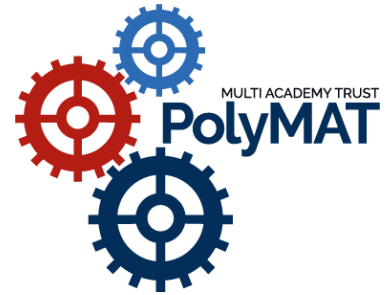




Woolwich Polytechnic
School for Girls



WOOLWICH POLYTECHNIC SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Anti-Bullying Policy

Reviewed September 2023
Approved: December 2023
Revision due: December 2024

Philosophy

All students and staff have the right to feel happy, safe and included. It is an integral part of the 3 school rules; to Be Ready, Be Respectful and Be Safe.

Students and staff have the right to work in an environment without harassment, intimidation or fear.

All bullying, of any sort, is therefore unacceptable. Students who experience bullying will be supported. The perpetrators of bullying will also be supported to not continue bullying.

We recognise the effects that bullying can have on students' feelings of worth and on their school work, and the school community will actively promote an anti-bullying environment.

Policy Statement

It is the belief of the staff and the Academy Committee that all students should be included fully in the life of Woolwich Polytechnic School for Girls. We aim to provide a learning environment, free from any threat or fear, which is conducive to the achievement of individual aspirations.

We strive to reduce and to eradicate, wherever possible, instances in which students are made to feel frightened, isolated or unhappy. Aiming to reduce and to eradicate wherever possible, instances in which students are subject to any form of bullying. We educate our students on the importance of treating others with kindness at all times and have the highest expectations of this. We also provide routines and structures in our behaviour systems and policies to support an anti-bullying environment.

We do all that we can to respond effectively to any and all instances of bullying that are reported to us. We will provide support to any student who have been bullied, whilst also providing support for pupils who are accused of bullying, who may be experiencing problems of their own. We work to restore relationships in all instances in order to encourage a positive end to the situation and enable both parties to move forward without further harm.

We ensure that all students and staff are aware of the policy and that they fulfil their obligations to it and to meet any legal obligations which rest with the school.

A definition of bullying

There is no legal definition of bullying, however our school definition of bullying is: Repetitive intentional hurting of one person or a group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online.

Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber- bullying via text messages or on social media and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is our first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical. (See ref: Preventing Bullying 2017, DFE).

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 a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click. Schools have wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 to give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted on. The Headteacher will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a student. If the

misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed

Bullying can be (but is not limited to):

- physical (hitting, kicking, theft)
- teasing
- making threats
- verbal (name calling, racist remarks)
- indirect (spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups)

We appreciate that cases of bullying can be very complex with a range of roles involved,

.At Woolwich Polytechnic we understand that sometimes there is relational conflict between students. This is not defined as bullying where there is a balance of power. However, where there is unkindness between students the pastoral team will endeavour to support students and re-emphasise our core values.

Main Principles

- Behaviour is considered to be bullying if a person repeatedly uses offensive names, threatens or attacks, deliberately attempts to worry or upset, makes offensive signs, frightens or attempts to extort from another; and
- Watching or encouraging another to be bullied is also considered to be bullying
- All bullying is challenged and addressed seriously and publicly
- Strategies exist to encourage victims to report bullying and to help them deal with bullying - we have developed a 'can tell' culture
- Sensitivity is used to protect victims

Some forms of bullying are attacks not only on the individual, but also on the group to which he or she may belong. Within school we will pay particular attention to:-

- Racial harassment and racist bullying
- Bullying because of students' religious beliefs
- Sexual bullying
- Bullying because of pupils' sexual orientation (including the use of homophobic language)
- Bullying of students who have special educational needs or disabilities
- Any other group/s which may be identified within the school community.

Cyber Bullying

- Cyber bullying includes sending or posting harmful or upsetting text, images or other messages, using the internet, mobile phones or other communication technology.
- It can take many forms but can go even further than face to face bullying by invading home and personal space and can target one or more people.
- It can take place across age groups and target pupils, staff and others.
- It can include threats and intimidation, harassment, defamation, exclusion or peer rejection, impersonation and unauthorised publication of private information or images.
- It can include messages intended as jokes, but which have a harmful or upsetting effect.
- Cyber bullying may be carried out in many ways, including:
 - Threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages
 - Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips via cameras
 - Silent or abusive phone calls or using the victim's phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible
 - Threatening or bullying emails, possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else's name
 - Menacing or upsetting responses to someone in a chatroom

- Unpleasant messages sent during instant messaging mobile phone, unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites (e.g. Facebook)

In some cases this type of bullying can be a criminal offence.

Our school's Behaviour & Exclusion Policy explains how we promote positive behaviour in school to create an environment where students behave well; where students take responsibility for each other's emotional and social well-being; and where they include and support each other.

