North Wootton Academy
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PE30 3PT

Name of policy:	Anti – Bullying Policy
Lead member of staff with responsibility for this policy:	Michele Buschman
Date of governors meeting when policy agreed:	June 2026
Type of governors meeting:	Academy Council
Date of implementation:	June 2026
Details of dissemination:	The policy is available for all staff, visitors, pupils and parents.
Linked Policies:	Behaviour, Equality and Diversity, Online Safety, PSHE & RSHE, SEN, Whistle-blowing and Safeguarding.
Frequency for review:	Annually
Changes since last revision	Highlighted in red

Aims and Objectives

All bullying is wrong and damages individual children (and staff), potentially for a life time. It is therefore a school priority to ensure we develop a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable, and one in which it is everybody's responsibility to prevent it. North Wootton Academy must be a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety or fear.

This policy aims to take a preventative approach. Reported concerns or those spotted are all meticulously investigated and recorded initially by our deputy principal and then referred to our principal. Rare as they are, any formal bullying complaint follows a set procedure with the principal feeding back to all families involved.

What is Bullying?

In many ways, bullying is the most emotive word in schools underpinning one of our biggest fears and yet the term is also one of the most misused words, often leading to disparity between school and families on the matter.

*'Bullying is the **repetitive**, intentional **hurting** of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an **imbalance of power**. It can happen face to face or online.' (Anti-Bullying Alliance definition)*

Bullying behaviour can be:

- Physical – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc.
- Verbal - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling.
- Emotional – isolating others, tormenting, hiding books, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation and coercion.
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc.
- Online /cyber – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion
- Indirect - Can include the exploitation of individuals.

Bullying as a Group Behaviour:

The Anti-Bullying Alliance is a coalition of organisations and individuals who are against bullying. It refers to evidence and research that demonstrates bullying tends to be a group behaviour, with several different roles that can be involved. The traditional view of bullying where there is a 'victim' and a 'bully' was much more complicated, and in fact bullying rarely takes place between a 'victim' and a 'bully' alone: it tends to be a group behaviour. Others can have a significant influence on the outcomes of behaviours among children and young people intentionally or otherwise.
In Christina Salmivalli's groundbreaking work, she identifies a number of roles that children play in a bullying scenario:
Ringleader - Initiating and leading the bullying but not always the person 'doing' the bullying.
Target - The person at whom the bullying is aimed.
Assistant - Actively involved in 'doing' the bullying but not leading it
Reinforcer - Supports the bullying, might laugh or encourage other people to 'collude'
Defender - Stands up for someone being bullied. Knows that bullying is wrong and feels confident enough to do something about it. This might involve talking to an adult.
Outsider/Bystander - Ignores any bullying and doesn't want to get involved.
These roles are constantly shifting depending on who is present and the dynamics in the group.

Prevention
The school is fully aware that the education of our pupils is the greatest preventative measure to issues of bullying within the school. Our TEAMWORK values underpin this beginning in EYFS through to Year 6.

Every child has an emotion peg to inform the teacher non-verbally if they are scared or upset. The teacher then 'checks in' with the child to discuss and support. We hold an annual survey whereby every pupil can report an issue with bullying or sometimes their answers demonstrate they are unclear about bullying. All identified issues in the survey are followed up on a one-to-one basis with their class teacher. Our Anti-Bullying ambassadors have been recognised for the last three years by the Diana Anti-Bullying Award for their preventative work around school.

At the centre of the anti-bullying approach is our school message that we are required to: '***Stand up and Speak Out!'*** when confronted with concerns around bullying. Permanent posters in school promote this.

The personal development of our children as well as their academic education is orientated towards promoting opportunities for all to collaborate in a positive setting and help break down cliques whilst encouraging wider friendship groups. We create opportunities for all pupils to interact with as wide a

range of peers as possible deliberately trying to group pupils in ways that will develop the social cohesion of our pupils. It is a genuine belief that the promotion of belonging to a 'TEAM', be it in sports, drama, choir, volunteering or even in a small group task, is the greatest way in which we can help all of our pupils to 'belong' and provide the social security needed to stop the imbalance of power between pupils that is often the cause of feeling bullied.

