



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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1.POLICY OBJECTIVES

This policy outlines what Wymondham College will do to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying. We recognise that we have a vitally important role in fostering the morality of our students, in developing their understanding of how the world works and their sense of responsibility towards the society they live in. Wymondham College needs to be a model of the kind of world we want our students to enter once they leave our school gates for the final time.

Point two of the 'College Code of Conduct' notes that "nothing must be done by any member of the College community that will adversely affect the right of any other member of the community to enjoy and benefit from being a member of the College." Wymondham College is therefore committed to developing an anti-bullying culture where the bullying of students or adults is not tolerated in any form. All of this is underpinned by the principles that form our core values: Pride, Passion and Positivity.

The policy has been adopted with the involvement of the whole College community.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of:

- The Principal and Vice Principal to communicate this policy to the College community and to ensure that disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably.
- Trustees to take a lead in monitoring and reviewing this policy.
- All staff (including Trustees, the Senior Leadership Team, teaching and non-teaching staff) to support, uphold and implement this policy accordingly.
- Parents and carers to support their children and work in partnership with the College.
- Pupils to support and abide by the policy.

3. DEFINITIONS OF BULLYING

In its 2017 publication 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' the DfE defined bullying as "behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally". Keith Sullivan's depiction in 'The Anti-Bullying Handbook' (2011) adds even more clarity, noting that "bullying is conscious and wilful", that the act/s of "aggression and/or manipulation and/or exclusion" are often directed at a single person, but may well extend beyond this.

Sullivan also offers the following, by way of definition;

- Harm is intended.
- It is repetitive and can occur over a short or long time.
- The person(s) doing the bullying has more power than the one(s) being victimised. In her article 'Bullying in Schools: The State of Knowledge and Effective Interventions' (2017) Ersilia Menesini notes that the imbalance of power can be derived from physical strength, social status in the group, or from group size (e.g. a group targeting a single person). She continues, "power may also be achieved through knowing a person's vulnerabilities (e.g. appearance, learning difficulty, family situation, personal characteristics) and using this knowledge to harm."
- Bullying can be premeditated, organised and systematic, or it can be opportunistic. Once it starts, however, it is likely to continue.

- Bullying may also communicate a sense of menace to those who are witness but not contributors to it.

Bullying can be physical, non-physical, emotional, sexual, prejudicial (race, religion, ethnicity, SEND, sexual orientation, gender) or committed via technology. Bullying is recognised by the College as being a form of peer on peer abuse.

It is important to note however, what is not bullying. We know that children and young people will fall out and disagree with each other as they form and build relationships, particularly in a large boarding school where many students are with each other for the entirety of the day. This is a normal part of growing up and most children and young people have the resilience needed to effectively manage these situations. Where support and guidance is needed, this will be offered by House pastoral teams.

Sullivan makes the point that “children of equal status can often play exuberant verbal or physical games that can quickly become unruly”. Thus, when behaviours emerge amongst students of “equal status” and such activities and events are not repetitive or intended to cause harm, they may be regarded as behaviours that will require elevated monitoring and observation, to check for frequency and any possible escalation, but they are not bullying behaviours at this stage.

A more aggressive attack that occurs once (be it an assault, harassment, intimidation or exclusion) can be hurtful and traumatic and will be dealt with robustly under the College Behaviour Policy. However, whilst a disciplinary matter, they are not necessarily instances of bullying at this initial stage.

The following table, adapted from Keith Sullivan’s version in ‘The Anti-Bullying Handbook’, seeks to add clarity:

CAN BE MISTAKEN FOR BUT IS NOT ALWAYS BULLYING	BULLYING	EXTREME BEHAVIOURS
No overt malice or harm intended A balance of power Typically, a one-off incident	Hurt is intended An abuse or imbalance of power Repeated over time	Criminal activity
Playful teasing Children ‘falling out’ – perhaps using language they will later regret A one-off incident which may involve some contact, but when there is a balance of power and no overt malice or intention to cause harm.	PHYSICAL (biting, hitting, kicking, pinching, punching, pushing, scratching, damaging property) VERBAL (abusive language or calls, intimidations, threatening behaviour, name calling, spiteful teasing, spreading false or malicious rumours)	Assault with a weapon Theft Sexual abuse

