. The police would be consulted in these cases.

All our pupils have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Staff recognise that while both boys and girls can abuse their peers, it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators of such abuse. Peer on peer abuse is not tolerated, passed off as “banter” or seen as “part of growing up”.

It is likely to include, but not limited to:

- bullying (including cyber bullying)
- gender based violence/sexual assaults
- sexting or
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

Consequently, peer on peer abuse is dealt with as a safeguarding concern and **not** managed through the systems set out in the school behaviour policy. All concerns of this nature will be reported to the Deputy Head/DSL who will seek guidance from the local children safeguarding board.

## **PROCEDURE TO BE USED IN THE EVENT OF A BULLYING INCIDENT**

1. All cases of suspected bullying should be reported in the first instance to the Tutor or the relevant Head of House and Housemaster/Housemistress, in the case of boarders.
2. All suspected incidences of bullying should be recorded using myconcern. The names of both victim(s) and perpetrator(s), details of the incident and any actions taken must be included. Alternatively a bullying form, available in the Staff Room, should be completed and copied as detailed. (A sample form is in the Appendix at the back of the Handbook)
3. The Heads of Houses and Assistant Head Pastoral & Boarding must be kept fully informed in order to enable any developing patterns of bullying to be identified.
4. The Deputy Head/Head of Prep will deal with all serious instances of bullying in consultation with the Headmaster. Records of these incidents are kept in the Pastoral file in the Deputy Head's/Head of Prep's office.
5. The usual range of sanctions outlined in the Discipline and Behaviour policy can be used in dealing with bullying, although in most cases counselling for the bully and the victim will be the most helpful.

In very serious cases exclusion either on a temporary or permanent basis may have to be considered.

The Heads of Houses have much experience of working with pupils to try to eradicate any bullying. Tutors work with pupils both through the Life Skills/PSHE programme and also through regular one-to-one meetings with their pupils. These enable Tutors to establish rapport and an effective conduit for pupils to voice any concerns.

In order to support this policy it is essential that pupils are fully aware of what is not acceptable. Year assemblies are used to highlight bullying issues and there is an inclusive ethos expected from the pupils. The School Chaplain delivers regular addresses to the school promoting inclusion of people of all abilities and nationalities. The Headmaster/Head of Prep also regularly addresses the school to raise awareness of the issues surrounding bullying, for instance during ‘National Anti-Bullying Week’ which is exploited annually as

an opportunity to explore the issue. Through Drama, current affairs, projects, literature and Religious Education discussions, staff are able to address bullying and prejudice in a variety of ways. Student questionnaires are used to assess the effectiveness of this policy.

In addition staff awareness training takes place to ensure that all are fully aware of this policy and how to take action to reduce the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely to occur.

Boarders are aware of what is not acceptable; no initiation ceremonies are allowed. Boarders' questionnaires and discussions with boarding staff have not identified bullying as a problem within the school.

Pupils are aware of the support network available to either the victim or the bully so that they are suitably supported and given help and guidance.

## **PUPIL SUPPORT SYSTEMS**

In addition to help provided by staff and friends the School Counsellor is available to offer confidential advice and support. The School and House Prefects are also available to support other pupils in the event of bullying.

## **INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES**

### **Parents**

Parents and families have an important part to play in helping us deal with bullying.

First, discourage your son/daughter from using bullying behaviour at home or elsewhere. Show him/her how to resolve the difficult situations without using violence or aggression.

Second, ensure you and your son/daughter are conversant with the anti-bullying policy.

Third, watch out for signs that your son/daughter is being bullied, or is bullying others.

Parents and families are often the first to detect that a problem exists. Don't dismiss it. Contact the school immediately if you are worried.

### **If your child has been bullied:**

- calmly talk with your son or daughter about his/her experience
- make a note of what he/she says - particularly who was said to be involved; how often the bullying has occurred; where it happened and what has happened
- reassure him/her that he/she has done the right thing to tell you about the bullying and discuss with him/her how he/she would like the problem to be tackled
- if he/she considers the school should be informed, contact your son's/daughter's Housemistress/Housemaster or Tutor

### **Talking with staff about bullying**

- try to stay calm - bear in mind that the member of staff may have no idea that your son/ daughter is being bullied or may have heard conflicting accounts of an incident
- be as specific as possible about what your son/daughter says has happened - give dates, places and names of other children involved
- make a note of what action the school intends to take
- stay in touch with the school. Let them know if things improve as well as if problems continue

## **If you are not satisfied**

Families who feel that their concerns are not being addressed appropriately by the school might like to consider making an appointment to discuss the matter with the Deputy Head/Head of Prep or the Headmaster.

## **If your son/daughter is bullying other children**

Many children may be involved in bullying other pupils at some time or other. Often parents are not aware that their child is involved in bullying.

