



King Edward's

WITLEY

Anti-Bullying Policy

In this policy, the terms “perpetrator” and “bully” are both used. In most respects they are interchangeable but at a few points, usage is more specific in recognition that a “perpetrator’s” behaviour may not constitute bullying and, until/unless that judgement is made, the individual/s should not be labelled “bully”.

This document complies with:

HM Government, *The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014*, HM Government, *The Equality Act 2010, Keeping Children Safe in Education* (Department for Education, September 2024), *Boarding Schools: National Minimum Standards* (Department for Education, September 2022), *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice* (Department for Education and Department for Health 2024)

This document has regard to:

Preventing and tackling bullying; Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies (Department for Education, July 2017) **and should be read alongside the following, which are openly available on the School website:** *Equal Opportunities Policy, Boarding principles and aims, Child Protection Policy, Behaviour and Discipline Policy including School rules, [Child on Child Abuse Policy]*

Information about the Peer Support Scheme (under which pupil volunteers receive training and guidance to develop their listening skills and thus to allow pupils to explore issues troubling them at an early stage, before they may feel ready to inform a responsible adult) is available from the School on request. Staff should read this document in conjunction with *Standards Expected of Teachers*.

Key personnel: Deputy Head, DSL, Deputy DSLs, Housemasters/Housemistresses, Heads of Form and Heads of Section(s). However, all members of the School community should be sensitive to and aware of bullying (including cyberbullying) whenever it occurs; all responsible adults have a formal responsibility to report and/or deal with bullying (including cyberbullying), in accord with the procedures outlined below.

A. How bullying is defined

1. At King Edward’s, Witley (the ‘School’), ‘bullying’ is the name we give to behaviour which:

- hurts or distresses another pupil, either emotionally or physically,
and
- is repeated, or part of a broader movement,
and
- is based on an imbalance of power.

2. 'Hurt' or 'distress' is judged from the victim's point of view (or the way they present to others), not the perpetrator's or onlooker's. This is because some bullies, thinking their behaviour is 'just a bit of fun', seem genuinely unaware of the hurt they are causing and because bullying can be subtle and hidden. The School aims to develop all pupils' capacity for empathy using a variety of means, including a full programme of Personal, Social & Health Education. Bullying conflicts with the School's moral values and social principles.
3. Our definition of bullying includes the idea of repetition. However, if hurtful behaviour has been seen only once, this does not necessarily mean that the element of repetition is not present; a single incident can be an instance of bullying. Different people may be aware of single incidents which together add up to a pattern. For this reason it is crucial that members of the community report even single or low-level concerns, as set out in section C below.
4. An 'imbalance of power' means that the bully has control over the relationship in a way that makes it difficult for the victim to defend himself or herself. Some examples might be:
 - the bully is physically larger and more intimidating
 - there is a difference in age, experience or intellect between bully and victim
 - the bully has found out exactly what upsets someone
 - the bully is a member of a particular social group and has the power to exclude or isolate others.
5. We call this 'bullying' whether it takes place in the physical world or online (see section F below).
6. The bully does not have to be an individual, and neither does the victim. Two, three or more people may be involved on either side. In addition, there are often bystanders who know about the bullying or even enjoy watching it but say nothing. We appreciate that cases of bullying can be complex with a range of roles involved. The terminology used can be seen in the appendix alongside a brief description of these roles.
7. Under the definition just given, deliberately excluding someone from a social group is a form of bullying. However, this is a very difficult area. Adults cannot force children to be friends with each other. School staff will do everything in their power to encourage happy social relationships amongst pupils, but it is sometimes only possible to deal with exclusion as bullying when other factors (as outlined below) are involved, too.
8. It is the aim of the School to eradicate all forms of bullying, harassment and abuse from the School community, and from the personal and professional conduct of its pupils in their lives beyond the School. To that end, our anti-bullying strategy has three main strands:
 - i. fostering the values of tolerance, respect for others and kindness, so that
 - ii. bullying is identified whenever it occurs, addressed promptly and effectively, and regarded by everyone as unacceptable;

- iii. taking preventative and pre-emptive measures to identify and address situations or forms of behaviour which might develop into bullying.

