



MILTON KEYNES EDUCATION TRUST

WALTON HIGH

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Anti-Bullying Policy

Principles

Walton High's Code of Conduct states that:

Walton High is a centre of learning – a place where the fun and fundamentals of learning matter. Everyone at Walton High has the right to attend classes, take part in activities and to carry out their duties without being hindered by others. There are no innocent bystanders when learning is being disrupted or when someone is being hurt or belittled.

In implementing this code, Walton High will not accept any behaviour which intends to cause harm or prevent learning. Students, staff, parents and governors at Walton High have a responsibility to see that this Code of Conduct works in practice.

Bullying in any form will not be tolerated at Walton High and appropriate action will be taken to deal with incidents should they occur. We are committed to providing a supportive, caring and safe environment where students can learn without fear of being bullied. It is the expectation of the school that anyone who is aware of bullying taking place will inform staff so the matter can be addressed promptly and effectively.

Practice

We provide a secure and stimulating environment in which students can learn. All students and parents should inform a member of staff if they suspect someone is being bullied or is in distress. Parents are provided with advice on the signs to look for that may indicate that their child is being bullied and are encouraged to discuss concerns with Walton High staff at the earliest opportunity. Where bullying outside school is reported it will be investigated and acted on.

The aims of this policy are to identify strategies and interventions to:

- respond to alleged bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way
- deter, de-escalate and prevent any on-going harmful behaviour
- safeguard the individual who has experienced bullying and ensure appropriate support is implemented
- deal effectively with those found to be bullying through appropriate sanctions and support to ensure they learn from the experience in order to change their attitudes and manage their future behaviour
- raise awareness of bullying amongst the whole school community

Definition of bullying

“Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically, mentally or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs, disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.”
(Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies. DfE July 2017).

At Walton High we recognise that bullying is often subtle, usually secretive and hidden. It is destructive in the short and long term for both the victim and the bully.

Bullying can include: name calling; taunting; mocking; making offensive comments; being physically aggressive; taking belongings; inappropriate text messaging and electronic messaging (including through websites, social networking sites and instant messenger); sending offensive or degrading images; chat room misuse; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups with the intent to distress and upset; spreading hurtful and/or untruthful rumours.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological, derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them.

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. Early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and isn't acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating.

Cyber-bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with the potential for a bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff who has been formally authorised by the headteacher, that staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so (to keep some safe and from risk of harm to themselves or others). This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

If an electronic device that is prohibited by the school rules has been seized and the member of staff has reasonable ground to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must give the device to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable.

Types of bullying

Specific types of bullying can be:

- related to race, religion or culture
- related to special educational needs or disabilities
- related to appearance or health conditions
- related to sexual orientation or gender reassignment
- of young carers, looked after children, or otherwise related to home circumstances
- sexist or bullying due to gender

- of a sexual nature or indecent/inappropriate behaviour
- cyber bullying
- harassment, abuse or intimidation of staff

Bullying can take place:

- between students
- between students and staff
- by individuals or groups
- face to face
- indirectly
- online or using smart devices
- between two individuals in isolation, or
- in the presence or knowledge of others

There may be different people involved in bullying including:

- a ring leader/centralised and main person delivering unkindness
- associates of a ring leader who actively join in
- those who 'encourage' the bully, perhaps by commenting, smiling or laughing at the situation
- bystanders who stay back or remain silent and, therefore, appear to condone or collude with the bullying behaviour rather than walking away
- an instigator that initiates bullying behaviour and then lets others take over

There may also be those who try to intervene to stop the behaviour or comfort students who experience bullying.

Signs and symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and follow up their concerns if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- does not want to go on the school or public bus and/or insists they are driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school or 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 poorly in school
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or 'go missing'
- asks for money or starts stealing money
- continually 'loses' money

- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home really hungry (if lunch or money has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous and jumpy when a cyber-message is received
- is frightened to say what is wrong
- gives improbable reasons for any of the above

It is important to be aware that these signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and it needs to be investigated.

Working with parents

Parents may not always notice that their child is being bullied and when they do notice, are not always sure of the best way to deal with the situation. Walton High's anti-bullying policy makes the school's position very clear and outlines the course of action it will take when incidents are reported.

It is also good to be aware that parents may not notice that their child is being a bully towards others. As stated in the anti-bullying policy the school should be made aware of any concerns so that we can intervene, prevent and support all parties that require it.

Parents should be clear what constitutes bullying: **“Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.”** (Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies. DfE July2017).

It is not usually bullying when two people of equal strength or age fight or argue; or when friends fall out with each other or banter. Nor is it bullying if it is one off random acts of unkindness. This still isn't acceptable at Walton High and shall be followed up accordingly but it shall not be classified as bullying.

It is important for parents to understand that if a child has been displaying aggressive or unkind behaviour to multiple others but infrequently this can also be classed as bullying and shall be followed up. What should be understood is that evidence and reports of repeated unkind behaviour to others would need to be reported and recorded in order to substantiate bullying behaviour.

The school may investigate allegations of bullying and parents should be prepared to accept that their child may be a bully, as well as a victim. Parents of those found to be bullying are expected to support the school in dealing with the issue in line with the anti-bullying policy.

