Watford Grammar School for Girls

Anti-bullying policy

This policy reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team	October 2021
Next review date	October 2023
Committee Responsible	Curriculum

Contents

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, carried out by pupils towards other pupils or towards an adult.

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):

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021
- 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. (See Appendix 1)

g) Emotional – controlling or manipulating someone.

h) Any incident which the victim perceives as targeting them because of a protected characteristic (see Appendix 2)

i) Sexual harassment or sexual violence (See Appendix 3)

j) Peer on peer abuse should be considered alongside the Child Protection Policy. Examples can be found in Appendix 4.

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 and Forum
- Externally provided workshops i.e. Stand up in Year 8
- Annual awareness campaigns
- 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. Analysis will be reported to Governors on a termly basis.

This policy will be reviewed biennially.

Appendix 1: Violent incidents

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 required to understand the negative aspects of their behaviour and where it is appropriate, their parents will be informed.

Appendix 2: Incidents 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.

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.

Appendix 3: Incidents involving sexual harassment or sexual violence

We want everyone to feel included, respected and safe in our school. We promote these values through our curriculum, specifically the PACE/Forum programme, through awareness campaigns in assemblies and through posters in the school. We will not tolerate verbal abuse, which includes name calling and sexist comments.

Definitions:

Sexual violence means rape, assault by penetration, or sexual assault (intentional sexual touching).

Sexual harassment means unwanted conduct of a sexual nature – such as sexual comments, sexual jokes or taunting, physical behaviour like interfering with clothes, or online harassment such as sexting

Sexist comments are those which discriminate based on sex, particularly against women.

Sexism also includes behaviour or attitudes that create stereotypes of social roles based on sex.

Appendix 4: Peer on Peer Abuse

The KCSIE (Sep 2020) states that all staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer on peer abuse).

This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:
- bullying (including cyberbullying);
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing
- physical harm;
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;
- sexual harassment: such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment,
- which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them
- knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification,
- or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm;
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

All staff should be clear as to the school's college's policy and procedures with regards to peer on peer abuse.

How can a child who is being abused by their peers be identified?

All staff should be alert to the well-being of pupils and to signs of abuse, and should engage with these signs, as appropriate, to determine whether they are caused by peer-on peer abuse. However, staff should be mindful of the fact that the way(s) in which children will disclose or present with behaviour(s) as a result of their experiences will differ.

- Signs that a child may be suffering from peer-on-peer abuse can also overlap with those indicating other types of abuse can include:
- Failing to attend school, disengaging from classes or struggling to carry out school related tasks to the standard ordinarily expected;
- Physical injuries;
- Experiencing difficulties with mental health and/or emotional wellbeing;
- Becoming withdrawn and/or shy; experiencing headaches, stomach aches, anxiety and/or panic attacks; suffering from nightmares or lack of sleep or sleeping too much; frequent visits to medical centre/school nurse
- Broader changes in behaviour including alcohol or substance misuse;
- Changes in appearance and/or starting to act in a way that is not appropriate for the child's age;
- Abusive behaviour towards others.

The above list is by no means exhaustive and the presence of one or more of these signs does not necessarily indicate abuse.

All allegations of peer on peer abuse will be treated as a safeguarding concern. Concerns will be investigated and managed in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy.

Examples of bullying include:

Physical Bullying may involve:
- Hitting or kicking someone;
- Jostling, shoving, pushing someone;
- Spitting at someone;
- Invading someone's body space;

- Physically humiliating someone (e.g. by "de-bagging" them);
- Taking, damaging or hiding someone's property;
- Invading someone's living space or intruding on their bed-space.
- "Benching"

If physical bullying involves assault, actual bodily harm or wounding it is a criminal offence.

Verbal Bullying may involve:
- Spoken comments;
- Written notes;
- Emails or text messages;
- Improper use of websites and social media platforms;
- Phone calls;
- The defacing of notices;
- Name-calling, spreading rumours, publicly blaming someone for something they haven't done;
- Circulating unflattering drawings or photographic images of someone.

Indirect or Manipulative Bullying may involve:
- Ostracising a fellow pupil by refusing to sit alongside him/her in class, in the Food Factor, etc. (or by moving away when he/she comes and sits down);
- The manipulation of social networks to ostracise, marginalize or intimidate individuals;
- Publishing photographs or images of someone that are intended to occasion mockery or gossip;
- Encouraging others to become the agents of physical or verbal bullying against one's intended victim.

Bullying characterised by racism, sexism, homophobia and the exploitation of disability may involve:

- Spoken comments about someone (their friends or a member of their family), or about some group of pupils;
- Written notes about someone (their friends or a member of their family), or about some group of pupils;
- Emails, web postings or text messages about someone (their friends or a member of their family), or about some group of pupils;
- Phone calls about someone (their friends or a member of their family), or about some group of pupils;
- The defacing of notices with snide remarks about someone (their friends or a member of their family), or about some group of pupils.

Sexual Bullying may involve:
- Bullying that seeks to hurt people by drawing attention to their body shape, hair colour, manner of dress, alleged sexual attractiveness (or lack of it), close friendships (or the absence of intimate relationships in an individual's life);
- Physical action of a sexually intimidating nature (by the invasion of body space, inappropriate touching);
- Spreading rumours about an individual's lifestyle (or the lifestyle of a close friend or relative);
- Spoken comments, written notes, emails, web postings, text messages, phone calls about someone (their friends or a member of their family), or about some group of pupils;
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm;

Bullying focused on religion, culture or family background may involve:
- Spoken comments, written notes, emails, web postings etc. that highlight an individual's religion or culture with the purpose of mocking them for cultural or religious difference;
- Comments, web postings etc. that mock a particular religious or cultural tradition for the purpose of discomforting an individual or group within the school:
- Pejorative religious or cultural descriptors.
- Gossip about an individual's family circumstances, spreading stories about (for example) his/her being adopted, a parent in a same-sex relationship, a relation in the news for negative reasons

All pupils will be encouraged to report incidents. Information is provided in posters, assemblies and through PACE and Form of how to do this.