B: Early warning signs

9. In our experience, certain kinds of situation or behaviour amongst young people may provide an early indication of the potential for bullying to develop. We therefore gather information from a number of sources (for example, pupils' previous schools, questionnaires, surveys) to help us identify possible issues early.
10. In addition, we ask all our staff to look out for the following kinds of behaviour, and to report any concerns to pupils' Housemaster/Housemistress as soon as possible. Although these do not necessarily amount to bullying in themselves, we find that they can be early warning signs:
 - a previous history of bullying, either as victim or perpetrator
 - a previous history of unkind or thoughtless behaviour
 - a lack of awareness of the impact of personal comments on others
 - an apparent unawareness of the inappropriacy of jokes or opinions
 - repeating nicknames or personal comments for effect
 - talking over peers in the classroom, at mealtimes or around House
 - dominating conversation such that shy peers talk less than normal
 - entering other pupils' rooms uninvited, and perhaps remaining longer than necessary
 - borrowing other pupils' possessions without asking
 - asking to borrow things or share food in a way that makes it awkward to say 'no'
 - monopolising or 'reserving' particular seats or areas in House or elsewhere
 - cultivating friendships with overly assertive pupils in older years
 - overly physical behaviour such as barging in corridors, pushing or grabbing peers
 - a tendency to be the centre of noisy or excited gatherings
 - socialising with groups whose appearance can destabilise otherwise settled situations
 - appearing furtive, evasive or defensive in communication with adults.

C: Bullying behaviour to watch out for

11. The following are examples of behaviour often associated with bullying itself. We would like everyone in the School community to watch out for such behaviour. Members of staff, in particular, should not tolerate a pupil doing any of the following:
 - teasing someone by (for example) calling them names or being sarcastic
 - spreading rumours about someone
 - making hurtful or abusive comments (including by message, graffiti or notice)
 - mocking another pupil by imitating their accent or anything else about them
 - making gestures towards someone which are designed to belittle or ridicule them
 - mocking another pupil's contributions in the classroom or elsewhere

- interfering physically with someone or their possessions (for example 'peanutting', 'de-booking', 'bed flipping', 'room trashing', hiding someone's things or pushing them off a desk)
- making threatening gestures
- barring somebody else's way or otherwise preventing them from moving freely
- pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, or using other kinds of physical aggression
- throwing or kicking things at someone else
- misusing seniority or imposing hierarchy (for example 'fagging', sending juniors on errands or expecting them to surrender certain common room chairs, queue-jumping, or imposing punishments other than strictly in accordance with House rules)
- encouraging or attempting to compel others to take part in 'hazing' or initiation processes.
- Indirect (spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups)

12. Everyone needs to be aware that bullying is often based on 'difference'. This means that the bully notices someone is different and turns them into a victim because they are vulnerable. Pupils are particularly vulnerable to bullying because they are new to a school, or because of:

- race
- gender
- physical difference
- sexual orientation
- special educational need
- disability
- a different economic background or unusual family situation (for example, adoption)
- an interest in things (academic work, classical music, acting, sport) which are considered 'uncool' by a dominant peer-group

or any of those factors which other pupils *perceive* to be true, whether or not that is actually the case.

D: Damage done

13. Bullying makes the victim's life miserable and has no place in King Edward's School, Witley or society. Below is a list of some of the noticeable effects bullying can have on the victim. Although there may be other explanations, these types of behaviour (especially in combination) are often typical of pupils who are being bullied. Therefore all members of the School community should watch out for and raise any concerns, however low-level they might seem at the time, about boys or girls who:

- become frightened of other pupils and avoid them (or certain places)
- cut meal-times or become reluctant to sit with peers at meals
- change their usual routine, and perhaps begin to miss commitments
- seem unwilling to return to school
- become withdrawn, anxious, or lose their confidence
- run away, or threaten or attempt suicide
- have nightmares, or cry themselves to sleep at night

- feel ill in the morning
- begin to do poorly in school work
- have clothes torn or books damaged
- have possessions which are damaged or 'go missing'
- have money continually 'lost', ask for money, or start stealing money
- have unexplained cuts or bruises
- become aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable, and perhaps start to bully others
- stop eating
- give unlikely excuses for any of the above
- beg peers, staff or parents not to say anything about what they have seen or been told
- become unwilling to use the internet or mobile phone
- become nervous and jumpy when a text or other message is received.