	<p>NON-VERBAL (gestures, manipulating and ruining friendships, systematically excluding or ignoring or isolating – often referred to as EMOTIONAL or PSYCHOLOGICAL bullying)</p> <p>PREJUDICIAL (physical appearance, race or religion or faith, SEND or disability, sexual orientation, gender)</p> <p>ONLINE OR CYBERBULLYING (harassment and intimidation, cyberstalking, dissing or flaming, exclusion, impersonation)</p>	
<p>A pro-active and restorative approach, using the Behaviour Policy where needed. Heightened monitoring of frequency and possible escalation.</p>	<p>Addressed robustly, recorded on our Bullying Incident Forms and treated accordingly.</p>	<p>All such incidents will be reported to the Police.</p>

CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is the use of technologies by an individual or by a group of people to deliberately and repeatedly upset someone else. Cyberbullying can include: intimidation and threats; harassment and stalking; vilification/defamation; exclusion or peer rejection; impersonation; unauthorised publication of personal information or images; manipulation.

Will Gardner, Director of the UK Safer Internet Centre makes the point that “while technology does not cause bullying, it may also be used by people who would not necessarily bully others face-to-face.” (‘Cyberbullying: Understand, Prevent and Respond – Advice for Schools’, 2016) He explores this feature further explaining that “the perceived anonymity of some online activities, or disinhibition due to the physical and emotional distance between people using technology, may mean that the person bullying will do things that they would not do in person.”

Cyberbullying is not a specific criminal offence in UK Law; however, harassment, malicious communications, stalking, threatening violence and incitement are all crimes. The Protection of Children Act (1978) criminalises the taking, creating, showing, distributing with a view to distributing, and publishing any advertisement of indecent photographs of children (people under the age of 18). The Criminal Justice Act (1988) makes the possession of indecent photographs of children (under 18) a criminal offense. The age of criminal responsibility in England and Wales is 10 years old.

IDENTITY AND PREJUDICE BASED BULLYING

A significant proportion of bullying behaviour is rooted in a lack of respect for difference and in social inequality, both of which have their foundation in wider society. The terms 'prejudice based bullying' and 'identity-based bullying' take into account the significant extent to which students may be more vulnerable to bullying because of prejudice, stereotyping and stigmatisation.

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against people with a 'protected characteristic'. These include age, disability, gender reassignment, race, sex, religion and sexual orientation. Prejudice can extend beyond these characteristics to include comments on body image, socio-economic status and any additional support needs a student may have.

While sometimes dismissed as 'harmless banter', homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language has a damaging effect on young people's self-esteem and, left unchecked, gives the impression that being lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans is in some way shameful or wrong. In her guide 'Ten Steps to Tackling Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic Language in Your School' (2018), Fay Bartrum explores the use of phrases like "that's so gay" and "you're so gay". She makes the point that such utterances "are most often used to mean that something is bad or 'rubbish' with no conscious link to sexual orientation at all, for example 'those trainers are so gay' (to mean uncool) or 'stop being so gay' (to mean stop being annoying)." Bartrum concludes that in settings where young people frequently hear or experience hurtful language, the rate of identity based bullying is nearly double compared to schools that have sought to eliminate such language.

Ultimately the College needs to challenge all negative language, and to do so consistently. Promoting equality involves challenging inequality as soon as it emerges. Wymondham College is proud of its diverse community and it will strive to recognise, respect and value people's differences, but above and beyond this, to celebrate the richness that this can bring.

4. DEALING WITH BULLYING – PREVENTION

The DfE is clear in its 2017 guidance that "schools which excel at tackling bullying have created an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave." The message is one reinforced by the 'stopbullying.gov' website which captures the drive of all prevention strategies: "the best way to address bullying is to stop it before it starts."

The College recognises that there is no single, easy fit solution to preventing bullying. However, in our commitment to creating an environment where all can flourish, attitudes about bullying will be discussed openly and visions and outcomes will be agreed by the whole school. Listening to our students and acting upon what they say will be key. It is also important to evaluate whether interventions and practices put in place are effective, and thus this policy will be reviewed at the end of each academic year.

The following actions and interventions currently underpin our efforts to develop a whole College approach to challenging bullying behaviour:

COLLEGE CLIMATE AND CLARITY ABOUT OUR POLICY

The College climate is key in bullying prevention and we recognise the importance of the House system in modelling behaviours. All members of the community will be encouraged to create and support an inclusive environment which promotes a culture of mutual respect, consideration and care for others, which will be upheld by all.

