

Westminster Tutors



Anti-Bullying Policy
2023-2024

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Anti-Bullying Policy enshrines a central aspect of Westminster Tutors' ethos: to provide a warm, friendly, and inclusive atmosphere in which each student is valued. Furthermore, all students' safeguarding and well-being are crucial for developing happy, confident, and considerate individuals who integrate successfully with their peers and can positively contribute to community life. To achieve this, the college aims to prevent bullying and deal effectively with it if it does occur.
- 1.2 This policy should be read and understood in the context of our Behaviour Policy, our Equality and Diversity Policy, and our approach to PSHCE.
- 1.3 This policy has been written in the context of our responsibilities under the following:
- The Equality Act 2010. The Act makes it unlawful in England and Wales for the responsible body of a college to discriminate against, harass or victimise a student, exclude them or subject them to any other detriment.
 - The Private Further Education framework standards.

2. Aims

- 2.1 The aims of this policy are that Westminster Tutors will:
- Maintain an environment characterised by warmth, positive regard, and mutual respect so that bullying will be less likely.
 - Raise awareness of bullying through the curriculum, PSHCE and other activities.
 - Have a Behaviour Policy that clarifies that all forms of bullying are totally unacceptable.
 - Developing effective strategies for recognising and supporting victims of bullying, including homophobic bullying, online bullying 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 encounter bullying, how to treat incidents seriously, and how to be consistent in their approach.
 - Assuring parents and students that all reports of bullying will be treated seriously.
- 2.2 The principles of this policy aim to underpin the DfE Guidance for preventing bullying, [Preventing bullying - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).

3. What constitutes bullying?

- 3.1 Bullying involves an imbalance of power, making it hard for those bullied to defend themselves. Bullying may be seen or felt physically, online, or psychologically and includes social isolation, intimidation, and any threat of violence.

It is defined as follows: -

- It is deliberately hurtful behaviour; and
- It is repeated over time.

3.2 Bullying may take various forms and is often motivated by prejudice, including:

- **Cyber:** the use of electronic communications, including email, mobile phones, text/multi-media messaging, photographs/video, online profiling, websites, social networks, and instant messaging, all with the intention to frighten, embarrass or harass. This can happen at any time of day with a potentially wider audience and more accessories as people forward on with a simple click.
- **Disability:** because of, or focusing on, the issue of disability.
- **Emotional:** being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g., hiding books, threatening gestures).
- **Homophobic or Transphobic:** because of, or focusing on, the issues of sexuality and/or gender identity.
- **Physical:** pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence inflicted on another individual.
- **Racist/Cultural/Religious:** racial, cultural, or religious taunts, comments, or gestures.
- **Sexual:** sexually abusive taunts, comments, or gestures.
- **Verbal:** for example, name-calling, sarcasm, and spreading rumours.

3.3 Westminster Tutors believe bullying is a behaviour choice and that anyone can be encouraged to change their behaviour. It can be an individual or a group.

3.4 Westminster Tutors respect differences, welcome diversity in young people and society in general, and believe our college should be inclusive.

3.5 Westminster Tutors believe that students should have the right to feel safe, secure and valued and that creating a safe environment and dealing with bullying is everyone's responsibility.

3.6 Westminster Tutors supports a range of positive strategies to deal with bullying and actively challenges the use of humiliation, fear, ridicule, and other similar approaches to reduce bullying.

3.7 Bullying can result in long-term psychological damage and, in extreme cases, suicide. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on the grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, including transgender, special educational needs and disability, or because a student is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between young people or perceived differences. Any prejudice-based language is unacceptable.

3.8 Bullying is not a criminal offence. However, there are criminal laws in the UK that apply to harassment and threatening behaviour. If the college feels that an offence may have been committed, our staff will seek assistance from the police.

- 3.9 College visits are a part of everyday college life; this policy applies when students are off-site, and teachers can discipline students reasonably for conduct on and off the college premises. As such, any bullying incidents occurring off the premises, such as on public transport or in the local community, will fall under this policy and be treated accordingly. If the matter involves criminal activity, the police will always be informed.

4. Our Procedures

- 4.1 Effective staff training is an essential aspect of our work to prevent and tackle bullying, including the different types. All staff have had relevant training and understand the importance of this policy. Our Senior Leadership Team ensures that all staff understand the principles and purpose of the college's policy, the legal responsibilities, how to resolve problems and where to seek support. We use specialised skills to help our staff understand the needs of any students, including special educational needs and disability and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students.
- 4.2 Westminster Tutors understands that bullying can occur anywhere and that we have a responsibility to be vigilant for incidents, especially at times and in places where it is more likely to occur. Our college ensures that our buildings' physical layout and safety mechanisms, such as CCTV, help discourage and reduce the risk of bullying.
- 4.3 We aim to ensure that staff feel confident to tackle all forms of bullying and that students are empowered to say "no" to bullying.
- 4.4 If a member of staff suspects that bullying is taking place or a disclosure is made to them about an incident of bullying, they should always consult a senior member of staff. Under the guidance of a senior staff member, an age-appropriate investigation should take place. In separate meetings, all conversations should be recorded in writing and arranged with those involved to establish their version of events and assure them that the situation will be dealt with sensitively but firmly and fully.
- 4.5 Parents of both parties are always kept fully informed about how the alleged bullying is being handled.
- 4.6 Bullying behaviour will normally be addressed through mediation and discussion for all parties involved. A proven allegation of severe bullying will result in suspension or exclusion, with the possible involvement of the police. Following the incident, a senior staff member oversees the monitoring of the situation, liaising directly with relevant teachers to check that further bullying is not occurring.
- 4.7 Parents are asked to keep the college and staff informed of any concerns and encourage their child to report any incidents immediately to an appropriate staff member. The Principal will ensure that the incident and any action taken are formally recorded in the behaviour incident log.

