



# WEST MIDLANDS EDUCATION & SKILLS ANTI-BULLYING POLICY & PROCEDURE

# Policy Statement

At West Midlands Education & Skills we aim to provide and maintain a safe and supportive environment in which effective learning and participation can take place. Bullying is in direct opposition to the aims and intentions of West Midlands Education & Skills. Preventing and tackling bullying is one of the ways in which we safeguard children and young people and this policy explains how this is done at West Midlands Education & Skills. All students must feel safe in school, we also want them to feel confident to seek support from school should they feel unsafe or are being bullied.

For the purposes of this policy bullying is defined as any behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

Bullying can take many forms for instance,

- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures) public humiliation, sabotaging friendships
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic or biphobic - because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Transphobic – motivated by a prejudice against people who identify as trans
- Disablist – motivated by a prejudice against people with any form of disability
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber - All areas of internet ,such as email & internet chat room misuse
- Mobile threats by text messaging & calls

Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Some students are particularly vulnerable to bullying and may be severely affected by it, such as:

- those with special educational needs or disabilities
- those that are going through a personal or family crisis, or suffering from a health problem
- children in care that are frequently on the move hence they are always the newcomer
- those with caring responsibilities because they are socially isolated.

These vulnerable young people may also be at risk of turning to social media for consolation or to get their own back by cyberbullying.

**Bullying in all its forms verbal or physical, manifest or insidious is unacceptable at West Midlands Education & Skills.**

Management and staff at West Midlands Education & Skills are dedicated to the prevention of bullying but if it does occur we have procedures to tackle it immediately. All students and students are encouraged to speak up if they are being bullied – during

induction they are reminded that they should talk to a trusted adult in the school if they are being bullied. They are also encouraged to tell a member of staff if they know someone is being bullied.

This policy has been developed with reference to the following guidelines:

- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (DFE 2014)
- Supporting children and young people who are bullied: advice for schools (DFE 2014.)
- Cyber bullying: advice for head teachers and school staff (DFE 2014)
- Advice for parents and carers on cyber bullying (DFE 2014)
- Every Child Matters (The Children Act 2004)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- The Equality Act 2010

### **Signs and Symptoms of Bullying**

Management and staff at West Midlands Education & Skills should be vigilant and look out for signs and symptoms of bullying. A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults (stf, parents, carers) should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or " go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating

- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber- message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated

### **We have created an environment that makes it easier for management and staff to be vigilant**

- All children and young people are taught on a one to one basis or in small groups making it easier for tutors to notice when individuals change their behaviour
- All staff sit together with students during their breaks and monitor them when they are outside increasing their chance of observing signs of bullying

### **Bullying outside school premises**

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The Head of School will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a student. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

### **Preventative Procedures**

West Midlands Education & Skills maintains that the implementation of the following strategies is conducive to reinforcing the anti-bullying policy:

- Promoting equality of opportunity amongst all students throughout all school activities by taking into account students different individual needs
- Fostering good relationships by teaching respect and responsibility for self and others
- Adopting a zero tolerance for discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Providing information and guidance through the curriculum at induction to ensure that students know how to proceed if they or someone else is bullied within the school and outside the school premises.
- Promoting caring and gentleness
- Teaching appropriate assertiveness, especially through the medium of sport
- Providing firm, clear and consistent standards of behaviour
- Maintaining a predictable, regular routine for everyday life
- Channelling all shows of aggression by distraction and early intervention
- Providing robust supervision of students throughout all their activities
- Avoiding exposure to violence at the centre, on video or television as much as possible
- Never allowing aggression to produce beneficial results for students – it must always have a 'cost' that has to be paid in reparation.

- All staff attend a weekly briefing during which safeguarding is always on the agenda – they can raise concerns and ensure that possible bullying is investigated

## Procedures for Tackling Bullying

Students can report bullying by:

- Speaking to their tutor or another staff member they trust

Parents/Carers can report bullying by:

- Calling the school and speaking to the Head of School
- Coming in to the school and speaking to the Head of School

The following steps will be taken when dealing with incidents:

If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached as follows:

- A clear and precise account of the incident will be recorded and given to the Head of School or the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Head of School or the Designated Safeguarding Lead will interview all concerned and will record the incident
- Parents will be kept informed and invited to take part in meetings to decide consequences and support
- Punitive measures will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned
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Some forms of bullying are illegal and will be reported to the police. These include:

- violence or assault
- theft
- **repeated** harassment or intimidation, eg name calling, threats and abusive phone calls, emails or text messages
- hate crimes

Support for those who have been bullied:

The nature and level of support will depend on the individual circumstances and the level of need. These can include

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a Tutor or a member of staff of their choice
- Reassuring the student
- Referral for formal counselling,
- engaging with parents,
- referring to local authority children's services,
- completing a Common Assessment Framework or referring to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Students who have bullied will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened
- Discovering why the student became involved
- Establishing the wrong doing and the need to change
- Informing parents or guardians to help change the attitude and behaviour of the child

The following disciplinary steps can be taken:

- Official warnings to cease offending
- Exclusion from certain areas of school premises
- Minor fixed-term suspension
- Major fixed-term suspension
- Permanent exclusion

Management, staff, parents and carers should be aware of the following specialist organisation that can provide information and guidance regarding bullying:

- Anti-Bullying Alliance - <http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>
- Bullying UK - <http://www.bullying.co.uk/>
- Childline - <http://www.childline.org.uk/Explore/Bullying/Pages/Bullyinginfo.aspx>
- The Diana Award - <http://diana-award.org.uk/>
- Kidscape - <http://www.kidscape.org.uk/>
- Anti-bullying Alliance SEND programme of resources: <http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/media/14816/aba-send-programme-resources-jan-14.pdf>
- EACH (Educational Action Challenging Homophobia) <http://www.eachaction.org.uk/>
- Show Racism the Red Card - <http://www.srtrc.org/educational>
- Advice on Child Internet Safety 1.0 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-on-child-internet-safety-10-universal-guidelines-for-providers>

**This Policy will be reviewed: July 2022**