14. Sometimes this kind of behaviour has a permanent effect on the victim (or even the bully), changing forever their self-esteem, relationships, career, or the way they see the world. In English law, bullying which harms a young person significantly in that way, or physically, or which has the potential to harm someone, is a form of abuse. In government guidance it is called '**peer on peer abuse**' [and it is more fully covered in the School's Peer on Peer Abuse Policy].
15. All members of staff are required to be familiar with the School's Child Protection Policy, which explains that they must report quickly to the police, the local authority or the DSL, as appropriate if they have reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm — even if that harm is being caused (or likely to be caused) by another child.
16. The Child Protection Policy also makes it clear that some forms of potential child-on-child abuse must be reported promptly and directly to the DSL, for example (but not limited to):
- Youth-Produced Sexual Imagery ('sexting', 'nudes')
 - gender-based abuse, sexual bullying and sexual assaults (this includes, for example, touching or groping someone else in a sexualised manner such as bottom slapping, 'de-bagging', teabagging or 'sack attack')
 - physical assault causing harm or injury

Sometimes, however, members of staff may not be immediately clear on whether an incident or concern should be called fighting, bullying or child-on-child abuse. In such cases, staff should not try to investigate or make a judgement, but simply pass on their concerns quickly and clearly, as detailed below.

E: Intervention and escalation process

17. Members of staff are expected to intervene if there is an immediate risk of harm to a child, and to report the matter as explained in the Child Protection Policy. The Deputy Head oversees all matters of a bullying nature in School.

18. All members of the School community share a responsibility to promote the happiness and security of others. Therefore, if you see or become aware of bullying directly, whether you are a pupil, a parent or a member of staff, we expect you to do something about it. Everyone should understand that addressing potential bullying at an early stage, and before lasting damage is done, is much more effective than leaving it to smoulder.
19. Staff who are employed to care directly for pupils are expected to try to stop anti-social behaviour amongst children when they see it, by intervening and reprimanding, as is natural to the job. Reasons for intervention include (but are not limited to) the kinds of behaviour outlined in sections B and C above.
20. In addition, however, members of staff (and, ideally, other members of the School community) who see or become aware of any behaviour which:
 - a) fits our definition of bullying or
 - b) is outlined in the bullet points in paragraphs 10, 11 and 14 above or
 - c) might otherwise reasonably be thought significant in this context

— should proceed as set out in Stage One:

Stage One

21. If the behaviour seems to contain an element of bullying, then (regardless of whether or not the staff member is aware of something relevant having happened to the same pupil(s) before), he or she should, in addition to intervening to stop anti-social behaviour:
 - a) *not* apply the labels 'bully' or 'bullying' to pupils or situations;
 - b) *not* try to start their own investigations; and
 - c) *not* impose their own disciplinary sanctions.
22. Instead, the member of staff should, within 24 hours, send a written report of the incident and/or their concerns to the DSL or the Housemaster/Housemistress(s) of the pupil who is the victim. If the Housemaster/Housemistress is off duty, and the role being covered by the Assistant Housemaster/Housemistress, the report should be sent to both. (In the following paragraphs, the term 'Housemaster/Housemistress' also refers to the Assistant in that context). Ideally, other members of the community — pupils, parents — would also pass on their concerns to the Housemaster/Housemistress(s). If the incident takes place during holiday times, the duty member of the Senior Leadership Team should be contacted.