The school is aware that even within a group, the ability to Stand Up, Speak Out still relies on a degree of self-confidence. Therefore, the school also aims to directly encourage the confidence to speak out in all of our pupils through:

- Prioritising pupil voice and oracy within the curriculum to teach all pupils that their voice is important
- Delivering a resilience sports program through Commando Joes that directly encourages the quiet members of our class to step forward and speak out
- Self-defence coaches working with the pupils to directly teach assertiveness and practice the ability to shout no, in a situation of self defence

Raising awareness across the school

Schools are places where children and young people learn, develop and grow, but they are not isolated from the stereotypes and prejudices that exist in the wider world. We teach tolerance and respect for others and how to take a stand against actions which are wrong. Therefore, a large section of our curriculum directly links to our TEAMWORK values of Open-mindedness, Respect and Kindness:

- Open-mindedness Day – where we encourage all to dress without fear of comment
- Heritage Day – where the school looks to celebrate the many backgrounds that constitute our school community
- Debating sessions – where the ability to respectfully debate contentious issue is a key focus of the curriculum
- A golden thread of PHSE topics that promote tolerance and understanding
- Explicit reminders of how British Values are taught within our curriculum through British Values Bingo
- A Relationship, Sex and Health Education curriculum with a focus on positive relationships and the wellbeing of ourselves and others
- Regular timetabled pupil voice opportunities ensure the voices of our pupils are heard including a full class by class review of any bullying concerns.

Ongoing, these aspects of the pastoral curriculum create a school culture in which bullying is less likely to occur.

Each year, we fully take part in the nationwide school focus known as Anti-Bullying Week. This is organised in conjunction with The Anti-Bullying Alliance. Anti-bullying Ambassadors raise awareness our Anti-Bullying zero tolerance across the whole school and are available to their peers for support leading on to adult support if appropriate. They also run campaigns, assemblies and competitions linked to TEAMWORK values to get their message across to all pupils. These Anti-Bullying Ambassadors also monitor the friendship benches which they introduced on each playground. Pupils are taught and regularly reminded that they can sit on them if they need help with friendships. Our Anti-Bullying Ambassadors are overseen

by our Deputy Principal and Senior Mental Health Lead and work closely with our whole school pupil Wellbeing Team as well.

Banter vs Bullying

Starting in early years, our teaching focuses on being kind. However, as pupils progress further up the school, they are taught about some of the more complex elements of friendships. In particular, they need to understand that the having a joke at someone else's expense can also easily become more hurtful when there is an underlying imbalance of power. The fine line between banter and bullying is discussed both within the classroom and within class assemblies throughout the year.

Safeguarding

Our approach looks to ensure the safety of our pupils as a priority and therefore, supports the aims of Keeping Children Safe in Education and the Education and Inspections Act 2006. We understand our clear responsibility to respond to bullying, in particular Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006; the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Duty 2011; and the Children Act 1989.

Keeping Children Safe in Education is updated yearly. This document refers to Child on Child Abuse as an area of growing concern. This abuse has the potential to become a safeguarding issue. Our RSHE curriculum now includes this.

Our Child-on-Child Abuse definition taken from the Safeguarding Network is: **'Any kind of physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse or coercive control exercised between children both on and offline.'**

Behaviour concerns are recorded within our Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS) to ensure chronological tracking, follow up and triangulation with our Designated Safeguarding Team.

Identification

Despite our best efforts, it is clear that on occasion, pupils will act negatively towards one another and therefore, the school is proactively looking for when repeated incidents of negativity may link together and develop into bullying.

Our pupil voice safety surveys annually indicates that our pupils feel safe, but the purpose of this exercise is to actively search for any child who indicates that they may be at risk of bullying or who does not understand what bullying is. In this situation, they are spoken to immediately, reassured and other appropriate action taken by senior staff. This action is logged and brought to the attention of the Principal and Behaviour Lead Teachers who also consider any further action required. Pupils know that we care about them and will actively listen to the concerns that they have. In addition, the Deputy Principal monitors all reported behaviour issues looking for trends to follow-up on.

In addition, each class starts the week with a 'check-in' assembly which aims to encourage all pupils to reflect upon their weekend, their emotional states and how this may impact their learning in the week ahead. Together with our approach around Zones of Regulation (see behaviour policy), we believe that

we are equipping pupils with an emotional intelligence which may also reduce insistence of bullying. This is also acts as a direct way of 'scanning' for potential areas of concern.