Our Anti-Bullying Policy will send a clear and robust signal that any bullying behaviour is unacceptable. Our policy will be communicated and visible in various forms around the College site and on the website, with all members of staff, students and their parents. The College Council will create a student – friendly version of this policy, which will evolve as the policy is reviewed.

Endeavours to raise awareness of bullying issues will be sustained over a long period of time (not merely during anti-bullying week, Safer Internet Day and LGBT History Month - although it is recognised that these are key opportunities) through our PSHE and tutorial programmes, campus displays, Well-Being Ambassador initiatives and assemblies.

EDUCATING STUDENTS AND STAFF SO ALL CAN CHALLENGE CONSISTENTLY

Through the curriculum and tutorial programmes students will openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying and gain the confidence to challenge practice and language (including ‘banter’) which does not uphold the College values.

It is recognised that students have a choice of what to do when they observe bullying behaviours: watch; join in; try to remain uninvolved; ignore; try to support those experiencing the bullying behaviours; report to staff. One of the prime tasks of the College and this policy is to create an environment where students feel comfortable and safe reporting these behaviours. Systems noted in Annex A (‘Reporting Bullying Behaviours’) will enable students to report bullying behaviours without feeling that they are ‘telling’ and possibly making the situation worse. Further, students will have confidence in the College pastoral systems and an appreciation that all reports will be acted upon swiftly, with the well-being of pupils involved driving all future actions. Wellbeing Ambassadors will lead on ‘Hear It. Stop It’ campaigns and ‘No Bystanders’ initiatives.

All staff (including senior leaders, teachers, support staff and governors) will be trained to ensure they have the skills and confidence to respond to all forms of bullying and discriminatory behaviour, taking appropriate action and recording and reporting incidents as appropriate. For example, developing a script or set of template responses can equip staff to respond confidently and consistently (e.g. Can trainers really be gay? What do you mean by that? Do you realise that language is homophobic? Would you use words that are hurtful about someone’s race? You know that hurtful language is not accepted in the College).

CAPTURING BEHAVIOURS, RESPONDING ROBUSTLY AND REVIEWING FREQUENTLY

All College staff will ensure that incidents and allegations are taken seriously, investigated and acted upon appropriately, with clearly defined action points, consequences and time frames (these are explored more fully in the next section). The ‘Bullying Behaviour Incident Report’ (completed by staff) and ‘Reporting Bullying Behaviours’ (completed by students) will provide a thorough and systematic recording procedure for incidents so that their nature, prevalence and frequency can be reviewed by the Vice Principal, reliably informing the review and evaluation of the policy.

CONTINUALLY ENGAGING WITH STAFF, STUDENTS AND PARENTS

The views of all stakeholders will be captured regularly through Parents Forums, boarding walks, the Annual Boarding Review, discussions with House Councils and the College Council and questionnaires. These will aim to frankly capture opinions on the prevalence of bullying in the College and the effectiveness of this policy and the actions it details to prevent and

tackle them. Work of the Well-Being Ambassadors, led by the Well Being Manager and Mrs Worsley, will be central to this.

The College recognises that parents are partners. They are experts in their children's behaviour and their physical and mental wellbeing. They have a key role to play in supporting their children when they experience bullying or bully other children, and in assisting in the management of bullying behaviour. They can offer advice to pastoral teams on extra support their child may need or any creative solutions that may help to resolve the situation. Parents will be aware of who to contact in College if they feel their children are being bullied. Information will be shared through the College newsletter on spotting the signs of bullying and how parents may initiate this conversation with their children.

IMPLEMENTING DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS

Disciplinary measures will be applied to pupils who demonstrate bullying behaviours to show to both them and the wider community that their behaviour is wrong and that there is no place for it in the College. Sanctions will be applied fairly and consistently whilst reasonably taking into account any special individual needs of the students involved.

LINKING WITH OTHERS AND CELEBRATING SUCCESS

Heads of House will discuss bullying related issues once every three weeks as part of their weekly meetings with the Vice Principal (on a rolling cycle with attendance and emerging concerns and complaints).

