



Woodlands Academy
Anti-Bullying Policy
January 2025

INTRODUCTION

Woodlands Academy provides a supportive, caring, and friendly environment which allows all our pupils to learn in an atmosphere which is focused on improving their life chances and helping them to maximise their potential. We expect our pupils to act safely, and feel safe, in and outside of school – we do not tolerate any form of bullying and we are committed to preventing and tackling it. We recognise that as children learn and grow together, they may experience fallouts with their peers, but we are committed to supporting our pupils to resolve these ‘relational conflicts’ and stop them from progressing to bullying behaviours. If an incident of bullying does occur, we believe our pupils, parents/carers and staff should feel confident in reporting it and know that that all incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

We encourage open discussions around differences between people, we actively challenge prejudice, and we celebrate diversity. We adopt a contextual safeguarding, trauma-informed and strengths-based approach to bullying and child-on-child abuse, and we are committed to working with families and outside agencies where appropriate.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

This policy has been developed to reflect the most recent Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) Statutory Guidance (1st September 2024)

This policy is available:

- Online on the school website
- From the school office

This policy is reviewed and evaluated throughout the academic year. It is updated every three years.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff in our academies are aware that children may bully other children, and that this can happen both inside and outside of school, and online. All staff understand the school’s expectations and approach and know the important role that they each have in preventing and tackling bullying.

The Principal has overall responsibility for Anti-Bullying in our academy. They are responsible for

- Liaising with the Local Academy Council, parents/carers and outside agencies when appropriate.
- Coordinating Anti-Bullying training and support for staff and parents/carers where appropriate
- Monitoring the effectiveness of strategies for preventing bullying behaviour

WHAT IS BULLYING AND HOW DOES IT DIFFER TO RELATIONAL CONFLICT?

Woodlands Academy has adopted the definition of bullying provided by the Anti-Bullying Alliance:

“Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online.”

We recognise that bullying can take many forms and can affect any child. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups (for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs, or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities). Bullying can be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

However, we also recognise that incidents may occur between pupils, which may not be deemed as ‘bullying’ but still require support or intervention from trusted adults. These incidents may be referred to as ‘relational conflicts’ or falling out. Relational conflict differs to bullying in the fact that it is usually between individuals or groups who are relatively similar in power and status (a power balance), and the behaviours or incidents occur occasionally (not

repetitive) or occur by accident (not intentional). Usually, following a relational conflict incident, pupils show remorse and there is a general willingness to make things right or to resolve the conflict.

Not all relational conflict or falling out leads to bullying, we are aware occasionally some can, and we are know that unresolved bad feelings or relationship problems left unaddressed can be the start of a pattern of behaviour in which the intention becomes to cause harm or distress.

Although bullying and relational conflicts can take place between individuals, we recognise that it often takes place in front of others (either physically or virtually), pupils who witness these incidents/behaviours are often referred to as 'bystanders'.

Regardless of whether an incident or situation is deemed as 'relational conflict' or 'bullying', Woodlands Academy will address the situation and support the pupils to resolve any negative feelings. We monitor children following a relational conflict to ensure that the situation has been resolved and does not escalate to bullying. We will challenge, address, and monitor any incidents of bullying, to ensure that it does not continue and that all pupils feel supported. (This will include the target, the alleged perpetrator, any bystanders, and the wider school community).

WHAT DOES BULLYING BEHAVIOUR LOOK LIKE?

We will always consider the context within which incidents and/or behaviours of concern occur. We will consider the motivations behind the behaviours and will take into account the age and stage of development of the pupils involved. Our focus will always be the safety and welfare of all children involved.

Bullying behaviour may include, but is not limited to:

- Physical – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc.
- Verbal – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling.
- Emotional – isolating others, tormenting, hiding books/belongings, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation, and coercion.
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc.
- Online / Cyber – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion etc.
- Indirect – can include the exploitation of individuals such as 'false friendships', criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation, and radicalisation.
- Prejudice-related – derogatory and discriminatory language and behaviour including that which is racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist in nature. This language and behaviour may be directed towards people because of their race/ethnicity/nationality; because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans, or are perceived to be, or have a parent/carer, sibling, or friend who is, because they have a learning or physical disability. Such language and behaviour are generally used to refer to something or someone as inferior.

