



WEST VALE
ACADEMY

Anti-Bullying Policy

Approved by:	LGB		
Responsible department:	West Vale Academy		
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Anti-Bullying Policy

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our academy. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a *TELLING* academy. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to let someone know so that the bullying will stop.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggressive behaviours, name-calling or intimidation with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. Bullying can be short term or continuous over long periods of time. We use the acronym STOP (Several Times On Purpose) to support the children with identifying what would be classed as bullying.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- 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
- Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities

To a child bullying is:

- Deliberately hurtful
- Repeated
- Difficult to counteract by the victim
- Different from random acts
- Characterised by an 'imbalance of power' eg. A more powerful person or persons intentionally hurting a less powerful person or persons.

Bullying can take place in the classroom, playground, toilets, on the journey to and from the academy/school, on residential trips and cyberspace. It can take place during out of school group activities and between families.

Bullies and Victims

A child who 'bullies' may not be a 'bad' person, but the behaviours that they exhibit are not acceptable. This understanding is fundamental to this policy.

Bullies are often lacking in interpersonal skills, where it involves a group, the ring leaders will need good social skills and intelligence. They are often charismatic but manipulative young people.

A bully is usually a person who:

- Is uncaring and lacking in empathy
- Often aggressive, easily resorting to violence
- Is poor in communication and co-operative skills
- Is insecure, possibly due to problems at home or at the academy
- Feel a need to gain control or power

- Will lie and be deceitful
- Need to impress and gain attention
- Have a poor sense of responsibility

A victim is usually a person who:

- Is timid and non-assertive
- Is introverted and shy
- Have low self-esteem
- Physically weak
- Is different in some obvious respect (wears glasses, is overweight etc)
- Has difficulty dealing with conflict at any level

Reasons why children bully

Most children are capable of bullying behaviour at sometime in their lives. A child may display 'bullying' behaviour if:

- They feel that they don't fit in
- They need to be seen as tough
- They think that it is okay to hurt others
- They repeat behaviour shown to them out of academy, (TV/DVD, computer games are also influential in some children's behaviours as well as older siblings, children and other people who live in our homes.)
- Not liking themselves or jealous of another person
- They have low self-esteem
- They are being bullied themselves

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Bullying has the potential to damage the mental health of a victim. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

Objectives of this Policy

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the academy policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the academy policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- We take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from the academy/school
- begs to be driven to the academy/school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to the academy/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 unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (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 and jumpy when a cyber message is received
- lack of eye contact
- becoming short tempered
- change in attitude to people at home.

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

Procedures

As the parent of a child whom you suspect is being bullied-

1. Report bullying incidents to the class teacher
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff and the Vice Principal or Principal notified.
3. In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem
4. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.

Do Not:

1. Attempt to sort the problem out yourself by speaking to the child whom you think may be the bully or by speaking to their parents.
2. Encourage your child to be 'a bully' back.

Both of these will only make the problem much harder to solve.

Outcomes

1. All known/reported incidences of bullying will be investigated by the class teacher or by a senior member of staff.
2. Parents of the victim may also be questioned about the incident or about their general concerns.
3. The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place e.g. a parent being informed about their child's behaviour.
4. In some cases, outside agencies may be requested to support the academy or family in dealing with bullying eg police, counsellor etc.
5. In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered.
6. If possible, the pupils will be reconciled.
7. After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.
8. Details of any incidents and investigations may be recorded on a secure electronic system and stored in compliance with the Data Protection Policy,

Prevention

At West Vale Academy we use a variety of methods for helping children to prevent bullying through general assemblies, specific eSafety/Cyber Bullying assemblies, Circle Time, PSHE and Citizenship lessons, raising awareness in anti-bullying week or access to our Learning Support Mentor. Children are also consulted through in-academy pupil questionnaires, pupil council meetings and appropriate surveys. The results of these are promptly responded to by staff.

The ethos and working philosophy of the school means that all staff actively encourage children to have respect for each other and for other people's property. Good and kind/polite behaviour is regularly acknowledged and rewarded.

If a child feels that they are being bullied then there are several procedures that they are encouraged to follow: (not hierarchical)

- Tell a friend
- Tell your School Council rep
- Tell a teacher or adult whom you feel you can trust
- Write your concern and post it in the class worry/ communication box
- Tell a parent or adult at home whom you feel you can trust