The school accepts however, that for some children shyness may be a barrier in speaking with an adult and therefore, every one has an 'emotion peg' with which to peg an adult if they are scared or need to talk. In addition, the Principal has a suggestion box outside of his office which is checked weekly and in most cases, pupils can ask for help via letter.

All teachers are asked to actively encourage parents to make contact with the school whenever there are concerns. School staff endeavour to answer all emailed/phoned-in concerns within 24 hours of receiving these where a potential bullying investigation may ensue.

Online Bullying

The school does not see a distinction between bullying that takes place within the school day or that which takes place outside of school. Therefore, we aim to deal with any reports of online bullying or those taking place externally, in the same manner in which we would address those in school if they involve our pupils.

In regard to online bullying, we would simply ask for parents to email us or allow the school staff to view any comments that have been made.

Establishing the Extent of Bullying

Once staff are clear that there has been harm or upset cause, school staff will speak with all pupils involved to try to ascertain the level to which this is a behaviour issue or one that needs to be more formally investigated as a case of bullying. Our Principal's Bullying Log is evidence that bullying is rare within North Wootton Academy, but we are mindful never to be complacent.

The following stepped approach will therefore be followed if such a concern is suspected:

If a member of staff is made aware that a child is either being bullied or bullying then the following action will be taken:

1. The member of staff will inform the class teacher.
2. The class teacher will listen to the child and discuss the child's concerns.
3. If the class teacher feels that the behaviour and concerns suggest bullying, then the teacher will pass on his/her concerns to the Deputy Principal/Principal. The Deputy Principal will also routinely monitor the behaviour tracking log and whole school pupil voice surveys. The Deputy Principal will use this to identify potential victims of bullying and speak with each.
4. Any pupils of concern will be passed on to the Principal who will make a decision as to whether a more formal process of investigation is needed. Stages 1-3 can also be by-passed through a direct email from parents and carers to the school office. At this point, parents and families will be contacted to discuss the matter and agree with the next course of action around speaking to other pupils who may be involved or have witnessed negative behaviour.

Formal Investigation of Bullying

5. If agreed, the Principal will speak to the person who is carrying out the alleged bullying. They will also speak with as many peers as possible to gather a full understanding of the situation; this will

include the alleged victim. All parents will be notified at this time their child has been spoken to about a bullying issue. As much as possible, the pupils involved will be kept separated during this investigation.

6. All conversations will be recorded within the Principal's Bullying log/CPOMS which is reported upon in the Termly Principal's Report presented to the Local Governing Body.
7. Considering the balance of evidence gathered, the principal will make contact with all parents concerned and arrange a separate meeting to discuss the matter. In making the decision over whether bullying has occured four key points from the definition of bullying will be considered:
    - How hurtful were the actions
    - How repetitive have they been and over what period
    - The level of power imbalance
    - The level of intentionality

8. The parents of the victim will be asked whether they feel that the matter has been dealt with appropriately or whether they would like further action or they are confident that this can be dealt with through normal behaviour channels. If parents accept the actions taken, a letter will be sent to all parents of those involved explaining this in full.
9. The Principal will offer both the victim and the perpetrator of bullying any additional support that may be necessary.
10. The situation will be monitored for a period of at least one term to ensure the bullying has stopped with ongoing follow-up by the principal for both victim and bully. Information regarding the issue will be passed to class teachers as the children move on through the school so no further issue occurs.
11. In the event that parents are not satisfied with the actions taken, they will be directed to the Trust complaints policy.

Responding to bullying

We apply disciplinary measures in line with our Positive Behaviour Policy to pupils who bully in order to show clearly that their behaviour is wrong. Disciplinary measures must be applied fairly, consistently, and reasonably taking account of any special educational needs or disabilities that the pupils may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable pupils. It is also important to consider the motivations behind bullying behaviour and whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is the case, the child engaging in bullying may need support themselves.

Restorative Practice

Known as 'RJ', our whole school Restorative Justice approach has evolved as a key element within our Positive Behaviour Policy helping pupils to understand each other's behaviour thus aiming to avoid further negative escalation. Relationships are restored and repaired between both parties by getting advice from a trusted peer in our Wellbeing Team which includes the Anti-Bullying Ambassadors or an adult can also mediate.

