

Anti-Bullying Policy

At Woodcote High School we are a proud and inclusive community that celebrates diversity, embraces a love of learning, and inspires ambition in every student. Grounded in respect, we foster high expectations and empower all learners to grow, achieve, and thrive.



Approved by:	LGC
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Policy Lead:	Justin David
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1. Introduction and Purpose

At Woodcote High School we are a proud and inclusive community that celebrates diversity, embraces a love of learning, and inspires ambition in every student. Grounded in respect, we foster high expectations and empower all learners to grow, achieve, and thrive.

At Woodcote High School, bullying of any kind is unacceptable and goes against everything we stand for as a community. This policy reflects our commitment to creating an environment where every student can belong, learn, and grow without fear of bullying.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play.

This anti-bullying policy is a key part of our safeguarding framework and should be read alongside our:

- [Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [Behaviour Policy](#)

This policy applies to all students and covers bullying that takes place:

- On school premises
- During school-organised activities
- Travelling to and from school
- Online or through digital technology
- Outside school where it affects the school community

2.1 Definition of Bullying

Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power*. It can be verbal, physical or psychological. It can happen online or face-to-face.

2.2 What isn't bullying?

Not all situations in which children and young people are involved in conflict or relationship difficulties can be understood as bullying. 'Relational' conflict is one way of describing such nonbullying situations. Knowing how to identify and respond effectively to relational issues is a necessary component of a successful anti-bullying policy. Woodcote High School accepts that just

because an incident doesn't have all the elements of bullying, it doesn't mean it is something to ignore. For example, peer conflict that goes unresolved can easily turn into bullying so should be monitored. Similarly, a one-off instance of a mean moment, whilst not bullying, would still need the involvement of adults and necessary educational consequences for children. Here is a helpful way of categorising peer-to-peer related problems:

<p style="text-align: center;">JOKING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone is having fun • No one is getting hurt (it's on the gentle side) • Everyone one is participating • The target knows it is a joke and doesn't mind 	<p style="text-align: center;">CONFLICT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No one is having fun • There is a possible resolution to the disagreement • Everyone is participating • Equal balance of power
<p style="text-align: center;">MEAN MOMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Someone has been hurt on purpose • Reaction to a strong feeling or moment • An isolated event 	<p style="text-align: center;">BULLYING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Someone is being hurt intentionally • It happens regularly over time • There is an imbalance of power

Bullying can take many forms, including:

- 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.)
- Sexual Harassment (inappropriate touching)

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying includes an online element which may facilitate, threaten and/or encourage harm. This can occur through social media, messaging apps, gaming platforms, mobile phones, and any other digital technology. Keeping Children Safe in Education

Cyberbullying can include:

- Sending threatening, abusive or offensive messages
- Sharing embarrassing photos or videos without consent
- Spreading rumours or lies online
- Excluding someone from online groups or activities
- Creating fake profiles to impersonate or humiliate someone
- Cyber-stalking: using the internet or text messages to repeatedly harass someone – often using multiple apps and platforms and multiple accounts

- Doxing: publicly posting someone's private information (e.g. their name, address, place of work or school), usually without their consent
- Dogpiling: when a group of people, usually a large group, target a single person with harassment

Prejudice-based bullying

Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying) Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping Children Safe in Education can be motivated by prejudice against particular groups. This includes bullying related to:

- **Race, religion or culture** – racist taunts, graffiti, gestures, or making assumptions about someone based on their ethnicity or faith
- **Special educational needs or disability (SEND)** – mocking, excluding or treating someone differently because of their needs or disability
- **Sexual orientation or gender identity** – homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language, exclusion or harassment
- **Sex or gender** – sexist comments, sexual harassment, or treating someone differently because of their gender
- **Appearance or health conditions** – mocking someone's physical appearance, weight, or medical conditions
- **Home circumstances** – bullying related to family situation, care status, or socio-economic background

3. How Our Values Guide Our Response to Bullying

Our school values are at the heart of how we prevent and respond to bullying:

Welcoming: We belong

Every student has the right to feel welcome and safe at Woodcote. We will not tolerate behaviour that makes anyone feel they don't belong in our community.

Happy: We are caring and inclusive

We foster a culture of kindness and empathy where students look out for one another and celebrate our differences rather than use them as reasons to exclude or harm others.

Supportive: Everyone has what they need to succeed

We provide support for both those who experience bullying and those who engage in bullying behaviour, recognising that everyone needs help to succeed and make positive choices.

Ambitious: We aim to succeed at the highest level

We set high expectations for behaviour and relationships, and we are ambitious in our goal to create a school community completely free from bullying.

Self-reliant: We act responsibly and strive for independence

We empower students to take responsibility for their actions, to stand up against bullying, and to support others who may be experiencing difficulties.

Persevering: We work hard and show resilience

We recognise that creating a bullying-free environment requires ongoing effort and commitment from everyone. We will persevere in our anti-bullying work and support students to develop resilience.

Inquisitive: We are curious and lifelong learners

We encourage students to be curious about different perspectives and experiences, to ask questions, and to learn about diversity and inclusion throughout their time at Woodcote.

Respectful: We are considerate and value diversity

Respect is at our core. We celebrate the diversity of our community and expect all students to treat others with consideration, dignity and respect at all times.

Enthusiastic: We embrace challenges and enjoy school life

We want every student to feel enthusiastic about coming to school. Bullying prevents this, which is why we are committed to tackling it swiftly and effectively.

4. Preventing Bullying

What is meant by prevention?

Prevention relates to all the activities that Woodcote High school delivers in a planned and systematic way to reduce bullying . Prevention is at the heart of our anti-bullying approach.

We will:

Create a positive school culture where we:

- Model respectful behaviour and positive relationships at all levels
- Celebrate diversity and promote inclusion in all aspects of school life
- Establish clear expectations for behaviour that reflect our values
- Recognise and reward kindness, respect and positive peer relationships
- Challenge all forms of discriminatory language and behaviour

Educate our community:

- Deliver anti-bullying education through our PSHE curriculum, assemblies, and tutor time
- Teach students about different forms of bullying, including cyberbullying and prejudice-based bullying

- Provide online safety education and promote responsible digital citizenship
- Educate students about the impact of bullying on mental health and wellbeing
- Run annual Anti-Bullying Week activities to raise awareness
- Provide staff training on recognising and responding to bullying

Empower students:

- Train and support our Anti-Bullying Ambassadors – a group of students who promote our school's anti-bullying strategy and provide peer support
- Encourage students to be upstanders, not bystanders
- Provide multiple ways for students to report concerns (see section 6)
- Involve students in reviewing and improving our anti-bullying work through student voice

Work in partnership with parents and carers

- Communicate our anti-bullying approach clearly through our website, newsletters and parent events
- Provide guidance on recognising signs of bullying and supporting children at home
- Work collaboratively with families when incidents occur
- Share information about online safety and how to support children with digital wellbeing

Monitor and evaluate

- Keep records and analysis of bullying, discriminatory and prejudiced behaviour, either directly or indirectly, including racist, sexist, disability and homophobic/biphobic/transphobic bullying, use of derogatory language and racist incidents
- Regularly review patterns and trends to inform our prevention strategies
- Evaluate the effectiveness of our approach and make improvements where needed
- Incidents that do not meet the definition of bullying are still recorded and reviewed to identify escalation or emerging safeguarding risk

5. Roles and Responsibilities

All staff must:

- Model respectful behaviour and positive relationships
- Be vigilant in recognising signs of bullying
- Take all reports seriously and respond promptly
- Record and report incidents appropriately

- Challenge discriminatory language and behaviour
- Support students who experience or witness bullying
- Implement this policy consistently
- Attend training on anti-bullying and safeguarding
- Create a classroom environment where students feel safe to report concerns

The Principal will:

- Ensure this policy is implemented effectively across the school
- Provide strategic leadership for anti-bullying work
- Ensure adequate resources and training are available for staff
- Monitor the effectiveness of the policy and make improvements where needed
- Report to governors on bullying incidents and trends
- Work with parents, carers and external agencies to address bullying
- Ensure the school meets its safeguarding duties in relation to bullying
- Lead by example in promoting our school values
- Ensure that bullying is addressed in staff induction and ongoing training

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs will:

- Take the lead on safeguarding concerns related to bullying
- Liaise with external agencies where appropriate, including local authority children's social care and the police
- Provide guidance and support to staff on safeguarding matters related to bullying
- Ensure accurate records are kept of all bullying incidents
- Monitor patterns and trends in bullying incidents
- Ensure staff understand when and how to report bullying incidents to external agencies
- Lead on cases where bullying constitutes a child protection concern
- Work with other agencies to support victims and address perpetrators' behaviour
- Ensure that child-on-child abuse, including bullying, is addressed in the school's safeguarding procedures

Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will:

- Support the headteacher in implementing this policy
- Ensure anti-bullying work is embedded across all aspects of school life

- Monitor the quality of pastoral support provided to students
- Review data on bullying incidents and identify areas for improvement
- Lead on specific aspects of anti-bullying work as delegated by the headteacher
- Ensure consistency in how bullying incidents are handled across the school
- Support Heads of Year and pastoral staff in managing complex cases
- Ensure that anti-bullying messages are reinforced through assemblies and school communications

Heads of Year and Pastoral Staff will:

- Respond to reports of bullying within their year group
- Coordinate support for victims and those who bully
- Monitor the wellbeing of students involved in bullying incidents
- Work with parents/carers to address concerns and keep them informed
- Implement and review support plans for students involved in bullying
- Liaise with the DSL where safeguarding concerns arise
- Track patterns of behaviour and identify students who may need additional support
- Coordinate with form tutors to ensure consistent support for students
- Lead restorative conversations where appropriate
- Maintain accurate records of incidents and interventions

Governors will:

- Ensure the school has an effective anti-bullying policy in place
- Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this policy
- Review data on bullying incidents and trends
- Challenge the headteacher and senior leaders on the school's approach to bullying
- Support the school in promoting a culture of respect and inclusion
- Ensure the school meets its statutory duties in relation to safeguarding and equality
- Review this policy regularly and approve any updates

Parents and Carers are expected to:

- Support the school's anti-bullying policy and approach
- Discuss bullying with their children and reinforce the school's messages about respect and kindness

- Watch for signs that their child may be experiencing bullying
- Report concerns about bullying to the school promptly
- Work in partnership with the school to address bullying incidents
- Support their child to develop positive relationships and resolve conflicts appropriately
- Encourage their child to be an upstander and report concerns
- Monitor their child's use of technology and social media
- Attend meetings with school staff when requested
- Model respectful behaviour in their interactions with the school community

Students are expected to:

- Treat others with respect, kindness and consideration at all times
- Refuse to take part in any form of bullying
- Report bullying incidents, whether they experience or witness them
- Support peers who are experiencing bullying
- Be an upstander, not a bystander
- Use technology responsibly and respectfully
- Engage with anti-bullying education and activities
- Follow the school's behaviour expectations
- Take responsibility for their actions and make amends when they have caused harm
- Contribute to creating a positive school culture where everyone feels they belong

6. Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

Students who are being bullied may:

- Be reluctant to come to school or frequently absent
- Show a decline in academic performance
- Appear anxious, withdrawn, or lacking in confidence
- Have unexplained injuries, damaged belongings, or missing possessions
- Have difficulty sleeping or experience nightmares
- Become isolated or have friendship difficulties
- Show changes in behaviour, mood or eating habits
- Self-harm or express suicidal thoughts

Children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or are being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead if they have concerns about a child. Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping Children Safe in Education

All staff should be vigilant and report any concerns, even if a student has not explicitly disclosed bullying.

7. Reporting Bullying

At Woodcote, we take all reports of bullying seriously. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward, and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim of bullying should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting any form of abuse and/or neglect. Nor should a victim of bullying be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Students can report bullying in the following ways:

Digital Reporting Form

Students can access our confidential digital reporting form through the student portal. This will be sent to the students Head of Year who will review the referral and act inline with our anti-bullying policy

Talk to Anti-Bullying Ambassadors

Our trained Anti-Bullying Ambassadors are available to listen, provide peer support, and help students report concerns to staff.

Tell Any Trusted Adult

Students should feel comfortable speaking to any member of staff, including:

- Form tutors
- Heads of Year
- Teachers
- Teaching assistants
- Student support staff
- Senior leaders
- Our Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies

Use the Voice Box

Students can write down their concerns and place them in our Voice Box located in The Hub

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers who have concerns about bullying should contact their child's form tutor or Head of Year.

What happens next:

- All reports will be taken seriously and responded to promptly
- The person receiving the report will listen carefully without judgement
- The report will be recorded and passed to the appropriate member of staff
- An investigation will begin as soon as is practically possible
- The student will be kept informed throughout the process
- Support will be provided to all involved
- All incidents of confirmed bullying will be logged on Arbor

8. Responding to Bullying Incidents

When bullying is reported or identified, we will:

Respond promptly and sensitively

- Take immediate action to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the student being bullied
- Listen carefully to all accounts without prejudice
- Manage reports with two members of staff present where possible
- Reassure the target that they have done the right thing by reporting

Investigate thoroughly

- Gather information from all parties involved, including witnesses
- Record the incident in writing, as bullying is recognised as a form of child-on-child abuse and is a safeguarding issue
- Consider the context, including any patterns of behaviour
- Identify whether the incident meets the definition of bullying
- Assess whether there are safeguarding concerns that require reporting to external agencies

Support the target

- Provide immediate emotional support and reassurance

- Develop a safety plan to prevent further incidents
- Offer ongoing support through pastoral staff, mentoring, or counselling
- Monitor the situation closely and check in regularly
- Involve parents/carers and keep them informed
- Make reasonable adjustments where needed to support the student's wellbeing

Address the behaviour

- Meet with the student(s) who engaged in bullying behaviour
- Help them understand the impact of their actions
- Apply appropriate sanctions in line with our Behaviour Policy, which may include:
 - Restorative conversations
 - Loss of privileges
 - Detention
 - Internal isolation
 - Fixed-term suspension
 - Offsite behaviour directives
 - Permanent exclusion (in the most serious cases)

Provide support to help them change their behaviour, which may include:

- Mentoring or coaching
- Targeted interventions
- Involvement of external agencies
- Involve parents/carers and work in partnership to address the behaviour
- Monitor behaviour closely and provide ongoing support

Support bystanders and witnesses

- Recognise that witnessing bullying can be distressing
- Provide support where needed
- Reinforce the importance of reporting concerns
- Educate about being an upstander rather than a bystander

Follow up and monitor

- Continue to monitor all students involved
- Review the effectiveness of interventions

- Make adjustments to support plans as needed
- Keep detailed records of actions taken and outcomes

9. Reporting to External Agencies

We will report bullying incidents to the relevant agency if we think the incident constitutes a child protection concern – this would be where there's "reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm" or if the incident could be a criminal offence or pose a serious threat to a member of the public.

We will make sure our Designated Safeguarding Lead knows about the incident, but we will not delay taking action if the DSL is not available.

For racist incidents specifically, we will follow any reporting requirements set by our local authority and will report to the police if we believe a crime has been committed.

10. Cyberbullying

Abuse that occurs online or outside of the school should not be downplayed and should be treated equally seriously. Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping Children Safe in Education

Our approach to preventing cyberbullying

- Educate students about staying safe online through our PSHE curriculum, assemblies, and dedicated online safety sessions
- Promote digital citizenship and responsible use of technology
- Ensure appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place on school devices and networks Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Have a clear mobile phone policy that addresses how devices should be used on school premises Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Work with parents and carers to raise awareness of cyberbullying and how to support their children online

Responding to cyberbullying incidents

When cyberbullying is reported, we will follow the same procedures as for other forms of bullying, with additional considerations:

- Gather evidence such as screenshots, messages, and witness statements
- Advise the target not to respond to abusive messages or posts
- Support the target to use reporting tools on the platform where the bullying occurred
- Support the target to block the perpetrator where appropriate
- Work with parents/carers to ensure appropriate monitoring and supervision at home
- Report to external agencies where necessary, including:

- The UK Safer Internet Centre (03443814772 or helpline@saferinternet.org.uk) Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping Children Safe in Education
- National Crime Agency's CEOP Safety Centre for online sexual abuse Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Internet Watch Foundation if sexual images or videos have been circulated Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping Children Safe in Education Keeping Children Safe in Education
- The police if a crime has been committed