

The Willows School Academy Trust



The Willows School Academy Trust Anti-Bullying Policy

Reviewed: September 2024
Next Review: September 2025

ALL STAFF HAVE ACCESS TO THIS POLICY AND SIGN TO THE EFFECT THAT THEY HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD ITS CONTENT

Legal Status:

- Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies: DfE Guidance (July 2017): and the relevant aspects of Safe to Learn, embedding anti-bullying work in schools. Cyberbullying: advice for head teachers and school staff: (November 2014). Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying: (November 2014) along with having regard for the guidance set out in the DfE (Don't Suffer in Silence booklet).
- Has regard to the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- KCSIE Sept 2024

Applies to:

- The whole school inclusive of activities outside of the normal school hours
- All staff (teaching and support staff), the Governors and volunteers working in the school

Related documents:

- *Code of conduct*
- *Positive Behaviour Management Policy (including Sanctions, Rewards, and Exclusions)*
- *Equality and Diversity including Equal Opportunities and Racial Harassment*
- *Safeguarding Policy and Procedures including Child Protection*
- *E-Safety Policy including ICT Acceptable Use*
- *Personal, Social, Health, Economic education (PSHE) and Citizenship.*

Availability:

This policy is made available to parents, carers, staff and pupils from the school office and website

Principles - Aims and Objectives

At The Willows School Academy Trust we seek to create a culture in which bullying of any kind, either against pupils or adults is not accepted by any member of the school community. Bullying of any kind can threaten both the mental health and educational progress of our pupils. Willows School Academy enables all members of the school community to understand what constitutes bullying. We make it clear to pupils, staff and parents that bullying is completely unacceptable. We strongly believe, as part of our behaviour policy, that our pupils have the right to study in a safe, supportive and secure environment, free from physical threats, verbal taunts and any form of harassment. Incidents of bullying threaten this and cause enormous stress to victims. We are therefore strongly committed to the avoidance of bullying in all its forms. We provide a clear framework for dealing with incidents of bullying, ensuring that bullies are dealt with swiftly and firmly. Our straightforward procedures make it easy to report bullying, including online bullying and bullying inside and outside of school. Therefore if bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell, and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. All adult members of our school community should be vigilant in recognising that bullying is taking place, and deal with it thoroughly and with sensitivity. Our aim is to promote positive relationships amongst all members of the school community and to develop a culture in which individuals are listened to and their concerns taken seriously. Records are kept to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach or to enable patterns to be identified.

We believe that the principle means of prevention is through the maintenance of conditions where bullying is less likely to flourish and is more easily detected. We know all pupils personally and it is therefore easier for us to detect signs of possible distress or changes to behaviour or emotional state. Moreover, we feel that it is important that pupils have free and informal access to the Head teacher and other staff. This can be

seen in the procedures we adopt. However, a formal anti-bullying policy is of utmost importance. We aim to promote a transparency in human relationships so that children, by default, become aware of the feelings they may evoke in others.

This policy applies to all Willows Academy activities both on and away from the school site. In the event of bullying taking place among the staff, the Head teacher should be informed and appropriate decisions made with possible reference to the relevant school Employment Policies and Procedures. Accusations of bullying of a pupil/s by members of staff will be investigated thoroughly. Each pupil is treated fairly and with respect. Members of staff to whom disclosures are made should initiate the following procedures themselves and/or consult with the relevant staff as appropriate. All disclosures, whether from a pupil, a parent, a member of staff or a volunteer should be taken seriously and treated with sensitivity. The victim(s) should be made aware that their safety is considered to be of paramount importance.