Stage Two

23. The Housemaster/Housemistress will gather information discreetly from victims, perpetrators, bystanders, other adults (including other Housemasters/Housemistresses) and perhaps senior pupils. If the matter is clearly serious, the Housemaster/Housemistress may decide at this stage to consult the Deputy Head.
24. Yet if, in the judgement of the Housemaster/Housemistress of the pupil who is the victim, the perpetrator's behaviour does not meet the School's three-point definition of bullying, and does not otherwise breach School rules, but is nevertheless behaviour of concern, then the Housemaster/Housemistress must log the decision appropriately on the School's online platform. If three reports about the same situation or pupil(s) are recorded within the same year, then the Deputy Head must also be informed.
25. Having decided that a pupil's behaviour is of concern, but is not bullying, the Housemaster/Housemistress may choose to offer pupil(s) specific guidance on their behaviour, or ask suitably-placed colleagues (for example, the Housemaster/Housemistress of a different House) to do so. Such decisions and completed actions must be logged on the School's online platform.
26. Whether the behaviour is judged to be bullying or not, it is important that the member of staff who originally raised the concern is kept informed, ideally via a brief email about the decision and proposed response. This is the responsibility of the Housemaster/Housemistress of the pupil who is the victim.

Stage Three

27. If, in the judgement of the Housemaster/Housemistress of the pupil who is the victim, the perpetrator's behaviour does meet the School's three-point definition of bullying, then the matter must be treated as a serious offence. The parents of the victim must be informed, and a written report sent to the Deputy Head within 24 hours. The Housemaster/Housemistress is responsible for recording concerns on CPOMs.
28. The Deputy Head will promptly evaluate each report of bullying, in consultation with pastoral staff, and decide on the appropriate type and level of intervention. Whatever intervention is decided, the Deputy Head will nominate a senior member of staff to take responsibility for it and to conduct reviews at agreed intervals. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, such reviews will always include talking with the victim. The nominated staff member will be expected to keep written records and report regularly to the Deputy Head.
29. The Deputy Head may decide to intervene at Stage Four (below) or skip that stage and proceed directly to Stage Five. If matters are complicated because a formal risk assessment is needed, or because the bullying has reoccurred from earlier, or because it has included a separate breach of school rules (such as theft or damage to property), then the Deputy Head may decide to proceed directly to Stage Six.

Stage Four

30. If there is no complicating factor, and it appears to be an initial case of 'bullying-in-itself', the School will strive in the first instance to deal with the incident or concern as a pastoral and educational matter, rather than a disciplinary matter.
31. The principal aim of a pastoral and educational response is to stop the bullying behaviour. It is not to try to force pupils to be friends, or to punish the perpetrator. It is understood that victims (and their parents) may sometimes feel that perpetrators have escaped lightly, but we would ask them to accept that a great deal of educational research shows that the longer-term well-being of victims is rarely best served by stringent punishment of perpetrators at an early stage.
32. In addition, bullies themselves are often unhappy children with needs of their own. The School must work to identify and address situations or circumstances which may be influencing a child's behaviour.
33. A wide range of possible interventions, designed to support victims, to deter and educate perpetrators, is used by the School. If the Deputy Head (working with the DSL and DDSLs, Housemaster/ Housemistress(s), Heads of Form, Heads of Section(s) and the senior pastoral team) considers that it is likely to be effective, then one or more of the following interventions will be implemented:
 - The Housemaster/Housemistress(s) and/or the Head of Year will speak with pupil(s) individually, to identify unacceptable behaviour and give advice on rectifying the situation;
 - House prefects and/or a peer mentor(s) and/or a pupil(s) from the Peer Support scheme, working sometimes in collaboration with an adult, will be nominated by the Housemaster/Housemistress to provide younger pupils with guidance on behaviour and relationships;
 - The Housemaster/Housemistress (or another senior member of staff) will ask pupils involved to reflect on their own experiences, behaviour and responses by writing them down and then collaborating in discussion;
 - Formal sanctions, as detailed in the Behaviour and Discipline Policy, including School rules may also be invoked; this will always happen with the best outcome for the victim of the bullying behaviour in mind.

Stage Five

34. If, in the judgement of the Deputy Head the measures outlined in paragraph 30 have not produced the desired effect, or if the Deputy Head decides the matter is of sufficient gravity to warrant entering immediately at this stage, then one or more of the following interventions will be implemented:

- A senior member of staff will be nominated to address a whole division, form or year group, to explain the issue and the School's expectations;
- Parents and/or chaplain and/or counsellors and/or medical staff will be enlisted in attempting to get pupils to analyse and reflect on their own motives and behaviour, and (where relevant) to seek and commit to a solution;
- The Housemaster/Housemistress (or other senior member of staff) will oversee a restorative approach, whereby the perpetrator meets the victim (perhaps in the company of other peers and/or adults, including parents);
- The Housemaster/Housemistress (or other senior member of staff) will oversee a 'method of shared concern' approach, involving conversations with (usually) each member of a House year group both individually and collectively over a period of time.

