



MERCHANT TAYLORS'
OXFORDSHIRE
ACADEMY TRUST



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

November 2025

Wellbeing
Committee

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1. Statement of Intent

At Wallingford School our aim is to send students into the world able and qualified. The able part of this is hugely important to us, and we aim to foster a healthy and safe community, where individuals take responsibility for themselves and show respect for others, emphasising the importance of positive relationships amongst all members of the school and wider community.

Wallingford School is committed to ensuring that students learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment, without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to feel supported and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

2. Policy Aims

- To work towards the elimination of bullying at Wallingford School.
- To enhance the Behaviour Policy which confirms the school expectations.
- To involve all members of the school community in countering bullying.
- To enable students, staff, parents and governors to understand what constitutes bullying and their specific responsibilities.
- To ensure that there are strategies to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse and procedures.
- To enable parents to feel confident that bullying will be firmly dealt with by the school.
- To inform all members of the school community that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated.

3. Definition

Bullying is any behaviour which is deliberately intended to hurt, threaten or frighten another person or group of people. It is repeated and usually unprovoked and can continue for a prolonged period of time. It always reflects an imbalance and abuse of power. It is important that it not be confused with the usual disagreements and arguments where individuals “fall out” with one another.

Bullying can be:

- **Psychological** (being excluded from groups and rumours etc.)
- **Cyber** (abusive text messages, internet messages etc.)
- **Verbal** (threats, name calling, racism, homophobia etc.)
- **Physical** (punching, kicking, scratching, pushing, throwing objects at someone etc.)

Bullying may occur to anyone, and this policy is inclusive of the bullying of school staff, whether by students, parents or other staff. (Members of the school workforce suffering from

or concerned about bullying may also contact their union or professional association for support and advice).

Bullying can seriously damage a person's confidence and sense of self-worth, and they will often feel that they are at fault in some way. Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness or taking unusual absences. There may be evidence in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school. These signs and symptoms may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Some forms of bullying may break the law and may be reported to the police by the school, including:

- Violence or assault.
- Theft.
- Repeated harassment or intimidation, e.g. name calling, threats and abusive phone calls, emails or text messages, sexual harassment and child-on-child abuse.
- Hate crimes – any incident which the victim, or anyone else, thinks is based on someone's prejudice towards them because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or because they are transgender.

4. Prevention

“A school’s response to bullying should not start at the point at which a child has been bullied. The best schools develop a more sophisticated approach in which school staff proactively gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place.” (Department for Education - Preventing and tackling bullying, July 2017)

Preventing bullying behaviours is possible through a range of proactive measures. At Wallingford School, we look for every opportunity to prevent bullying-type behaviours from happening. Some of the actions the school takes to prevent bullying include:

- Effective school leadership that promotes an open and honest anti-bullying ethos.
- Use of curriculum opportunities, in particular tutor periods and PSHE lessons where issues of diversity are discussed and anti-bullying messages are drawn out.
- Use of opportunities throughout the school calendar and at certain times of the school day to raise awareness of the negative consequences of bullying and remind staff and students of their responsibility to report it, e.g. Anti-Bullying Week in November of each year and whole-school assemblies.
- Student surveys.
- Students are not permitted to use their mobile phones around the school. This is partly to prevent cyber-bullying.
- Duty staff have been trained to be vigilant and to watch and listen for any bullying-type behaviours, no matter how small.

- Staff duties have been carefully considered to ensure there are no areas on the school site where bullying can take place undisturbed.
- Seating plans in lessons are carefully considered using any relevant information about the relationships between specific students.
- External speakers raise awareness of issues such as racism and homophobia.
- Posters around the school emphasise the importance of diversity in the school community.
- Review of general and specific staff induction and continuing professional development to ensure staff training reflects the anti-bullying policy and practice of the school.
- Working with the wider community such as the police/children's services where bullying is particularly serious or persistent to send a strong message that bullying is unacceptable within our school.