This is supported by the school having a ban on mobile phones being used on the school premises. The school also a filtering and monitoring system that prevents social media and harmful material being accessed in school. The schools monitoring system also allows us to identify cyberbullying happening on school computers.

Generative artificial intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard. We recognise that AI has many uses to help pupils learn, but may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

We will treat any use of AI to bully pupils in line with our policy.

Our curriculum is used to:

- Raise awareness about bullying and our anti-bullying policy
- Increase understanding for victims and help build an anti-bullying ethos
- To teach students how constructively to manage their relationships with others

Bullying will not be tolerated and we will aim to make this clear in the information we give to students and parents when they join our school.

We will use school assemblies, PD lessons and day-to-day interactions to reinforce this message. Where appropriate we will report illegal bullying to the School Police Officer.

All reports will be taken seriously and will be followed up by the Pastoral Team and where necessary SLT.

When appropriate we will have Restorative Justice to prevent future incidents.

Creating an anti-bullying culture in school

Some of the measures used to specifically create an anti-bullying culture in our school are:

- We advertise our anti-bullying policy on the school website.
- The school supports antibullying week each year.
- We explicitly teach students how to be kind one another and have high expectations of this in all aspects of school life.
- We hold assemblies and teach PD lessons on various areas directly and indirectly connected to anti bullying.
- We have robust and clear behaviour systems and routines to enable an anti-bullying environment such as silent corridors.

Responding to incidents when they occur

Students who have been bullied should report this to their Tutor or Head of Year in the first instance, either in person, via email, via parents/friends or by a paper note if this is easier for the student.

Students who see others being bullied should report this to the Tutor or another member of staff. All matters of bullying should be reported immediately to the Pastoral Team.

Reports of bullying will be logged by the Pastoral Team.

All reports will be taken seriously and will be followed up by the Pastoral team and where necessary SLT.

Work with children who have been bullied could involve some or all of the following:

- We will provide support to students who are bullied.
- They will be reassured that they do not deserve to be bullied and this is not their fault. We will assure them that it was right to report the incident.
- We will encourage them to talk about how they feel.
- We will try to ascertain the extent of the problem.
- We will engage them in making choices about how the matter may be resolved.
- We will try to ensure that they feel safe.
- We will discuss strategies for being safe and staying safe.
- We will ask them to report immediately any further incidents to us.
- We will affirm that bullying can be stopped and that our school will persist with intervention until it does.
- We will involve their friends/older students in peer support/a buddying scheme/ mediation.
- We will interview the student (or students) involved in bullying separately.
- We will listen to their version of events.
- We will talk to anyone else who may have witnessed the bullying.
- We will reinforce the message that bullying is not acceptable, and that we expect bullying to stop.

Support of the student being bullied

As with any form of bullying, support for the individual will depend on the circumstances.

Examples include:-

- Emotional support and reassurance that it was right to report the incident
- Advice not to retaliate or reply, but to keep the evidence and show or give it to their parent or a member of staff
- Advice to prevent re-occurrence
- Advice on how the perpetrator might be blocked from the individual's sites or services
- Actions, where possible and appropriate, to have offending material removed
- Advice to consider changing email addresses and/or mobile phone numbers
- Discuss contacting the police in cases of suspected illegal content

There is also acknowledgement that the student bullying will also often need both support and sanction, parents of all parties will also be informed. The school also recognises that certain categories of children are more prone to being bullied for e.g. SEND students. This is reflected in the training for staff at the start of each academic year. Students are also taught about celebrating and understanding differences and diversity in the community.

Staff responsibilities

Everyone within school is expected to:

- Act in a respectful and supportive way towards one another.
- Adhere to and to actively promote the objectives of this policy.

Students' responsibilities

Students are expected to:

- ensure that they support and adhere to the school rules to Be Ready, Be Respectful and Be Safe, and to ensure their behaviour means other students are able to Be Ready, Be Respectful and Be Safe.

Parents can help by:

- Supporting our anti-bullying policy and procedures

- Encouraging their children to be positive members of the school community
- Discussing with their child's tutor any concerns that their child may be experiencing bullying or involved in some other way.
- Helping to establish an anti-bullying culture outside of school.

We believe it is important for our school to work with parents/carers to help them to understand our approach with regards to bullying and to engage promptly with them when an issue of bullying comes to light, whether their child is the student being bullied or the one doing the bullying. We will ensure parents/carers are made aware of how to work with us on bullying and how they can seek help if a problem is not resolved. Some parents may need specific support to help deal with their child's behaviour. Where our school identifies that this is the case, we will initially provide support ourselves or signpost the parents to appropriate channels of help.

Concerns, complaints and compliments

We recognise that there may be times when parents feel that we have not dealt well with an incident of bullying and we would ask that this be brought to the SLT's notice. If the SLT cannot resolve these concerns informally with parents, they can raise their concerns more formally through the school's Complaints Procedure. We would also be pleased to receive compliments/feedback from parents when things have gone well.