The College will seek to share experiences, policies and ideas with other schools in the Trust and beyond, and this will involve observing first-hand what these providers do to tackling bullying. The Vice Principal for Boarding and Behaviour, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Wellbeing Manager and Head of PSH will work with other organisations in the local and national community – such as the local authority, NHS services, local businesses, charities and individual speakers – to promote equality and diversity.

The College will continue to celebrate the Mental health Awareness Day, the Safer Internet Day, the Anti Bullying Week and the LGBT History Month initiatives, but it will also seek to celebrate more personal stories and endeavours.

5. DEALING WITH BULLYING – INTERVENTION

Whilst the actions and support needed to respond to any occurrence of bullying behaviour will be determined by the specific nature of the incident, the intended outcomes of any actions should always include:

- Keeping the person being bullied safe
- Reassuring the person being bullied that it is not their fault and they don't deserve this
- Changing the behaviour of the perpetrator and making them aware of the impact of their behaviour
- Developing skills to manage further situations should they occur
- Whilst seeking solution orientated approaches, effectively employing sanctions in line with the Behaviour Policy where appropriate.

The following steps, which fall under 'immediate actions' and 'long term strategies', may be taken when dealing with an incident of bullying behaviour. This strategy borrows heavily from advice offered by the highly accredited 'North Lanarkshire Anti Bullying Guideline' (2018) document, and strategies promoted by the Anti-Bullying Alliance, Childline and Kidscape.

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

The incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached or witnessed the concern.

The College will provide support for the person being bullied – making sure they are not at risk of any immediate harm and involving them in the any decision-making process, as appropriate. This might involve ensuring distance is created between the victim and the perpetrator whilst investigations take place. The College recognises that students fear what might happen if they report bullying and so they will be reassured about what will follow, be given a point of contact for any further discussion and be told the timeframe in which further events will likely take place. Students experiencing bullying behaviour will also be asked what they wish to see resulting from the investigation, a question that they can respond to after they have had time to reflect or speak to parents, if they so wish.

Professional judgement will then be needed to determine the level of response and the person who should coordinate this (possibly the member of staff observing the incident, or a Form Tutor who may have a stronger appreciation of the student, or a Head of House if the seriousness of the incident warrants a more heightened response).

Any subsequent investigation will seek to clarify the exact nature of any bullying behaviours and determine what underpins and motivates these encounters. An investigation may require further witness statements and interviews, observation of possible CCTV imagery and discussions with pastoral staff to ascertain any contexts and the prevalence of previous frictions or incidents. Throughout this process, it will be made clear to all those involved that any bullying behaviours are totally unacceptable, and any further actions that exacerbate or continue the distress being caused will be a very significant breach of the Code of Conduct. The need for distance and the need to limit further discussions on the matter with peers will be stressed.

Where Cyberbullying has occurred, students will be encouraged to capture any evidence of bullying activity before blocking those involved. If the identity of the person demonstrating the bullying actions is not known, steps will be taken to try and clarify this using school systems and service providers. If content posted online contravenes the College behaviour policy or causes distress for the recipient, requests will be made for this content to be deleted. As noted by the DoFE and recorded in the College 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy', student electronic devices may be confiscated and searched if deemed appropriate.

Where students involved in bullying behaviours have additional support needs, investigations will follow the same protocols. However, the College recognises that thresholds for such behaviour may be subtly different for those who do have such needs, and that the process of investigating allegations should take into account the difficulties experienced by those with additional support needs, for those experiencing bullying behaviour and also those displaying it.

A 'Bullying Behaviours Incident Form' will be filled in, and all associated documentation connected to the investigation will be attached to it.

The College will ensure parents/carers are kept informed about the concern and action taken, as appropriate and in line with child protection and confidentiality policies. College staff connected to those involved (Tutors, Heads of Heads, Matrons) will be informed of the incident as appropriate.

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS FOR THOSE BOARDERS EXPERIENCING BULLYING BEHAVIOURS FROM FELLOW BOARDERS

It is acknowledged that for those boarders on the receiving end of bullying behaviours from fellow boarders whom they may share a House (or landing, or dorm) with, creating separation may be practically more challenging. However, the premise will be the same. As always, the voice of the boarder needing support will be listened to. Where separation or space is requested or essential, this will be facilitated, either by moving the perpetrating boarder to another dorm, or landing, or boarding House. Whilst boarders may not have the same level of physical support from their parents in these times, they do have the support of the wider boarding community. Trusted boarders, or appointed Mentors will be used to support boarders experiencing bullying behaviours, ensuring there is another channel of communication and greater observation of the person needing support. Movement of boarders can be restricted within the boarding house (and beyond) to minimise the number of contact points and, where necessary, behaviour contracts can be written to reinforce expectations around interactions.

