



Westminster Tutors

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Aims of the Policy

This Anti-Bullying Policy enshrines a central aspect of the ethos of Westminster Tutors, which is to provide a warm, friendly and tolerant atmosphere in which each student is valued. Furthermore, the safeguarding and wellbeing of all of the students is crucial for the development of happy, confident and considerate individuals who integrate successfully with their peers and are able to make a positive contribution to life in the community. In order to achieve this, the college aims to prevent bullying and to deal effectively with bullying if it does occur. Westminster Tutors will do this by:

- maintaining an environment characterised by warmth, positive regard and mutual respect, so that bullying will be less likely;
- raising awareness of bullying through the curriculum, PSHCE and other activities;
- having a Behaviour Policy which makes it clear that any and all forms of bullying are totally unacceptable, and including the Behaviour Policy in the annual Student Handbook;
- developing effective strategies for recognising and supporting victims of bullying, including homophobic bullying, cyberbullying and bullying related to disability, race, religion, sex and culture, and for recognising and dealing with bullies;
- ensuring that all staff know what to do if they come across bullying, that they treat incidents seriously and that they are consistent in their approach;
- assuring parents and pupils that all reports of bullying will be treated seriously.

The principles of this policy are underpinned by the DfE Guidance for Preventing and Tackling Bullying (May 2012) and The Equality Act 2010, and it therefore aims to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The Equality Act also makes it unlawful for the college to discriminate against, harass or victimise a student (or potential student) in relation to admissions, how education is provided for students,

provision for any service or benefit, or by excluding a student or subjecting them to any other detriment.

In addition, under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is a 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. If an incidence of bullying meets this criterion, procedures in the college's Child Protection Policy will be followed.

What constitutes bullying

Bullying can mean different things to different people and takes different forms, but two major elements are that:

- a) bullying is persistent behaviour which intimidates individuals or groups through verbal, emotional or physical aggression.
- b) bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone else.

Bullying can be:

- short-term or can continue over many years, sometimes starting in a previous school
- physical: kicking, punching, slapping, pushing, pulling hair
- verbal: name-calling, personal, family or racial insults
- written: passing notes, use of email, internet, social media
- references to clothing or other possessions which cast aspersions on another pupil's choices or financial means
- exclusion from an activity, inside or outside school
- psychological: a look, whispering, shunning, laughing at someone
- overt, but is more usually covert, and can be subtle intimidation
- taking or defacing property
- belittling achievements and undermining self-esteem

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.

The college's immediate concern is to stop violence and ensure the physical safety of pupils, but of equal concern is the underlying damage that can be caused by emotional bullying.

With the growth of social media and electronic communication, 'virtual' bullying (or cyber-bullying) has the potential to extend the behaviour to a wider audience. With particular reference to the Education Act 2011, teachers have the power to examine and delete inappropriate images or file on electronic devices if they believe there is a 'good reason' to do so. In order to have a 'good reason', the teacher must reasonably suspect that the data or file on the device in question has been, or could be, used to cause harm. Cyber-bullying or harassment of either students or staff by means of social media will be treated as occurring on the college premises, as will other inappropriate internet behaviour which may cause distress to any member or staff or student at the college.

Should the college receive reports of bullying which has occurred off college premises, but has been

either perpetrated by a student at the college, or is an incident in which a student at the college has been the victim of bullying, the Principal will investigate and take action as appropriate. This may include either adhering to the same disciplinary measures which would have been taken if the incident occurred within the college premises, or taking all possible measures to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of a child who has been the victim of bullying outside the college premises.

Recognising likely victims

Bullies usually pick on vulnerable pupils who may also be the victims of prejudice. Vulnerability is not always visible to adults and the victim may look and behave like any other pupil. Even though it is not always easy, teachers should try to identify those who might be seen as vulnerable.

Victims may be pupils who:

- Share any of the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marital status, pregnancy/maternity, race, religious belief, sex/gender, and sexual orientation)
- are new to the class or college
- are different in appearance, speech or background from other pupils
- suffer from low self-esteem, whether as a cause or effect of bullying
- are nervous, anxious, insecure (tend to be sensitive and quiet)
- are younger or weaker than the rest of the peer group (less likely to retaliate)
- are isolated, lonely or 'loners' (sometimes only children with minimal experience of socialising and who are close to their parents)
- appear or have in the past been powerful, aggressive, provocative and disturbed: these are 'active' victims
- are evidently more (or less) academically able than others

Victims react in different ways such as crying, withdrawal, reluctance to come to college, reluctance to socialise outside school, lack of involvement in college activities such as sports, absence for minor ailments.

Recognising likely bullies

Identification of the 'typical' bully is difficult as the background, nature, motivation and actions of bullies can vary considerably. Those who act aggressively and overtly are obviously easier to identify as bullies than those who are more subtle and covert in their actions and teachers will have to use their experience, training and professional judgement in recognising bullies, who may exhibit the following characteristics:

- is aggressive to peers, teachers, parents and siblings
- likes to dominate, calls out, shows off
- has a positive attitude to violence and exhibits anti-social behaviour
- uses abusive or inappropriate language

Teachers should understand that such behaviour often masks academic or other inadequacies, insecurity, humiliation, the effects of being bullied themselves and other emotional and family problems. Alternatively, such students may be academically clever, confident, arrogant, undisciplined at home and spoilt.