There is no hierarchy of bullying, all forms of bullying are taken equally seriously and will be dealt with appropriately.

WHERE DOES BULLYING TAKE PLACE?

Woodlands Academy understands that bullying is not confined to the individual academy premises. Bullying can take place outside of school, on the journey to and from school and in the local community. Bullying may also take place online (this is sometimes referred to as cyberbullying).

We will offer support and guidance to pupils, parents/carers and families who have experienced any type of bullying whether this has taken place inside school, outside of school or online. We are committed to working with outside agencies where appropriate to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying.

CYBERBULLYING

The increasing use of digital technology and the internet has also provided new and particularly intrusive ways for bullies to reach their victims. Cyberbullying can take many forms and bullying online can often start in school and

then be progressed online, or start online and influence behaviour in school. Whilst most incidents of Cyberbullying occur outside school, we will offer support and guidance to parents/carers and their children who experience online bullying and will treat Cyberbullying with the same severity as any other forms of bullying.

Cyberbullying can include:

- Hacking into someone's accounts/sites.
- Posting prejudice/hate messages
- Impersonating someone online
- Public posting of images
- Exclusion
- Threats and manipulation
- Stalking

We will ensure that our children are taught safe ways to use the internet and encourage good online behaviour.

Bullying can take place between:

- children
- children and staff
- between staff
- individuals or groups

HOW TO REPORT BULLYING CONCERNS

The school wants pupils, parents/carers, staff, and visitors to confidently report bullying and know that their concerns will be taken seriously. We remain committed to supporting and safeguarding all children involved including the target, the alleged perpetrator, any bystanders/witnesses to the bullying behaviour and the wider school community.

PUPILS, INCLUDING BYSTANDERS / WITNESSES

We ask that all pupils report concerns of bullying or bullying behaviour to a member of staff – this can be any member of teaching or non-teaching staff, including a class teacher, a TA, the Principal, a lunchtime supervisor, or a member of the office team. We talk about trusted adults regularly in class and in assemblies to remind our pupils of who they can report concerns to.

The member of staff will listen to the pupil, they will then discuss next steps with them and reassure them that they will be supported. The member of staff will directly alert the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead if the report is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.

We understand that some pupils may find it difficult to tell a member of staff about their concerns verbally, we therefore have additional reporting mechanisms in place. Our school has worry boxes where the pupil can put their name/a brief note about their concerns/draw a picture of their concern – these worry boxes are introduced to the pupils at the start of the year and pupils are reminded of them regularly.

Even if the behaviour/incident which has been reported is deemed 'not bullying' and is thought to be 'relational conflict', school staff will still support the pupils involved and help them to resolve any concerns.

PARENTS / CARERS

We understand that it can be very difficult for a parent/carer to be concerned or hear that their child has been the target of bullying, has experienced bullying behaviour or is an alleged perpetrator of bullying.

We ask that if parents/carers have concerns about their child experiencing or perpetrating bullying, that they contact a member of school staff. Initially we ask parents/carers to contact their child's class teacher (in person/via telephone call/via email/) to explain their concerns.

We ask that parents/carers come directly to the school with their concerns rather than discussing them with other members of the school community in person or online.

Our Trust remains committed to supporting pupils and their families in all instances of bullying and relational conflict and will respond to reports promptly. Even if the behaviour/incident which has been reported is deemed 'not bullying' and is thought to be 'relational conflict', academy staff will still support the pupils involved and help them to resolve any concerns.

We will endeavour to ensure that all parties are kept informed of progress and any developments, but we will also need to show due regard to GDPR. This may mean, at times, that we are not able to provide or share information or updates.

ACADEMY STAFF

Our staff work closely with our pupils and therefore may notice a change in a pupil's behaviour or attitude that might indicate that something is wrong before receiving a report from a pupil or a member of the school community. If staff have any concerns about a pupil's welfare or are concerned that a pupil is displaying behaviours that may show they are the target of bullying or perhaps perpetrating bullying, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told.