Stage Six

35. *Severe or persistent bullying may lead to temporary or permanent exclusion.*

The School reserves the full range of disciplinary sanctions for pupils who bully others and who:

- wilfully refuse to engage in or learn from the pastoral process of education, reflection and review set out at Stages Four and Five above; or
- appear to engage in and learn from the pastoral process, but go on to become repeat offenders by bullying the same or a different victim at a later point in time; or
- involve other kinds of offence within their bullying behaviour, such as theft or vandalism.

F: Cyber-bullying

Introduction

36. The School recognises that technology plays an important and positive role in children's lives, both educationally and socially. It is committed to helping all members of the School community to understand both the benefits and the risks, and to equip children with the knowledge and skills to be able to use technology safely and responsibly. Cyberbullying has the potential to be even more pervasively harmful than other forms of bullying because it is difficult for young people to escape from the online community.
37. Cyber-bullying is the use of ICT, commonly a mobile phone including messages or the internet including social media and forums, deliberately to upset someone else. It includes such things as threats and intimidation, harassment or 'cyber-stalking', defamation and exclusion or peer rejection, impersonation and the unauthorised publication of private information or images, but this is not an exhaustive list.

38. Sexting describes the sending of explicit images electronically. This can be via a mobile phone, e-mail or via Facebook or other instant messaging services. Under the Sexual Offences Act (2003) taking an indecent image of a child (someone under the age of 18) is illegal. It is also illegal to send or be in possession of such an image. There may also be further legal implications if an older pupil requests such pictures of a younger pupil. This could be viewed legally as 'grooming'.

The police may be contacted in cases of actual/suspected illegal content.

The ways in which the School manages personal data is outlined in the Data Protection Policy.

Preventing Cyber-bullying

39. The Director of ICT and the Deputy Head are responsible for overseeing the practices and procedures outlined in this policy and for monitoring its effectiveness. The Deputy Head alongside the DSL oversees all matters of a bullying nature in School.
40. Clear guidance on the use of technology can be found in the School's E-Safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy. Staff receive training in identifying cyber-bullying and understanding their responsibilities and are helped to keep up to date with the technologies that children are using.
41. Pupils are educated about cyber-bullying through assemblies, anti-bullying campaigns, PSHE and ICT lessons. Parents are invited to E-safety talks and the subject is also talked about in the "Moving to the 3rd Form" event.

An *Acceptable Use of ICT* policy is presented and explained to all pupils and staff when they join the School. Every time someone logs in they click a button to say that they agree with this Policy.

Responding to Cyber-bullying

42. Most cases of cyber-bullying are dealt with through the School's Behaviour Policy. Some features of cyber-bullying differ from other forms of bullying and may prompt a particular response. The key differences are:
- the scale and scope of cyber-bullying can be greater than other forms of bullying
 - the people involved may have a different profile to traditional bullies
 - the persistent nature of cyber-bullying
 - the person being bullied will not always know who is bullying them
 - some pupils may be unaware that what they are doing is bullying and encourage others to join in when they might not normally do so
 - the target of the bullying will have evidence of its occurrence.
43. Support must be offered for the person being bullied:
- emotional support
 - reassurance that they have done the right thing in telling
 - advise that the person is not to retaliate or reply, but to keep the evidence and take it to an appropriate adult
 - advise that the person may wish to consider what information they have in the public domain

- unless the victim sees it as a punishment, they may be advised to change their mobile phone number
- if hurtful or embarrassing content is being distributed, efforts are made to have it removed from the web. If the person who posted it is known, they will be spoken to and asked to remove it.
- confiscation of the mobile phone
- instruction to the pupil to delete the offending content and say who they have sent it on to.

Appendix:

