



September 2018

Friendship (Anti-Bullying) Policy

At West Thurrock Academy we believe that:

- ❖ everyone should be treated with respect and courtesy
- ❖ consideration should be given to other people, their feelings and opinions
- ❖ problems should be discussed and conflict avoided

We all have the right to feel safe and happy, wherever we are, whoever we are. All acts of bullying are in direct conflict with our code of conduct. Bullying will not be tolerated and claims of bullying will always be taken seriously and acted upon. The ethos of our school fosters high expectations of outstanding behaviour and we will consistently challenge any behaviour that falls below this.

Aims and objectives

At West Thurrock Academy, we aim to produce a safe and secure environment where all can learn and work without anxiety, and measures are in place to reduce the likelihood of bullying in all areas of the school at all times.

At West Thurrock Academy we aim to treat every child, regardless of gender, social or cultural background, ethnic origin or religion as being of equal value and having the same entitlement to educational opportunities. There is no place for discrimination or harassment on the basis of gender, ethnic origin, culture or religion in West Thurrock Academy, and our aim is to eliminate it.

This policy aims to produce a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur. The school recognises that bullying can take place in all relationships: between pupils, between pupils and staff or between staff.

We aim to make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the eradication of bullying in our school.

Challenging bullying effectively will improve the safety and happiness of pupils. It shows that the school cares and makes it clear to bullies that their behaviour is unacceptable. Indeed to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under Child Protection Procedures.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is unacceptable behaviour used by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can be short term or continuous over long periods of time.

Our Definition

*Bullying is an abuse of power by one or more people through **repeated** hurtful or aggressive behaviour with the intention to cause emotional or physical harm to another person.*
(Thurrock Local Authority)

Bullying may take various forms, including:

❖ **Physical**

e.g. kicking, hitting, pushing, intimidating behaviour or interference with personal property

❖ **Verbal / Psychological**

e.g. threats, taunts, shunning/ostracism, name calling / verbal abuse or spreading of rumours.

❖ **Racist Bullying**

e.g. physical, verbal, written, on-line or text abuse or ridicule based on differences of race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, culture or language.

❖ **Faith-based Bullying**

e.g. negative stereotyping, name-calling or ridiculing based on religion.

❖ **Sexist Bullying**

e.g. use of sexist language or negative stereotyping based on gender.

❖ **Sexual Bullying**

e.g. unwanted / inappropriate physical contact or sexual innuendo.

❖ **Homophobic Bullying**

e.g. name-calling, innuendo or negative stereotyping based on sexual orientation or use of homophobic language.

❖ **SEN / Disability Bullying**

e.g. name-calling, innuendo, negative stereotyping or excluding from activity based on disability or learning difficulties.

❖ **Gifted / Talented Bullying**

e.g. name-calling, innuendo, ostracism or negative peer pressure based on high levels of ability or effort.

❖ **Cyber Bullying**

e.g. abuse on-line, such as Twitter or Facebook, via emails or via text message, such as WhatsApp, interfering with electronic files, setting up or promoting inappropriate websites and inappropriate sharing of images from webcams/mobile phones.

Bullying is not:

It is important to understand that bullying is not the odd occasion of falling out with friends, the odd fight, name-calling, arguments or when the occasional trick or joke is played on someone. It is bullying if it occurs several times, over time, on purpose. Children sometimes fall out or say things because they are upset. When occasional problems of this kind arise, it is not classed as bullying and such incidents are dealt with under the Behaviour for Learning Policy. It is an important part of children's development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns, the odd name-calling or childish prank. Children have to learn how to deal with these situations and develop social skills to repair relationships.

Signs and Symptoms For Parents and Staff

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 school
- ❖ begs to be driven to school
- ❖ changes their usual routine
- ❖ is unwilling to go to 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 make less effort with school work than previously
- ❖ comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- ❖ has possessions which are damaged or " go missing"
- ❖ asks for money or starts stealing money
- ❖ has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- ❖ has unexplained cuts or bruises
- ❖ comes home hungry (money / 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 social, emotional and/or mental health problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

The role of the teacher and support staff

All the staff at West Thurrock Academy take all forms of bullying seriously, and seek to prevent it from taking place.

Records of all reported incidents are kept. If teachers witness a potential act of bullying, they will either investigate it themselves or refer it to the Headteacher. Teachers and support staff do all they can to support the child who is being bullied.

- ❖ When any bullying has taken place the teacher will deal with the issue immediately and report it to the Headteacher.
- ❖ This may involve counselling and support for the victim, and will involve sanctions for the offender.
- ❖ Time is spent talking to the child who has done the bullying, explaining to them why their action was wrong and how they should change their behaviour in future.
- ❖ The child displaying unacceptable behaviour, may be asked to genuinely apologise (as appropriate to the child's age and level of understanding). Other consequences may take place e.g. a parent being informed about their child's behaviour and a request that the parents support the school with any sanctions that it takes (See Behaviour Policy). Wherever possible, the pupils will be reconciled.
- ❖ In some cases, outside agencies may be requested to support the school or family in dealing with a child continually demonstrating unacceptable behaviour towards others. eg police, counselling and additional support.
- ❖ In more extreme cases, e.g. where these initial discussions have proved ineffective and there is an on-going lack of response to sanctions, that is, no change in behaviour of the perpetrator and an unwillingness to alter their behaviour choices, the Headteacher may consider reduced timetables, fixed or permanent exclusion and/or contact relevant external agencies.
- ❖ During and after the incident(s) have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be recorded and monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

Teachers use a range of methods to help prevent bullying and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. They use assembly, role-play, stories etc, to help pupils understand the feelings of bullied children, and to practise the restraint required to avoid lapsing into bullying behaviour. Circle time is used to praise, reward and celebrate the success of all children, and thus to help create a positive atmosphere.

The role of pupils

Pupils are encouraged to tell staff if they are being bullied, and if the bullying continues, they must keep on letting people know.

Pupils are invited to tell us their views about a range of school issues, including bullying, in the annual pupil questionnaire.

The role of the Headteacher

It is the responsibility of the headteacher to implement the school's friendship strategy, and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy, and know how to identify and deal with incidents of bullying.

The headteacher reports to the governing body about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy on request.

The Headteacher ensures that incidents of bullying are recorded. If a child is being bullied then the headteacher informs the child's parents.

The headteacher ensures that all children know what bullying is and is not, that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour in this school. The headteacher draws the attention of children to this fact at suitable moments.

The role of governors

The governing body supports the headteacher in all attempts to eliminate bullying from our school. The Governing Body requires the headteacher to keep accurate records.

The governing body reviews the effectiveness of the policy regularly.

A parent who is dissatisfied with the way the school has dealt with a bullying incident can ask the chair of governors to look into the matter. The governing body responds within ten working days to any request from a parent to investigate incidents of bullying. In all cases, the governing body notifies the headteacher, and asks him/her to conduct an investigation into the case, and to report back to a representative of the governing body.

The role of parents

The role of parents is vital in supporting and reinforcing school policy on bullying and parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school. Please encourage your child to:

- ❖ follow the code of conduct
- ❖ report instances of bullying.

Parents **should**:

- ❖ report any concerns about bullying to us promptly
- ❖ let the school deal with a bullying problem and not approach alleged offender directly
- ❖ come back to the school immediately if there are further concerns.

Parents **should not**:

- ❖ Attempt to sort the problem out yourself by speaking to the child whom you think may be behaving inappropriately towards your child or by speaking to their parents.
- ❖ Encourage your child to be 'a bully' back.

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

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH INCIDENTS OF BULLYING

These guidelines should be followed by all staff, teaching and non-teaching, who are aware of, or suspect, an instance of bullying.

- ❖ Action and support for the victim must be provided as quickly as possible
- ❖ The Headteacher must be informed of your concerns
- ❖ The Headteacher must follow up the incident as quickly as possible making sure that written statements are taken from the children concerned
- ❖ The Headteacher should, if the situation is serious enough or if it is a repeat, inform both sets of parents of the incident and of the action the school has taken. They should be offered the opportunity to come into school to discuss the situation
- ❖ The offender and his/her parents must be left in no doubt of the school's view of bullying and of the range of sanctions that may be imposed should there be a repeat.

Monitoring and review

This policy is the governors' responsibility, and they review its effectiveness regularly. They do this by examining the school's records. Governors analyse information with regard to gender, age, racist bullying or bullying directed at children with disabilities or special educational needs.

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier if necessary.