We are a TELLING School. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff. All adult members of our school community should be vigilant to recognise where bullying is taking place, and deal with it thoroughly and with sensitivity. Records are kept to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach or to enable patterns to be identified.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying can be defined as a deliberate, unprovoked and a repeated (over time) action to intentionally humiliate, threaten, frighten or hurt an individual or group physically or emotionally. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion and belief, culture, sex, gender, homophobia/biphobia/transphobia, special educational needs and disability (as defined in the Equality Act 2010), or because a child is adopted or is a carer. It may occur directly or through -online-technology such as social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email. Bullying can occur through several types of anti-social behaviour. A feature of bullying in schools is that its existence is not always immediately known or suspected by those in authority. The school recognises the seriousness of both physical and emotional bullying in causing psychological damage and even suicide. Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal act in the UK, some types of harassing or threatening behaviour or communications could be a criminal offence; for example, under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003 and the Public Order Act 1986. If our staff consider that an offence may have been committed, we will seek assistance from the police. As part of our Behaviour Policy Willows Academy believes that all children and adults have the right to live in a supportive, caring environment in which pupils feel safe and free from bullying and harassment that may include cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying related to special educational need, sexual orientation, sex, race, religion and belief, gender questioning or disability (as defined in the Equality Act 2010), and the use of discriminatory language.

Bullying can be:

Emotional (indirect bullying) including isolation of others by a refusal to co-operate with them and exclusion - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures), deliberately excluding from social groups or an activity by refusal to sit next to/ talk to/ work/ co-operate with others and refusal to follow staff instructions to do the above, or malicious rumours, e-mails or text messages, and also exclusion from play/discussions etc. with those whom they believe to be their friends.

Physical harm or its threat including the abuse of personal property – jostling, fighting, pushing, kicking, hitting, taking or hiding belongings, punching or any use of violence; deliberately destroying or damaging work or possessions or removing personal property, use of weapons/threatening use of weapon (or any object which could be used as a weapon), intimidation through physical gestures and actions.

Online– not occurring face to face but rather through electronic means including, but not limited to, social networking sites, internet and intranet sites, email, instant messaging, by mobile phone including through text messages and phone calls, photographs both real and manipulated etc.

Racist - Bullying directed at individuals of a certain race, culture, ethnicity, language, faith, and community, national, origin or national status. The distinctive feature of racist bullying is that the victim is selected not as an individual but as the representative of a family, community or group. This is an area where schools are required to keep statistics about incidents.

Cultural – focusing on and/or playing off perceived cultural differences or similar.

Sexist – covers a wide range of behaviour including name calling and “banter”. It is the use of sexualised language or negative stereotyping on the basis of gender.

Sexual - is unwanted or inappropriate physical contact or sexual innuendo.

Homophobic - This is bullying which is directed towards people who are openly gay, bisexual, are perceived as gay. Heterosexual young people subject to homophobic bullying are less reluctant to report it as this may enforce the stereotypical way that they are already viewed by others so sensitivity and positive support is required for victims.

Religious – Attacking faith, belief, religious practice or custom.

Special Educational Needs and Disability – remarking upon, drawing attention to, or discriminating against persons with physical disabilities or learning difficulties or other identified special educational needs such as social, emotional and mental health needs and Specific Learning Difficulties (SLD) - (Dyslexia, Dyscalculia and Dyspraxia).

Verbal - Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, making snide comments, teasing, humiliating others,

Threatening others, inciting others to humiliate and threaten others.

Written – Spreading rumours, writing or printing unkind or malicious-in written form.

Bullying can take place take the form of pupil on pupil, staff on staff ,staff on pupil ,pupils on staff, pupils on parents , at school, home, online, and outside of the home . We consider the pastoral care of the pupils and staff to be of prime importance. In class, this role largely rests with the class teacher and staff on duty. It is school policy that any misdemeanour will be dealt with by the member of staff present when it occurs, whether in the playground, classroom, cloakroom or any part of the school. A common code of behaviour is expected from everyone at Willows Academy (see Behaviour Policy). All staff and volunteers at Willows Academy are expected to treat each other with a professional level of respect. The term ‘bullying’ is commonly associated with acts of violence but non-physical bullying may be experienced by many pupils at some period during their school career. We believe that all children and staff should be able to work and play without any fear of being bullied by any other person. Bullying is not tolerated and all accusations are to be taken seriously and dealt with. We recognise that bullying behaviours may be an indicator of an underlying safeguarding concern and support is always also given to the child who is bullying.