We ask that staff report their concerns to a Designated Safeguarding Lead or directly to the Principal. The member of staff receiving the report will make a record of the bullying on the school's Safeguard recording system and other relevant staff members will be alerted.

VISITORS

We ensure that all visitors to our academies are aware of our Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures and which staff member they should report any concerns to.

We ask that if a visitor has any concerns about bullying behaviour that they have witnessed, or been told about, that they report their concerns at the earliest opportunity in person to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead/the Principal/a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

HOW WE RESPOND TO REPORTS OF BULLYING

All bullying or reported concerns of bullying behaviours will be taken seriously and investigated. Even if an incident is deemed 'not bullying' or a 'relational conflict', our school remains committed to supporting all pupils who have been involved and effected.

We keep records of all reports of bullying, this information is stored on our school's Safeguard recording system. These records are used to identify trends and inform our preventative work.

Our staff use a contextual approach to safeguarding and each incident will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Some of our school's responses may include, but may not be limited to:

- Talk to all pupils involved in the reported incident – this may include the target, the alleged perpetrator, and any bystanders/witnesses
- Talk to the parents (of the target and/or the alleged perpetrator)
- Implement appropriate sanctions in accordance with the academy behaviour policy. These sanctions will be graded according to the seriousness of the incident, but will send out a message that bullying is unacceptable
- Discuss the report/incident/case with other agencies and organisations when appropriate and make referrals to those organisations when appropriate.
- Liaise with the wider community if the bullying is taking place off the academy premises (e.g., the Police, Local Authority etc.)
- Keep in touch with the person who reported the incident/behaviour to inform them that action has been

taken – this may include a pupil, a parent/carer/guardian, a member of staff or visitor, or another member of the school community.

- Implement a range of follow-up support/interventions appropriate to the situation (this may include informal or formal restorative work with the target and alleged perpetrator, solution-focused meetings, individual or group work with the target, individual or group work with the alleged perpetrator, individual or group work with any witnesses/bystanders, group work with the wider-school community etc.)
- Monitor the effectiveness of actions taken and reassess/take more actions if appropriate.

If a parent/carer is not satisfied with our actions, we ask that they follow our complaint policy and procedures. This is available online from our Trust or Academy website and on request from the school office.

STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTING BULLYING

At Woodlands Academy, we are committed to the safety and welfare of our pupils, and therefore we have developed the following strategies to promote friendly and positive behaviours and discourage bullying behaviours. Throughout the academic year, the effectiveness of these strategies is reviewed, and the variety of strategies may be expanded to address specific concerns or meet the needs of all members of our community.

The strategies we use include, but are not limited to:

- Active school council with representatives from each year groups
- Taking part in Anti-Bullying week annually (November)
- Taking part in Safer Internet Day annually (February)
- Robust R(S)HE curriculum for all year groups
- Specific curriculum inputs for online safety and cyberbullying
- Themed days to promote equality and tackle prejudice
- Opportunities for pupils to share their voice and opinions – through surveys etc.
- Inclusive displays throughout the school with a diverse range of work, photographs etc.
- Inclusive toys and books throughout the school raising awareness of and celebrating differences
- Positive Play / MELSA support / Lego therapy / Art therapy / counselling for identified students / Hamish and Milo interventions
- Specific interventions for identified individuals or groups
- Parent events and training
- Regular staff training for all staff
- All staff model expected behaviour

LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

You may find it helpful to read this Anti-Bullying policy alongside the other following school policies:

Policy	How it may link
Behaviour Policy	Includes details about the rewards and sanctions for pupils
Safeguarding Policy	Includes information about child protection procedures and contextualised safeguarding
Online Safety Policy	Includes information about children’s online behaviour and details about online bullying/cyberbullying
RSHE / PSHE Policy	Includes information about our school’s RSHE programme and how we teach about relationships, friendships, and bullying
Complaints Policy	Includes information about how to make a complaint if you are not satisfied with the school’s response