Reporting bullying

If the school is not made aware of alleged bullying incidents, unkind behaviours or issues that could stem from bullying then the school is likely to be unaware of anything that may be happening and therefore unable to follow up any concerns and action or support any behaviours identified.

Other than the victim, there may be other people in a position to report incidents of bullying, including: staff in school, parents and other adults; witnesses to bullying, including associates of a ring leader or bystanders.

Reporting arrangements for victims

The school publicises arrangements for reporting bullying through board displays around the school, PSHE and during assemblies. Students are frequently reminded of how to access support if they are being bullied, feel distressed or anxious or have concerns about someone else.

Students can:

- speak to their tutor, a teacher or another adult in the school
- tell a Behaviour Support Assistant
- speak to their family
- tell a friend or an older student they trust
- report the issue to Time Out
- report the information via email to a staff member they trust such as a Behaviour Support Assistant, their Tutor or Head of Year.

Parents can:

- discuss their concerns in their child's tutor, with the Student Safety and Welfare Coordinator or the Pastoral Manager. They can do this by calling the school or emailing with the details of the concern to feedback@MKET.org.uk so it can be passed on. Once an issue has been reported, parents will be contacted to discuss the situation and will be kept informed of the outcome following any investigation.

Prevention of bullying

At Walton High we strive to prevent bullying through a range of approaches which include:

- raising awareness during assemblies of the school's zero tolerance of any form of bullying and the actions that will be taken to prevent bullying taking place. Students are frequently reminded that there are no innocent bystanders with regards to bullying (this is shown on the back of each identity card worn by all staff and students)
- challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers that are actually abusive in nature and not tolerating certain behaviours as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys"
- a strong anti-bullying message is reinforced during tutor time and PSHE when students learn about all aspects of bullying and its impact on both the victims and perpetrators
- ensuring that there is adequate supervision during break and lunchtimes and at the beginning and the end of the day to reduce the risk of incidents occurring
- appropriate use of CCTV throughout the school premises as a deterrent
- raising awareness and available support through the national anti-bullying week

Investigating bullying

All reported incidents of alleged bullying will be taken seriously and investigated. The Pastoral Manager will oversee the investigation which will generally be carried out by the Student Safety and Welfare Coordinator. After investigation, not all reported incidents will turn out to be bullying or may not be as straight forward as first reported.

If bullying is confirmed, the school will consider appropriate action to take according to the situation, taking into account the needs of the victim, bully and the incident itself.

Incidents may be quite complex and we ensure investigations are completed as efficiently, accurately and quickly as possible, keeping parents and students informed throughout as far as possible

Responding to incidents of bullying

Response to the targets of bullying will be proactive, sympathetic and supportive and may include:

- immediate action to stop the incident and secure the student's safety
- positive reinforcement that reporting the incident was the right thing to do
- taking detailed and accurate accounts from as many people required
- reassurance that the alleged victim
- strategies to prevent further incidents
- understanding and empathy
- befriending
- assertiveness sessions
- additional supervision or monitoring
- peer mediation or peer mentoring
- informing or involving parents
- staff led mediation between the victim and the perpetrator (only if this does not increase the victim's vulnerability in any way)

Incidents of bullying are taken very seriously and we will respond to this behaviour robustly by adopting a supportive, pragmatic, problem solving approach to enable students who bully to behave in a considerate and acceptable way. We will deal with bullying behaviour in a proportionate manner according to the seriousness of the concern. Sanctions may be necessary and will be applied fairly and consistently. The following actions will be considered:

- immediate action to stop an incident of bullying from continuing
- engagement of the bully to reinforce the message that bullying is unacceptable and is a breach of the school rules
- loss of break or lunchtime privileges
- detention
- change of class or group
- internal isolation in the Time Out room
- removing the opportunity to participate in an event or activity (in or out of school)
- informing parents
- work with Student Safety and Welfare Coordinator to promote acceptable behaviour towards others
- referral to Student and Family Support Advisor or outside agencies
- Involvement of the Thames Valley Police Safer Schools Officer
- staff led mediation or restorative justice between the perpetrator(s) and the victim(s) as long as the victim feels safe and is happy for this to go ahead
- exclusion

In addition to sanctions, the school may use restorative practices to resolve issues of bullying including:

- non-judgemental support and advice
- mediation in school between parties
- mediation with the support of the school Police Liaison Officer

Support for the victim might include:

- non-judgemental support and advice
- clear identification of staff who they can approach and how to contact them
- changes to seating plan
- use of a Learning Link card
- permission to arrive and leave school via Reception for a period of time
- one to one sessions with a Behaviour Support Assistant or Student Safety and Welfare Coordinator
- review with parents as applicable

Strategies to improve the behaviour of a perpetrator might include:

- regular monitoring
- Behaviour Support Plan or Pastoral Support Programme
- referral to Student Safety and Welfare Coordinator
- change of class or group

Linked policies and documents

The following policies and documents are relevant to the Anti-bullying Policy and can be found on the school website:

- Behaviour Management Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Online Safety Policy