### **Children sometimes bully others because:**

- they don't know it is wrong
- they are copying older brothers or sisters or other people in the family whom they admire
- they haven't learnt other, better ways of mixing with their school friends
- their friends encourage them to bully
- they are going through a difficult time and are acting out aggressive feelings

### **To stop your son/daughter from bullying others**

- talk with your son/daughter, explain that what he/she is doing is unacceptable and makes other pupils unhappy
- discourage other members of your family from bullying behaviour or from using aggression or force to get what they want
- show your son/daughter how she can join in with other pupils without bullying.
- make an appointment to see your son/daughter's Housemistress/Housemaster/Tutor/Head of School, or explain the problems your child is experiencing; discuss how you and the School can stop him/her bullying others
- regularly check with your son/daughter how things are going at school

## **Cyberbullying Policy**

### **Definition**

**Cyberbullying can be defined as the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else.**

The advent of cyberbullying adds a new and worrying dimension to the problem of bullying – there's no safe haven for the person being bullied. 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.

- **text message bullying** involves sending unwelcome texts that are threatening or cause discomfort
- **picture/video-clip bullying via mobile phone cameras** is used to make the person being bullied feel threatened or embarrassed, with images usually sent to other people. 'Happy slapping' involves filming and sharing physical attacks

- **sexting is not allowed.** If this should happen students need to be aware that the police may be involved. All images would need to be removed from all devices at the earliest opportunity, whether it is the school devices or a personal device. The student involved may well have their phone confiscated and searched if appropriate. Parents would always be informed.
- **phone call bullying via mobile phone** uses silent calls or abusive messages. Sometimes the bullied person's phone is stolen and used to harass others, who then think the phone owner is responsible. As with all mobile phone bullying, the perpetrators often disguise their numbers, sometimes using someone else's phone to avoid being identified
- **email bullying** uses email to send bullying or threatening messages, often using a pseudonym for anonymity or using someone else's name to pin the blame on them
- **chat room bullying** involves sending menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chat room
- **bullying through instant messaging such as Whatsapp and Snapchat** is an Internet-based form of bullying where children and young people are sent unpleasant messages as they conduct real-time conversations online

**Bullying via websites** includes the use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal polling sites. There has also been a significant increase in social networking sites for young people, which can provide new opportunities for cyberbullying.

### How extensive is the problem?

According to national statistics:

- between a fifth and a quarter of students had been cyberbullied at least once over the previous few months
- phone calls, text messages and email were the most common
- there was more cyberbullying outside school than in
- girls are more likely than boys to be involved in cyberbullying in school, usually by phone
- for boys, text messaging is the most usual form, followed by picture/video clip or website bullying
- picture/video clip and phone call bullying were perceived as most harmful.
- website and text bullying were equated in impact to other forms of bullying

Around a third of those bullied told no one about the bullying.

### Who is most vulnerable?

Because of the anonymity that new communications technologies offer, anyone with a mobile phone or Internet connection can be a target for cyberbullying. What's more, bullies can reach much larger numbers within a peer group than they can with conventional bullying. Vindictive comments posted on a website, for instance, can be seen by a large audience, as can video clips sent by mobile phone.

Most cyberbullying is done by students in the same class or year group. Although it leaves no visible scars, cyberbullying of all types can be extremely destructive.

### What can you do about it?

While other forms of bullying remain prevalent, cyberbullying is already a significant issue for many young people. School staff, parents and young people need to work together to prevent this and to tackle it whenever it occurs.

Schools have a duty to ensure that:

- bullying via mobile phone or the Internet is included in their mandatory anti-bullying policies, that these policies are regularly updated, and that teachers have sufficient knowledge to deal with cyberbullying in school
- the curriculum teaches pupils about the risks of new communications technologies, the consequences of their misuse, and how to use them safely
- all e communication using the school servers either on or off site are monitored
- clear policies are set about the use of mobile phones at school and at other times when young people are under the school's authority
- internet blocking technologies are continually updated and harmful sites blocked
- they work with pupils and parents to make sure new communications technologies are used safely, taking account of local and national guidance and good practice
- security systems are in place to prevent images and information about pupils and staff being accessed improperly from outside school
- they work with police and other partners on managing cyberbullying

### **Accessible help**

- A quarter of the young people who had been cyberbullied said that knowing how to get hold of and speak to an expert at dealing with cyberbullying would have made a difference
- Knowing there was a staff member at school dedicated to stopping bullying was cited by 15% as a help
- 13% said that knowing of a website with advice and tips would have helped them

### **NCH/Tesco Mobile survey, 2005**

#### **A key way of supporting children who are being bullied is to establish good links between schools and counselling organisations.**

- Make sure parents are kept informed of the School policies so that they can be applied at home as well as at school. Ensure that parents know about the School's rights to monitor their child's e-communications
- [www.beatbullying.org](http://www.beatbullying.org) has useful information and resources for parents and families, young people and teachers, including ideas for schools to consider to combat bullying
- <http://cybermentors.org.uk> runs a scheme that allows victims to talk to people of the same age who have experienced bullying either as a victim or reformed bully

