



WAKEFIELD GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

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WGHS Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Purpose of the policy

We place great emphasis and take great pride in the relationships we build at Wakefield Girls' High School (WGHS) and every allegation of bullying will be taken seriously. Wakefield Girls' High School does not tolerate bullying, harassment, victimisation or discrimination of any kind and we work hard to prevent these or to tackle them if they occur.

Bullying is a whole school issue and we take a whole school approach in response; all our pupils have the right to learn in an environment without fear. Wakefield Girls' High School also recognises that bullying may also occur outside school and this must also be investigated and acted upon. We regard all incidences of bullying seriously and in turn expect all staff, pupils and parents to play their part in preventing and tackling bullying.

The policy is available to parents from the Foundation website (www.wgsf.org.uk). It is also available by request from any Foundation school office or from the Governors' office.

1.1 List of abbreviations and meanings

DfE	Department for Education
Firefly	The learning platform, school intranet and VLE
ISI	Independent Schools Inspectorate
IT	Information Technology
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer or Questioning
PSHE	Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education
SenDCo	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SLT	Senior Leadership Team

May / Should	Advisory
Shall / Must	Mandatory

2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Try and prevent bullying, as far as possible, and
- Help staff, pupils and parents deal with bullying when it occurs.

3. Definition of bullying

The Department for Education defines bullying as *'behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally'*.

Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against an individual or particular groups, for example on grounds of race or culture, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual or perceived differences between children. Stopping violence and ensuring

immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make judgments about each specific case.

Sometimes pupils can feel hurt or upset because they have been teased or have fallen out with a friend. *This is not the same as bullying.* Bullying:

- Is deliberately intended to hurt or humiliate
- Involves a power imbalance that makes it hard for the victim to defend themselves
- Is usually persistent
- Often involves no remorse or acknowledgement of the victim's feelings

Staff at Wakefield Girls' High School are available to help and support pupils who have fallen out with their friends, but this will be dealt with differently to a case of bullying. However, the strategies in place might be similar as the impact on the student may be the same, and the situation may have the potential to escalate to one of bullying.

3.1 Different types of bullying

- physical (pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, spitting or any form of violence)
- verbal (name-calling, spreading rumours or untruths, taunting, teasing, gossiping, making offensive comments) – this can be face to face, on the telephone or online.
- targeting differences (see list below)
- social or psychological (making threats, excluding from groups, tormenting, exploiting known issues, humiliating, ignoring, using body language inappropriately)
- forcibly taking or stealing someone's belongings
- cyber bullying (sending of inappropriate text messages, picture messages or images, emails; inappropriate use of social networks)
- prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
- homophobic/transgender - focussing on the issue of sexual orientation.
- disability - incidents relating to special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities (SEND). incidents relating to appearance or specific health conditions can also be included.
- racist -taunts, graffiti, gestures relating to race, religion or culture.
- child on child abuse

Although bullying is not a criminal offence, there are some types of harassing or threatening behaviour, or communications that could be a criminal offence. Where the School suspects this may be the case, advice will be taken from the Police.

It is important to note that bullying can also be a single incident. Both physical and emotional bullying may cause psychological damage and therefore Wakefield Girls' takes all acts and types of bullying very seriously.

3.2 Cyber-bullying

The Communications Act 2003 makes it a criminal offence to send menacing and threatening communications and the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives Headteachers "to such an extent as is reasonable" the power to regulate the conduct of pupils when they are off site.

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 when one person or a group of people try to threaten or embarrass someone else using

a mobile phone (including the camera functionality), other hand held device or the internet. 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.

The most common forms of cyber-bullying involve the use of text or picture messages, instant messenger systems, email, abusive phone calls or posting comments on social networking sites such as Instagram, Whatsapp, TikTok or Twitter. This list however is not exhaustive.

The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 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. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone

The Online Safety guidance in the [WGSF ICT Acceptable Use Policy](#) gives details on the blocking of access to inappropriate websites and pupils are bound by the School's AUP when using the School's ICT facilities and mobile devices on the School site.

Educationally, we will tackle cyber bullying in various contexts, but in particular we will identify the fact that a lot of cyber bullying takes place because the person carrying it out is not face to face with the other person, and this, whilst making it "easier", in many ways makes it more serious and certainly a behaviour with a cowardly element to it - even more so when the perpetrator hides behind anonymity.

Many online behaviour incidents amongst young people occur outside the school day and off the school premises. Parents are responsible for this behaviour. However, often incidents that occur online will affect the school culture. When online behaviour poses a threat or causes harm to another pupil, and/or could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school, when the pupil is identifiable as a member of the school or if the behaviour could adversely affect the reputation of the school, Wakefield Girls' may well sanction pupils and reserves the right to take action against those who take part in cyberbullying. It will support those who are targeted and, when necessary, will work with the police to detect those involved in criminal acts. It will also use the full range of powers and sanctions to punish those who bully pupils or staff in this manner.

