



Watford Grammar School for Girls

Anti-bullying policy

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Committee Responsible	Education

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1. Purpose, scope and links:

The purposes of this policy are:

1. To outline the key principles which underpin work to prevent and respond to bullying at WGGS.
2. To define what is understood by bullying at WGGS.
3. To outline approaches which may be used to respond to incidents of bullying.

This policy should be used to inform all responses to bullying.

The policy should be read alongside these documents:

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Drugs and alcohol policy, as appropriate
- Equalities policy

There are several pieces of legislation which set out measures and actions for schools in response to bullying, as well as criminal and civil law. These may include (but are not limited to):

- The Education and Inspection Act 2006, 2011
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children Act 1989
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986

An appendix outlines the principles and practice which will be applied in instances of violent behaviour, or incidents where a student experiences offensive behaviour as a result of one of their protected characteristics.

2. Key principles

WGGS recognises that all students have the right to feel safe and secure when they come to school. Everyone in the school community has the right to feel free from any threat of bullying or harassment. Students should also feel safe from reprisals when reporting incidents to members of staff. It is necessary that we at WGGS apply this policy fairly and consistently to all students and that all students have the right to have their concerns heard and valued and be informed as to the outcome of an investigation.

There are many definitions of bullying, but most people consider it to be:

- behaviour which is intended to cause distress
- behaviour which is repeated
- a situation where there is an imbalance of power between the perpetrator of bullying and the target

Bullying takes many forms, none of which is tolerated at this school. It can be physical or emotional. The responsibility for dealing with bullying is shared by everyone in the school community; those who do not bully need to help, encourage and support those who are.

Resolution of incidents must involve both the victim and the aggressor. Those who do bully need to understand the effect their actions have upon others and be helped to modify their behaviour accordingly.

3. Definitions of types of bullying

The school recognises the following forms of bullying. In each case, it is important that the unacceptable behaviour on the part of the perpetrator is repeated for it to be deemed bullying. A one-off instance of unacceptable behaviour still needs to be challenged, but should not be regarded as bullying.

- a) Written – cyber bullying (insults contained in online conversations, or comments posted on social media); note-passing; threatening letters; graffiti; the defacing of property belonging to another individual, or any other method designed to intimidate or hurt. The school will not become involved in cases of cyberbullying that do not occur directly on the school premises or in school time or during school related activity. In all other instances the school will act in an advisory capacity.
- b) Verbal - comments made directly to the victim or to another member of the school community concerning the victim – these may be racist, sexist, homophobic remarks; any words used in a sexual manner designed to hurt or cause offence; comments about size and appearance, including hair colour and odour; comments about clothing; academic or other abilities; comments about any perceived disability or weaknesses; comments about home life; or comments about social circumstance or financial circumstances.
- c) Intentional psychological pressure – social exclusion; looks and glares; lying; slander; passing or starting rumours; name calling; reorganising or pressurising friendship groups or any other activity designed to intimidate or hurt an individual, including use of ICT.
- d) Incitement or intimidation of others to become involved in bullying.
- e) Interference with another individual – theft; extortion; vandalism; defacing or interfering with property; ruining games; blackmail or any other activity designed to intimidate or hurt, including verbal threats and interfering with possessions.
- f) Physical – assault, pushing, shouldering, elbowing, tripping, slapping, kicking, hair pulling, spitting, unacceptable touching (including that of a sexual nature), throwing missiles, blocking (preventing passage or movement on the school site), pinching, punching, stabbing, burning or other physical activity that is used in a way that hurts or makes another person feel threatened or intimidated.
- g) Emotional – controlling or manipulating someone.
- h) Any incident which the victim perceives as targeting them because of a protected characteristic (see appendix one)

4. School Action:

Regardless of the nature of the incidents, reports of bullying are always investigated and appropriate action is taken.

4.1. Responsibilities:

- Any member of staff who has bullying reported to them, or who witnesses bullying, should act on this at once. In some cases, it may be appropriate for the individual member of staff to deal with the bullying which has occurred, or the member of staff may choose to seek the support of a HoD, HoY, or member of SLT. In all cases, the member of staff should record the incident on CPOMS.
- Any bullying incident which raises urgent safeguarding concerns should also be raised in person with a member of the DSP team.
- When bullying includes behaviour which targets a protected characteristic, this will be recorded on CPOMS with the 'protected characteristic' box checked.

4.2. Approaches to victim and perpetrator:

Each incident of bullying is different, and staff dealing with an incident will need to use professional judgement about the exact course of action to be followed. It is important, however, that support is offered to the student who has been bullied, and that work is undertaken with the perpetrator to address the behaviour.

The following approaches may be considered.

Students who have been bullied may be supported in some of these ways:

- By being offered reassurance, and the chance to speak about the experience with a member of staff.
- By being given advice about what to do should the bullying behaviour reoccur e.g. keep a record, take screenshots if cyberbullying etc.
- As necessary, through the provision of more sustained pastoral support in school or via referral to other agencies.

In working with perpetrators, the following may be appropriate:

- Discussing what happened, establishing the concern and the need to change.
- Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude and behaviour of the child.
- Applying a sanction, in line with the school behaviour policy.
- Providing appropriate education about the consequences of bullying behaviour.
- Requiring the student to delete online content.

4.3. Bullying prevention

The school will raise awareness amongst pupils of how to identify and challenge bullying using:

- school and year group assemblies
- materials used in PACE
- the School Council
- information to parents/carers and students
- the school website

4.4. Monitoring

The Senior Leadership Team will annually review data about the incidence of bullying in the school. Student perceptions of the level of bullying in school, and the effectiveness of staff responses, will be gathered via the Pupil Evaluation Form.

This policy will be reviewed biennially.

Appendix – Violent incidents, and those involving protected characteristics

This appendix outlines the principles and practice of the school with regard to violent incidents, and those in which behaviour is directed towards a student because of a protected characteristic. It is included in this policy for reference, as bullying may contain these elements. Not all bullying will be violent or target a student because of a protected characteristic; neither are all violent incidents, or those involving behaviour directed towards a student because of a protected characteristic, part of a pattern of bullying. The school is clear however: offensive behaviour towards a student which focuses on a protected characteristic, and violence, are always wrong; and they have no place in this community.

1. Incidents in which poor behaviour by one student towards another targets a protected characteristic

The Equality Act of 2010 recognises nine protected characteristics and affords protection against discrimination based on these. The characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

WGGS wholeheartedly supports the spirit of this Act, and is clear that behaviour which targets an individual on account of one or more of these characteristics is always unacceptable. Diversity is recognised, shared and celebrated both formally and informally. Through the curriculum, PACE, assemblies, daily relationships in and out of the classroom, and the overall ethos of the school, we aim to give all pupils a sense of belonging to a school community which considers everyone as of equal worth.

All complaints of behaviour by a student which targets another student on account of one or more of the protected characteristics – whether one-off or repeated- will be investigated and recorded on CPOMS. If a complaint is made about discriminatory behaviour by a member of staff, this should be referred immediately to the Headteacher, who will respond in line with the Disciplinary Policy.

2. Violent behaviour

Incidents of violent or aggressive behaviour can have a devastating impact upon students. These are taken seriously and will always be investigated, whether they are one-off or form part of a pattern of bullying. Students who act in a violent and aggressive manner will be required to understand the negative aspects of their behaviour and where it is appropriate, their parents will be informed.