Signs of Bullying and Staff Awareness

All staff must be alert to the signs of bullying. These may include:

- unwillingness and reluctance to return to school, displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet with signs of distress and low esteem;
- failure to produce work, or unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others, excuses for work not done and books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged;
- a change in established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary) psychological damage, unexplained tearfulness; and diminished levels of self-confidence;
- frequently feeling unwell with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches and so on;
- a pattern of minor illnesses and health problems, unexplained cuts and bruises, health problems, frequent absences, erratic attendance and late arrivals to class along with excuses for work not done;
- choosing the company of adults;
- missing property;
- being afraid to use the internet or mobile phone, is nervous and jumpy when a cyber-message is received;
- asking for extra pocket money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact, difficulty in sleeping, experiences nightmares;
- self harm, talking of self harm/suicide
- running away from school or home
- Verbal taunting and pupils sitting on their own or being left out of activity groups during lessons or play activities and gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

Although there may be other causes for the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents, teachers and care staff.

Strategies

We will work to prevent and eliminate any form of bullying by:

- Promoting good behaviour and positive relationships based on mutual respect. Making pupils fully aware of the school's policy through, for example, a list of expectations;
- ensuring pupils understand that if they have been bullied or have witnessed bullying, they should tell a member of staff, their parents or any helpful adult or friend;
- promoting anti-bullying using educational elements such as our scheme for Personal, Social, Health, Economic education (PSHE) education assemblies, circle time, projects, drama, stories, literature, key working sessions with discussion of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice based language;
- developing Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) throughout Willows Academy and the curriculum;
- informing parents by various means of the school's anti-bullying policy whilst encouraging them to support it;
- providing counselling and help for victims of bullies and for bullies themselves;
- imposing reasonable, proportionate and consistent sanctions as and when necessary;
- developing initiatives to raise awareness of the negative impact of bullying by any member of our community such as an anti-bullying assembly and peer mentoring;
- Familiarising all staff at Willows Academy with the anti-bullying policy through training and Professional Development to ensure it is applied consistently and fairly and by showing respect for all members of the school community, they act as good role models for pupils.

Willows Academy's Anti-bullying Policy is dovetailed with the Behaviour Management Policy (with support for the victim and the bully) and makes it clear what the sanctions are for bullying. At Willows Academy we implement disciplinary sanctions that reflect the seriousness of an incident and convey a deterrent effect. If necessary, strong sanctions, such as exclusion, would be used in cases of severe and persistent bullying.

It is incumbent on Willows Academy to have clear policies that are communicated to parents, pupils and staff, along with creating an environment of good behaviour and respect, with helpful examples set by staff and older pupils inclusive of the celebration of success. Integral to our policy is involving parents and making sure pupils are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders.

Handling of a bullying incident is given much thought to ensure that the facts are fully known, agreed and understood by the bully/ies and the victim(s). Bullying instances are reported and recorded so that patterns can be identified. Children are encouraged to share their concerns with the adults responsible for them. Staff will consult with the Head teacher or other senior staff knowing that their response will be sympathetic and appropriate.

The Role of the Staff

The ethos and working philosophy of Willows Academy means that all staff actively support children to have respect for each other and for other people's property. Kind and polite behaviour is regularly acknowledged and rewarded. Children are actively involved in the prevention of bullying. School rules are apparent in all classes and support our commitment to anti-bullying practice.

All the staff in our school take all forms of bullying seriously, and seek to prevent it from taking place.

All staff need to be aware of any obvious or subtle hurtful conduct in lessons and care time.