Wallingford School recognises that specific groups of students are particularly vulnerable to bullying. These include children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), young carers, those from ethnic minority backgrounds, those who are, or thought to be, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersexual, asexual or pansexual (LGBTQ+). As such, prevention of bullying considers the specific patterns of discrimination these groups face.

5. Tackling Bullying

Wallingford School has clear strategies for responding to bullying incidents. These may include outcomes from the school sanction system, as detailed within the school behaviour policy. The consequences of bullying will reflect the seriousness of the incident. All sanctions will be applied fairly, consistently and reasonably – after careful consideration of possible contributing factors, such as special educational needs, disabilities or other vulnerabilities of both the victim and perpetrator.

The school will support the victim upon finding out about bullying, but will also seek to work with the perpetrator of the bullying in order prevent further incidents in the future.

6. Reporting Bullying

Students can report bullying of themselves or someone else in the following ways:

- Speaking to their tutor or head of year.
- Year 12/13: contacting the head of year or head of sixth form.
- Speaking to the designated (or deputy) safeguarding lead.
- Importantly, students are reminded that they can speak to **any** member of staff in school they trust.
- Speaking to their parent and asking them to pass on the information to the school.
- Reporting bullying via the “get help” button on the school website.

Parents/Carers can report bullying of their child or someone else's in the following ways:

- Contacting their child's form tutor or head of year by email, telephone or meeting.
- Speaking to the designated (or deputy) safeguarding lead.
- Year 12/13: contacting the head of sixth form or head of year.
- Parents/carers are reminded that they can speak to **any** member of school staff, who will pass this on to the pastoral team, although in most circumstances, speaking to the tutor or head of year would be the most "direct" route.
- Reporting bullying via the "get help" button on the school website.

Staff reporting process

- A member of staff notices an incident or a student/parent/carer reports the incident to a member of staff.
- In cases of the incident being reported to them, the member of staff assures the student/parent/carer that the school will investigate further. If dealing with a student, especially if it is the victim, they will reassure them that they have done the right thing passing this on.
- The member of staff logs the incident/disclosure on the CPOMs system under the name of the victim and "links" the name of the perpetrator(s).
- The incident will be read by members of the pastoral team working with that year group and the safeguarding team. Depending on the seriousness of the allegation, the team will allocate someone to take action to investigate the allegation of bullying.

7. Investigation

The investigation into the bullying incident(s) will be conducted by the most appropriate member of staff, depending on the severity of the allegation. This may include the form tutor/head of year, designated safeguarding lead, assistant headteacher, deputy headteacher, member of the pastoral team or, in certain circumstances, may include external agencies such as the police.

Any investigation into alleged bullying will be discreet, sensitive, timely and thorough. The exact timeline of investigations will vary depending on the scenario but will usually include:

- Talking to the victims along with other witnesses, and taking statements.
- Talking to the accused to get their version of events.
- Involving other staff, students and parents, where needed.
- Keeping parents/carers fully aware.
- Sharing relevant information with appropriate staff members, including the form tutor and head of year.
- Placing a record in all the involved students' files.
- Making all students aware that such behaviour will not be tolerated.

8. Outcomes

The student who has been bullied will be offered support if they feel they need it. This may depend on the nature and severity of the incident and may include counselling and, in more extreme cases, referral to external agencies such as CAMHS.

Students who have displayed bullying behaviour will be issued sanctions in line with the school behaviour policy. These sanctions range from detentions to fixed and even permanent exclusion where it is deemed bullying has been extreme and particularly damaging.

Parents of those bullied and bullying will be notified of the outcomes of the investigation.

A Resolutions Meeting will be set up to take place as soon as possible. This is the process whereby both parties get an opportunity to achieve closure through mediation by trained staff and/or students with agreement from both parties and parents.

9. Monitoring and Review

This policy, the information included, and its implementation will be monitored by the governing body and reviewed every three years.