What to do if bullying occurs

Initial steps:

- always treat the incident seriously. Listen to parents or pupils and assure them that you will investigate the matter, take action and inform them of the outcome. Assure parents that reporting any incident will not aggravate the situation and that no significant action can be taken unless the perpetrator is named
- parents, staff and students should report any incident to the Principal and, in consultation with her, investigate and log the reported incident(s), and take other necessary action as soon as possible
- reassure the victim and offer support and advice
- make the college's strong disapproval plain to the bully/bullies
- decide and institute disciplinary measures as appropriate and oversee an apology.

The Principal will inform both sets of parents if necessary. She will report back to any parent(s) who may have raised the matter in the first place. If appropriate, she will suggest a review date.

Relevant staff will be told what has happened and will not perpetuate the incident by continued references to it, unless it should re-occur.

Sanctions

The Principal will implement disciplinary measures that will be swift and appropriate to the level of bullying that has occurred. Sanctions might include:

- forfeiture of outings or participating in extra-curricular activities
- detentions or supervised study periods which remove the student from the wider student body
- suspension (automatic for cyber-bullying or serious abuse of email, internet or social media)
- permanent exclusion, although more usually parents will agree to withdraw their child

Students are made fully aware of the college's zero-tolerance of bullying. The Student Handbook is given out to all students at the beginning of each academic year, and the main contents are highlighted at the annual student induction meeting which all students must attend. The Student Handbook includes an abridged version of this Anti-Bullying Policy, in addition the Behaviour Policy, which makes it clear that any and all forms of bullying are defined as 'totally unacceptable behaviour', and clearly sets out the sanctions that may be imposed for serious breaches of conduct.

How to help the victim and the bully

The victim: All students must feel that the college is concerned about them and that they can trust the responsible adults within the community. The Principal and staff should give additional pastoral support and help the victims by:

- encouraging them to talk openly, if necessary to another member of staff of their choice with whom they feel at ease;

- giving them the opportunity to write about their feelings;
- conveying to them (and all other students) that 'it's ok to tell';
- helping them to be more assertive: by teaching them both to tease and be teased, by acting out ways to cope, by learning to say 'no' firmly, by developing a more confident manner;
- eliminating, with the support of parents, obvious causes of bullying, e.g. personal hygiene
- helping the victim to work together with the victim after the problem has been resolved
- contacting parents to discuss ways in which they can encourage the building of confidence at home. NB: it is unhelpful if we appear to criticise home attitudes, or those prescribed by religious belief – this should be handled by the Principal.

The bully: In circumstances where the Principal has decided that the incidence of bullying has been minor enough to be disciplined by lighter sanctions, the bully may need additional support, care and counselling if further bullying is to be prevented. It is important that the members of staff most concerned should:

- investigate the incident fully with the bully and listen to his or her story, remembering that two versions of the same incident will rarely tally
- help the bully to understand what it is like to be bullied, appeal to his or her better nature, try to develop both empathy and sympathy for victims;
- ensure that there is atonement by overseeing a full apology to the victim, followed by a letter if appropriate;
- set clear expectations about future behaviour;
- state the consequences of failure to meet these expectations;
- praise/reward good behaviour;
- the member of staff and the Principal may decide to speak to the parents to ascertain if there is any explanation to be found at home and to discuss future tactics.

Raising Awareness

Pupils: Students need to be made aware that the college disapproves of bullying and will not tolerate it, that victims will be supported and that bullies will be punished.

Wherever possible, the PSHCE programme, the curriculum and other activities will be used to raise awareness. In general, the college ethos and the specific aim creating a warm, friendly and tolerant atmosphere in which each student is valued, promotes an environment in which bullying should not occur. This ethos should be fostered and supported by staff and students alike during all their interactions in college.

Staff: Staff should be vigilant during students' free periods and other activities to the possibility of bullying. In order to increase awareness and understanding, any instances of bullying and strategies for dealing with future incidents will be discussed at staff meetings. Training for key staff involved in the pastoral care of students will also be provided by means of the Educare Preventing Bullying Behaviour programme, which offers four short training modules and has been written by the NSPCC with input from other bodies such as Childline and the Anti-Bullying Alliance.

Parents: The management of the college, the atmosphere prevailing in Westminster Tutors and the degree of co-operation and communication between home and college must be such that parents do not worry about their children being bullied. Parents must feel confident that the college will listen, take their concerns seriously and act against bullies; they must feel confident that any victims will be

supported and that effective strategies are in place to try to prevent and to deal with instances of bullying.

Parental awareness will be raised by:

- informing them of the existence of the Anti-Bullying policy and making it available to them
- communication and co-operation with parents of both bullies and victims, discussing what they can do at home to prompt new behaviour in the bully and to build self-confidence in the victim.

Celebrating Success

Westminster Tutors is fortunate in being a very small community which is successful in promoting a warm, friendly and tolerant atmosphere. However, it is essential not be complacent. The number of annual reported incidents of bullying will be recorded in this policy, with reported incidents embracing:

- i) situations where a student has confided in a member of staff
- ii) situations where a member of staff has noted or raised concerns relating to bullying
- iii) situations where parents/guardians have raised concerns or reported a bullying incident

In addition, both parents and students will be consulted on an annual basis to ascertain whether the students firstly, feel safe, and secondly, whether they feel that the college is either free from bullying, or that the college deals with all types of bullying very well.

Number of Bullying Incidents Reported in Academic Year 2012-2013:	None
Number of Bullying Incidents Reported in Academic Year 2013-2014:	None
Number of Bullying Incidents Reported in Academic Year 2014-2015:	None
Number of Bullying Incidents Reported in Academic Year 2015-2016:	None
Number of Bullying Incidents Reported in Academic Year 2016-2017:	None

Updated VM Jan 2018