RJ, adult discussions and drawing visual consequences e.g. Circles of Harm, Social Stories and Visual Behaviour Plans are useful tools but we also understand that sometimes a child just needs some space (see point 1 below) and time to reflect, self-regulate and feel ready again to positively engage with others.

After an incident, there will be on-going monitoring of the well-being of the bullied pupil and the behaviour and welfare of the bully. This includes tracking by a designated Teaching Assistant.

If the child who carries out the bullying continues, then the Principal will do the following:

1. Time out at break times and lunchtimes
2. Alternative roles given during lunch such as supporting the tidying of the lunch hall
3. Therapeutic Intervention such as Thrive/ELSA sessions, trusted peer support, Mental Health Team Support.
4. Fixed term exclusion at lunchtimes
5. Fixed term exclusion during the school day
6. Part-time timetable
7. Managed move
8. Permanent exclusion

Working with parents/carers

The school seeks to build a partnership with parents/carers in addressing bullying. A question around parental perception of bullying will be a permanent feature with the parent annual survey to ensure with the results communicated to parents in newsletters.

Parents/Carers will be given the right to discuss their concerns / incidents of bullying with the class teacher, Deputy Principal and Principal in a respectful way. Should a parent have a complaint they may seek a meeting with the Principal to discuss. Parents should feel confident that we will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child; furthermore, they can reinforce the value of good behaviour at home.

As noted, the school would welcome emailed/phoned-in concerns and would aim to address these within 24 hours.

Roles and Responsibilities

Anti-bullying policies are most effective when all school staff understand the principles and purpose of the school's policy, its legal responsibilities regarding bullying, how to resolve problems, and where to seek support. Therefore, the policy would suggest the following key stakeholders should undertake these roles and responsibilities:

The Role of Governors

The governing body supports the Principal in all attempts to eliminate bullying from our school. This policy statement makes it very clear that the governing body does not accept or allow bullying to take place in our school, and that any incidents of bullying that do occur are taken very seriously and dealt with appropriately.

The governing body monitors the incidents of bullying that occur, and reviews the effectiveness of the school policy regularly. The governors require the Principal to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying and to report to the governors on a termly basis.

The governing body would also be principally involved in any reported issues related to staff bullying or accusations of, in conjunction with the local authority as per the Trust's Safeguarding and Whistleblowing Policy.

The role of the Principal

It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that there is an anti-bullying strategy and that all staff are aware of it. The Principal ensures that all children know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour in this school. The Principal draws the attention of children to this fact at suitable moments. For example, if an incident occurs, the Principal may decide to use assembly as a forum in which to discuss with other children why this behaviour was wrong. A visual drawing of the consequences may be considered appropriate too with individuals. The Principal will also instruct staff to discuss issues around bullying with their pupils in class time where necessary. The Principal sets the school climate of mutual support and praise for success to make bullying less likely.

The Role of the Teacher

Teachers in our school take all forms of bullying very seriously. Where a teacher is made aware of allegations of bullying or witnesses bullying they will follow the agreed anti bullying strategy.

Teachers attempt to support all children in their class and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. They have class rules on display created by everyone concerned. Teachers will plan and deliver lessons throughout the year on how to prevent bullying and how to deal with it. They will also discuss the impact bullying has on others.

Teachers (and all other staff in school) will record behaviour concerns in line with our Positive Behaviour Policy using CPOMS – Child Protection Online Management System.

Teachers will also oversee the School Parliament/Wellbeing Team and Anti-Bullying Ambassadors within their class to guide and advise them to help their peers.

The Role of Parents

Parents who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying should contact the school immediately with a view to discussing their concerns with the class teacher. 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. We would ask that this involves any acts of cyber-bullying that take place out of school but involve our students as the school would aim to deal with such episodes as if they had taken place in school.

The Role of the Pupil

Pupils are taught and expected to demonstrate our school TEAMWORK values. Open-mindedness, Respect and Kindness underpin Anti-Bullying and positive relationships across our school. Children are expected to consider the wellbeing of others as well as themselves.

All pupils will understand our approach and are clear about the part they can play in preventing bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders who need to **'Stand Up and Speak Out!'** They will commit to understanding what constitutes bullying and learn how to not bully others. Our pupils will learn the skills needed to deal with bullying should it occur. Pupils will take responsibility for their actions and know that using any prejudice based language is unacceptable.

UPDATED June 2026

REVIEW ANNUALLY