LONG TERM STRATEGIES

Having worked with the perpetrator to establish the impact of their actions on others, work will begin to address misconceptions, challenge behaviour and prevent recurrences. Where appropriate, a restorative approach will be taken. Equally and perhaps additionally, this may involve attending the College 'Bullying Behaviours: They Are Never Acceptable' workshop, undertaking community service, completing a successful period on report, engaging with the well-being team or external agencies and support groups. A revised 'Behaviour Contract' will be agreed following any period away from College, and this will be shared with parents. It will be made clear to the perpetrator that a review date will be set, when all parties will be interviewed once again. Actions taken during this period must demonstrate that outcomes from any restorative meetings are respected if further action is to be avoided.

Where appropriate, disciplinary sanctions will be enforced, and these can range from detentions to internal exclusions, fixed term exclusions and permanent exclusions from the College. The message will be a thoroughly clear and robust one; there is no place for any bullying behaviour at the College.

Ongoing support for those on the receiving end of bullying behaviours will be provided. Where appropriate, they will be supported to explore restorative approaches. Ongoing discussions with the initial point of contact or pastoral staff will continue and a referral can be made to the Wellbeing team. Students may be offered support from a mentor in House or opportunities to meet regularly with the Wellbeing Ambassadors. The College supports the sentiments of the Anti-Bullying Alliance when it suggests "don't stop when the incident is resolved – keep going." Staff will work to restore relationships, self-esteem and confidence, and opportunities to build resilience will be taken. Students will be aware of the review meeting, and the importance attached to this, but discussions will continue beyond this point, even when the resolution is an extremely positive one. Outcomes of any restorative meeting will be monitored closely.

Restorative approaches place harm and its repair at centre stage. The aim is to provide a safe process in which, wherever possible, damaged relationships can be repaired. In particular, it gives those who have exhibited bullying behaviour a chance to learn. The focus moves from blame or guilt to responsibility and problem-solving; from an adversarial position to one of dialogue, repair, apology and reparation. Importantly, the approach provides the person harmed with an equal voice in the process, thus rectifying the imbalance of power Sullivan notes that underpins all bullying incidents. The restorative process in no way precludes using sanctions, but it does provide a framework for making them more meaningful.

6. ADDITIONAL NOTES

Labels (victim, bully) can stick and come to define a person. Indeed, they can actually add to the sense of isolation rather than assist with recovery. For the person displaying these behaviours, labels can prevent them from changing their perspectives and actions. The object of this policy is to help students recognise that bullying is unacceptable, shining light on ignorance so that students can appreciate why certain behaviours are wrong and why the College will challenge them robustly. Thus, labels will only be used to define behaviours, not students.

The Education and Inspectors Act 2016 gives Principals the power “to such an extent as is reasonable to regulate the behaviour of pupils when they are off the school site (which is particularly pertinent to regulating cyberbullying).” Further, DfE cyberbullying guidance states that “all forms of bullying (including cyberbullying) should be handled as a community issue for the whole school.” The guidance also states that “where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted up.” The College will respond robustly to all such incidents.

The College will ensure that regular monitoring and evaluation of this policy and its mechanisms takes place. Any issues identified will be incorporated into future College action planning. The Principal will be informed of bullying concerns, as appropriate. The named Governor for Boarding and Behaviour will report on a regular basis to the governing body on incidents of bullying, including outcomes.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY – CONNECTED READING

Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk

Childnet: www.childnet.com

Restorative Justice Council: www.restorativejustice.org.uk

‘The Anti Bullying Handbook’, Keith Sullivan, 2011, Sage Press

‘Bullying in Schools: The State of Knowledge and Effective Interventions’, Ersilia Menesini, 2017

‘Cyberbullying: Understand, Prevent and Respond – Advice for Schools’, Will Gardner, 2016

‘Ten Steps to Tackling Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic Language in Your School’ Fay Bartrum, 2018