

This policy has been developed with regard to the Schools Standards and Framework Act, 1988, *Bullying 'Don't Suffer in Silence'* (an anti-bullying pack for schools) and the DfE document *Preventing and Tackling Bullying – Advice for Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies, July 2017*.

The aim of the anti-bullying policy is to ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is an anti-social behaviour and affects everyone. Bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. In order to ensure that all pupils can benefit from all the opportunities available at Woodcroft School the school fully commits to addressing all issues related to bullying, including cyber and text bullying.

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, unprovoked and repetitive, which is directed at those who are unable to defend themselves. It usually has a secretive nature and power imbalance between the perpetrator and victim. The main types of bullying are:

- *Physical* hitting, kicking, threats or any form of violence
 - *Verbal* name calling, taunts/persistent teasing, racist remarks
 - *Indirect* spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups, ridicule, graffiti
 - *Cyber* using computers, mobile phones or other technology to hurt, scare or embarrass
- Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming withdrawn or nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lack of concentration or unwillingness to attend school, even truanting.

The staff at Woodcroft School must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly in accordance with the guidance set out in this policy.

As referenced in the *Behaviour policy*, some pupil's on the autistic spectrum may not realize that their behaviour is unwanted by other children and could be construed as targeting or bullying. Where this is so, as difficult as it can be when inflexibility of thought may be present, pupils need to be helped to realize that this behaviour is unwanted and must stop.

This policy has been approved by the board of directors of Woodcroft School. It is due for review in Autumn 2024.

Statutory duty of schools

Head teachers have a legal duty under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to draw up procedures to prevent bullying among pupils and to bring these procedures to the attention of staff, parents and pupils.

Implementation

1. School procedures

- If bullying is suspected or reported the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached or who has observed the incident.
- A clear account will be recorded and given to the head teacher or deputy immediately.
- The head teacher will investigate the incident and will record the incident.
- Parents will be informed.
- Other members of staff will be informed.
- Appropriate consequences will follow consultation with all parties (See section 3).

2. Pupils

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Offering immediate support from familiar staff of their choice.
- Reassurance.
- Establishing continuous support.
- Strategies to restore self-esteem and confidence.

Pupils who have bullied will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened.
- Investigating why the pupil became involved in this type of behaviour.
- Clearly setting out the wrongdoing and the need to change.
- Informing the parents to help change the attitude and behaviour of the pupil.

3. The following steps may be taken:

- A warning to the pupil, (reinforced by a telephone call to the parent), to cease bullying behaviour.
- A letter to the parent requesting an interview at school with the head teacher, to include the pupil.
- A daily/weekly behaviour report to be signed by the school and the parents.
- Consideration of steps to be taken to change the teaching arrangements for the specific pupil for a fixed period, for example, individual tuition away from the group, part time education or change of staffing support arrangements.

4. Raising awareness

Within the curriculum the school will raise awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in PHSE sessions, circle time, assemblies, and through consultation, planning and staff training. The school's anti-bullying week (friendship week) is a further opportunity for cross-curricular and social activities.

Under the Equality Act, 2010, the school has a duty to protect people with certain characteristics against harassment and victimisation. It must advance equality of opportunity for all and foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and those without. These characteristics are defined in the Act as age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. We should therefore raise awareness of these duties in our anti-bullying work across the school.

Principles from the anti-bullying policy will be incorporated into the *Home school partnership agreement*.

The school's aim to affirm an anti-bullying culture is reinforced by identifying the importance of developing the relevance of each pupil's voice and engagement with school processes, for example, via the school council.

The school's approach to dealing with bullying also forms part of the Woodcroft healthy school initiative. There are regular staff training sessions, emotional wellbeing and inclusion and focus meetings.

5. Policy links

The *Anti-bullying policy* links to the *Curriculum policy*, the *Safeguarding children policy*, the *Behaviour management policy*, staffing policies and the *Equal opportunities policies*.