Procedures

It is important that all staff be alert to early signs of distress, or any change in pupils. If a member of staff witnesses a bullying incident, in any form, or is approached by a pupil about bullying, they should investigate the incident without delay according to the agreed procedures that are as follows:

- Pupils should be reminded of the standards of behaviour expected.
- The teacher will investigate the incident and see the pupil/s involved. The Head teacher should be kept informed of any instances of bullying.
- Parents will always be informed if their child has been found to be either a victim or a perpetrator of a bullying incident.
- victims, alleged bullies and witnesses should be interviewed separately by the teacher first involved and are required to write down independent accounts of the incidents/situations. In the course of this procedure enquiries should be made to ascertain whether or not the alleged bully has been involved in similar incidents involving this or other pupils, thus enabling patterns of behaviour to be established.
- All incidents of Bullying are serious, however for those which are of an even more serious nature, or recurrent or persistent the Head teacher should be informed as a matter of urgency.
- The school will continue to monitor the wellbeing of the victim and the behaviour of the bully. Meet with the victim on the review date to determine whether the bully/ies have stopped their behaviour. If the bullying has stopped comment favourably to the bully, inform staff that the problem has stopped. Inform the Head teacher if the bullying has continued. The Head teacher will then take appropriate action.
- it should always be acknowledged that on rare occasions some pupils set themselves up as victims, and the reasons for this should be thoroughly investigated and appropriate support given.
- in the course of this procedure enquiries should be made to ascertain whether or not the alleged bully has been involved in similar incidents involving this or other pupils, thus enabling patterns of behaviour to be established.

Staff should:

- Be continually aware, watchful and available promoting and modelling good behaviour and encourage the care of others;
- Ensure pupils are appropriately supervised report all cases of bullying-on cpoms.

Staff Training

We raise awareness of staff through training, so that the principles of the anti-bullying policy are understood, action is defined to resolve and prevent problems and sources of support are available.

Online bullying Preventative Measures

In accordance with legislative requirements, we have a whole school approach to e-safety. This includes annual update training for staff regarding e-safety. The school also organises annually an awareness session for parents with regards to e-safety. We expect all pupils to adhere to the safe use of the internet. Also please see our E-safety Policy.

The Procedures for Pupils

Pupils are encouraged to tell anybody they trust 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 various pupil questionnaires.

For children who are being bullied - Remember bullies thrive on silence

- if you are being bullied, tell someone, preferably a trusted adult
- If you can, write down everything that has been said or done to hurt you. Be careful only to write down things that have really happened.
- do not blame yourself – it is not your fault
- make friends or stay around others
- if worried, stay near a playground TA or Teacher at break
- personal belongings should be left at home or handed into the office for safe keeping
- Do not to retaliate - Stay calm - walk away to safety.

For children who see someone being bullied

- If you see someone being bullied or in distress ACT. Watching or doing nothing can suggest support of the bully.
- tell an adult immediately
- try to be a friend to the person who is being bullied
- Ask if they feel they can talk to someone. If they won't talk to someone and you are worried about them, go to a trusted adult.
- never join in with a bully – physically, verbally or by isolating another child

For children who are using bullying behaviour

- Recognise that your behaviour is seen as bullying – physically, verbally, or by isolating; this is wrong and can have a long-lasting effect on others.
- Even if you think that bullying is just a laugh, children who are bullied and those who care for them, feel very scared and/or upset.
- If you are angry and upset about something, talk about it with a trusted friend or adult, instead of taking it out on someone else.
- A bully doesn't have many true friends.
- change your bullying behaviour straightaway and become a 'hero' not a 'baddie'
- Speak to an adult about your bullying behaviour.

Involvement of Parents/Carers/Guardians (including clear policies communicated to parents)

We have clear policies communicated to parents, pupils and staff to create a helpful environment of integrity and respect. This will be achieved through staff members communicating with parents regularly

and setting a good example for the pupils. Through the involvement of parents, the school aims to show pupils the part they can play in preventing and dealing with bullying. Parents have a responsibility to:

- Support the school's anti-bullying policy, actively encouraging their child to be a positive member of the school.
- Contact their child's class teacher immediately if they are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying.
- Contact the Head teacher if they are not satisfied that their concerns have not been dealt with appropriately.

Parents may be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.

- Allow the school to resolve the problem with the bully/ies and their parents.
- Encourage their child to behave responsibly and punctually on entering and leaving the school site. The school strongly urges parents not to incite their child to defend themselves through the use of inappropriate language or behaviour.
- Be aware that bullies have often been victims themselves.
- in the case of online bullying, e.g. messages on tik tok, Whatsapp, social media, emails & texts, pupils should be encouraged to keep a record of the date and time of any offensive message(s), save it and bring it to a trusted adult.

Action should then be taken with regard to each of the following:

Advice and support for the victim and the perpetrator is in accordance with the school's behaviour management policy. Sanctions imposed will be relative to the age of the child. The bully will be supported to understand what they have done and why the sanctions are being applied. Giving general information to all staff, through daily staff briefing and staff meetings, of incidents of bullying, mentioning the type of incident and the individuals involved to support greater awareness of problem areas. We will inform the Local Authority of any serious bullying or race incidents.

The above process and sanctions should impress on the person instigating any act of bullying that: their action is totally unacceptable; it is meant as a deterrent to enabling repeat behaviour and it is a signal to other members of the community that bullying is not tolerated.

Prevention

Willows Academy uses the following methods for helping pupils to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- The school rules
- through (PSHE) education and citizenship activities.
- social stories and drawings about bullying
- bullying prevention projects/Anti Bullying week
- reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly
- making up role-plays
- Providing emotional support to give each child the opportunity to express how they feel.

Methods:

- We watch for early signs of distress or changes in children.
- We listen, believe act and give reassurance when a child communicates that they are being bullied.
- We intervene to stop the child who is bullying from harming the other child or children.
- We help and explain to the child doing the bullying why his or her behaviour is unacceptable and offer support with any issue they may be experiencing that may have led them to bully.

Appreciating the Seriousness of Bullying

Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Children who bully need to learn different ways of behaving and support is given to help them gain positive social skills and have positive interactions with their peers. The school has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying. The sanctions might include apologising to the victim or, in extreme circumstances, exclusion.

Pupils' Response to Bullying

Pupils mainly respond to bullying behaviour in one of four ways. They can:

- actively encourage the bullying behaviour
- passively support the bullying behaviour
- passively reject the bullying behaviour
- actively challenge the bullying behaviour

Classroom Management

Teachers' classroom management adheres to the school Behaviour Policy. This includes a positive ethos with emphasis on the dignity of each pupil, on praise and reward, rather than punishment. The skills of self-discipline must be learnt early in life. All pupils will know that their teacher is the person to whom they can talk in confidence. Pupils will be given the opportunity in class to discuss bullying and how to deal with it. Pupils will be encouraged to discuss how they get on with others and how to form positive attitudes towards them. This includes a review of what friendship really is and how to treat everyone with dignity and respect. Teachers will be aware that they can radically affect the incidence of bullying and that it must always be taken seriously.

Playground / outdoor area Management

The staff on duty will be patrolling the playground areas and constantly monitoring the behaviour of pupils. In the case of minor misbehaviour – a pupil will be given the chance to apologise to the victim – this may stop the situation getting out of hand. The supervisors on duty will report bullying to the Head, who in turn will act in accordance with the agreed policy. All staff will be aware that they can radically affect the incidence of bullying and that it must always be taken seriously.

Monitoring and Review:

This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Head teacher. The Governors will undertake a formal annual review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than one year from the date shown below, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

Signed: Malcolm Shaw, Headteacher

Bal Grant, Safeguarding Governor

The Willows School Academy Trust