5. Preventative Strategies

- 5.1 As a successful college, we create an environment that prevents bullying from being a serious problem in the first place.
- 5.2 We proactively gather intelligence about issues between students that might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying from occurring in the first place. We talk with students through the curriculum about issues of difference and use dedicated project time and events such as special assemblies. We keep lines of communication open so students feel included.
- 5.3 We know that to excel at tackling bullying is fostered through an ethos of good behaviour where students treat one another and the college staff respectfully because they know this is the right way to behave. Values of respect for staff and other students, an understanding of the value of education, British values, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate the college environment. We reinforce these messages through the behaviour and attitudes of our staff, who set a good example.

6. Successful Intervention Strategies

- 6.1 Westminster Tutors applies disciplinary measures to students who bully to show clearly that their behaviour is wrong. In accordance with our Behaviour Policy, we apply sanctions fairly, consistently, and reasonably, considering any special educational needs or disabilities that students may have and considering the needs of vulnerable students.
- 6.2 We also carefully consider the motivating factors that may have affected the bullying behaviour and whether it indicates any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is the case, the child engaging in bullying may need support themselves.
- 6.3 We involve parents to ensure that they are clear that the college does not tolerate bullying and know the procedures to follow if they believe their child is being bullied. We make sure that our parents feel confident that we will take any bullying complaint seriously and resolve the issue to protect the student.
- 6.4 We involve students so they understand our approach towards bullying and are clear in their role to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders.
- 6.5 We regularly evaluate our approach and ensure that our policy and practice are current.
- 6.6 We ensure that the consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see bullying as unacceptable.
- 6.7 We teach students that using any prejudice-based language is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

- 6.8 We work with the broader community, such as the police and children's services, where bullying is particularly serious or persistent and where a criminal offence may have been committed.
- 6.9 We make it easy for students to report bullying so that they feel assured that they will be listened to, and incidents acted upon.
- 6.10 We draw on the expertise of specialist organisations with a proven track record in dealing with bullying to ensure our practices are effective and keep children safe.
- 6.11 We ensure that notices around the college provide appropriate telephone numbers and email addresses for children to contact organisations such as ChildLine, Kidscape, and CEOP.
- 6.12 We always listen to our students' voices and act accordingly.
- 6.13 We aim to use restorative approaches in college that focus on reconciliation with those harmed. This enables all those affected by any incident to play a part in repairing the harm and finding a positive way forward, enabling everyone to prevent conflict and build relationships.

7. Stopping Bullying: Our Procedures

- 7.1 The immediate priority is to stop the bullying. Bullying instances will be dealt with without delay. The college takes the standpoint that most students involved in bullying do not intend to inflict significant harm. As a first recourse, those who bully will be counselled by pastoral staff; an appeal will be made to 'better nature', and a commitment to correct the behaviour will be elicited. The bully should apologise to the victim.
- 7.2 The college needs to understand the motivation behind any bullying and whether it reveals any cause for concern about the safety of the perpetrator. This is because the bully may need additional support themselves.
- 7.3 In severe or persistent cases, parents should be informed and may be asked to come into a meeting to discuss the problem. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted. All attempts will be made to help the bully or bullies change their behaviour. This may include referral to outside agencies or specialist programmes of support.
- 7.4 Our college uses restorative practice, which includes a facilitated meeting to enable individuals and groups to work together to improve their mutual understanding of what has occurred and jointly agrees on the best solution moving forward. Sometimes, a less formal approach is used with the same principles in place, depending on the nature of the incident. Restorative practices provide an opportunity for everyone to reflect on how they interact with each other and consider how best to prevent harm and conflict, recognising everyone has a part to play and is responsible as such.
- 7.5 Incidents of bullying will be recorded by relevant pastoral staff.

This will enable patterns to be identified, and keeping records of bullying incidents will also allow the college to:

- Manage individual cases effectively.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies.
- Celebrate the anti-bullying work of the college.
- Respond effectively and swiftly to concerns from parents.

7.6 The most obvious strategy is the use of disciplinary sanctions and learning programmes to deal with those students who are found to be bullying. Such corrective measures have three primary purposes, namely:

- Impress the perpetrator that what they have done is unacceptable.
- Deter them from repeating that behaviour.
- Signal to other students that the behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from doing it.

7.7 Sanctions for bullying are intended to hold students who bully to account for their behaviour and to ensure that they face up to the harm that they have caused and learn from it. They also allow the student to put right the harm they have caused. Sanctions available are detailed in the college's Behaviour Policy and will be applied fairly, consistently, and reasonably, considering vulnerable students' needs. Ultimately, bullies will not be tolerated at this college. Permanent exclusion (expulsion) will be used if deemed appropriate at the Principal's discretion, and the relevant procedures have been followed accordingly.

7.8 We have powers to search included within the Education Act 2011 to tackle cyber-bullying, including, where necessary, deletion of inappropriate images or files on electronic devices, including mobile phones. We use this power under the specific authority of the Principal only, and where there is good reason to do so, i.e., it could be used to harm peers, disrupt teaching, or break the college rules. We do not search students in a blanket way.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

8.1 The Principal is responsible for maintaining a behaviour log including bullying instances with support from the Director of Studies (Pastoral).

8.2 The Principal is responsible for the implementation of this policy and for reviewing it from time to time to evaluate its implementation and impact.

8.3 Principals report on behaviour and bullying at governance advisory board meetings. This forms the monitoring and evaluation function of the proprietor.