### **As a Member of Staff**

Make sure you're familiar with your role and responsibilities in:

- teaching children safe Internet etiquette
- applying School policy in monitoring electronic messages and images
- taking action if a pupil is being cyberbullied or is bullying someone else
- teaching pupils the value of e-communications and the risks and consequences of improper use, including the legal implications

### **Useful Advice for Staff/Tutors**

#### **If you discover a pupil is being bullied by phone or the Internet:**

- remind them that bullying is never their fault. It can be stopped and it can usually be traced
- don't ignore the bullying. Encourage pupils to tell someone they trust, such as a teacher or parent, or call an advice line

- encourage pupils to try to keep calm. If they are frightened, encourage them to try to show it as little as possible. Don't get angry, it will only make the person bullying you more likely to continue

Please ensure that your concerns are passed immediately to the relevant Head of School or the Deputy Head.

There's plenty of online advice on how to react to cyberbullying. For example, [www.digizen.org](http://www.digizen.org) has some useful tips:

### **Text/video messaging/phone calls/emails/web bullying/chat rooms and instant messaging – advice for pupils and information for Staff**

You can easily stop receiving text messages for a while by turning off incoming messages for a couple of days. This might stop the person texting you by making them believe you've changed your phone number.

If the bullying persists, you can change your phone number. Ask your mobile service provider.

Don't reply to abusive or worrying text or video messages. Your mobile service provider will have a number for you to ring or text to report phone bullying. Visit their website for details.

Don't delete messages from cyberbullies. You don't have to read them, but you should keep them as evidence.

Text harassment is a crime. If the calls are simply annoying, tell a teacher, parent or carer. If they are threatening or malicious and they persist, report them to the police, taking with you all the messages you've received.

### **Phone calls**

- If you get an abusive or silent phone call, don't hang up immediately. Instead, put the phone down and walk away for a few minutes. Then hang up or turn your phone off. Once they realise they can't get you rattled, callers usually get bored and stop bothering you
- Always tell someone else: a teacher, youth worker, mum or dad, or carer. Get them to support you and monitor what's going on
- Don't give out personal details such as your phone number to just anyone. And never leave your phone lying around. When you answer your phone, just say 'hello', not your name. If they ask you to confirm your phone number, ask what number they want and then tell them if they've got the right number or not
- You can use your voicemail to vet your calls. A lot of mobiles display the caller's number. See if you recognise it. If you don't, let it divert to voicemail instead of answering it. And don't leave your name on your voicemail greeting. You could get an adult to record your greeting. Their voice might stop the caller ringing again.
- Almost all calls nowadays can be traced
- If the problem continues, think about changing your phone number
- If you receive calls that scare or trouble you, make a note of the times and dates and report them to the police. If your mobile can record calls, take the recording too

### **Emails**

- Never reply to unpleasant or unwanted emails ('flames') — the sender wants a response, so don't give them that satisfaction
- Keep the emails as evidence. And tell an adult about them
- Ask an adult to contact the sender's Internet Service Provider (ISP)

- Never reply to someone you don't know, even if there's an option to 'unsubscribe'. Replying simply confirms your email address as a real one

## **Web bullying**

If the bullying is on a school website, tell a teacher or parent, just as you would if the bullying were face-to-face.

If you don't know the owner of the website, follow one of the online safety links below to find out how to get more information about the owner.

## **Chat rooms and instant messaging**

- Never give out your name, address, phone number, school name or password online. It's a good idea to use a nickname. And don't give out photos of yourself
- Don't accept emails or open files from people you don't know
- Remember it might not just be people your own age in a chat room
- Stick to public areas in chat rooms and get out if you feel uncomfortable
- Tell your parents or carers if you feel uncomfortable or worried about anything that happens in a chat room
- Think carefully about what you write; don't leave yourself open to bullying

## **Four steps to stay out of harm's way**

1. Respect other people - online and off. Don't spread rumours about people or share their secrets, including their phone numbers and passwords.
2. Respect yourself. Do not do or say things which you may later regret.
3. If someone insults you online or by phone, stay calm – and ignore them.
4. 'Do as you would be done by.' Think how you would feel if you were bullied. You're responsible for your own behaviour – make sure you don't distress other people or cause them to be bullied by someone else.

## **The law is on your side**

The **Protection from Harassment Act**, the **Malicious Communications Act 1988** and the **Communications Act 2003** may be used to combat cyberbullying. People may be fined or sent to prison for up to six months.

## **Useful Cyberbullying links**

[www.beatbullying.com](http://www.beatbullying.com)

[www.cybermentors.org.uk](http://www.cybermentors.org.uk) [www.digizen.org](http://www.digizen.org)

[www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)