In cyberbullying, bystanders can easily become perpetrators – by passing on or showing to others images designed to humiliate, for example, or by taking part in online polls or discussion groups. They may not recognise themselves as participating in bullying, but their involvement compounds the misery for the person targeted. At Wakefield Girls' High School we regard these 'bystanders' as 'accessories' who actively support cyberbullying and therefore may take action against them as well.

Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of bullying or cyber-bullying, this will be defined as abuse and as such will be referred to the appropriate local agencies by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

4. Preventing bullying

Wakefield Girls' High School aims to prevent bullying by:

- promoting good behaviour and positive attitudes in pupils, including mutual respect and consideration and we make sure that pupils and all staff are aware of our expectations;
- developing a culture in which diversity is celebrated alongside the school taking a proactive role in educating all members of their community about equality issues;
- developing a culture in which the vulnerable are protected and incidents which might demonstrate prejudice or intolerance are tackled and addressed, for example by challenging inappropriate language or behaviour;
- instilling high expectations and demonstrate how to behave towards each other;
- creating forums for pupils to discuss such issues eg taking pupils' views into account through the school councils of both sections of the school, and developing the roles that pupils can play in anti-bullying work, for example Peer Mentors are used in selected PSHE lessons. The Peer Mentoring programme runs every lunchtime to support younger pupils in the Senior Section, in addition to our 'Girls on board' programme which has been introduced in both sections of the school; friendship buddies in each Junior Section class are known by the class as a point of contact for those in need of emotional support;
- raising awareness about bullying through opportunities in the curriculum, the PSHE programme, assemblies, and national events such as Anti Bullying Week, E-Safety Week amongst others, demonstrating to all that the safety and happiness of pupils is enhanced by dealing positively with bullying;
- educating all members of the school community about how to keep themselves safe when online or using social media or other electronic means of communication, so they take maximum precautions to help prevent themselves from being victims of cyberbullying. We also ensure that all parents and pupils sign up to the school's ICT Acceptable Use Agreement, which make it clear that cyberbullying is unacceptable. This is accessible for parents via Firefly;
- demonstrating that the School takes bullying seriously and that it will not be tolerated by making it clear to all that there are effective procedures for reporting, investigating and tackling bullying;
- encouraging pupils to report instances of anything they perceive to be bullying. Our very strong team is committed to student welfare and is very experienced in dealing with bullying issues. In addition, all our staff are trained in recognising and responding to bullying and staff awareness is raised through regular discussion of pupil issues in pastoral meetings. Action is taken to reduce the risk of bullying where and when it is known to be most likely to occur. The member of staff with overall responsibility for anti-bullying work is the Deputy Head (Pastoral);
- supporting everyone in taking action to identify and protect those who might be bullied. We also build this into academic lessons such as RS, History, English and Drama to highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message through our teaching in PSHE that demonstrate bullying to be unacceptable;
- promoting an environment where it is not an offence to tell someone about bullying;
- promoting an environment where being an 'upstander' rather than 'bystander' is praised;
- ensuring the pastoral team offers support and guidance to all staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies. Staff are informed as appropriate about pupils and relationships to be particularly aware of or to actively monitor;

Wakefield Girls' High School employs a Counsellor and this is a key role in our pastoral support service, providing specialist skills of assessment and counselling. They are available to give confidential advice and counselling support to pupils who can refer themselves when they have any concerns. In the Junior Section, referral is suggested by the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead team and parental consent is sought prior to sessions beginning.

The School Nurse, School Counsellor, Mental Health Lead and SENCo are all key members of the pastoral team and regularly liaise with the Deputy Head (Pastoral), HOYs, Head of Sixth Form and Director of Junior Section and may attend pastoral meetings and Case Conference, as necessary.

Advice is displayed on form and PSHE notice boards around the school and in the School Nurse's room, directing pupils to self-help including details of confidential helplines and websites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline, NSPCC and Samaritans. Information is also available from the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and the Director of Junior Section.

Wakefield Girls' High School works in accordance with national guidance, and the requirements of our regulatory bodies.

The Senior Section School Council reviews the student-friendly anti-bullying charter and policy each year regularly communicating with parents and guardians the school's procedures, measures and anti-bullying policies including Parent webinars which look at girls' friendships and complex relationships.

5. Possible signs of bullying

All staff, fellow pupils and parents should be alert for these possible signs of bullying and should contact a member of the pastoral team if they are concerned.

- Unwillingness to go to school or return after a break
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, work that appears to have been copied, or interfered with or spoilt by others
- Belongings suddenly going missing or being damaged
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, sitting in the library instead of going out at playtime)
- Diminished levels of self confidence
- Inability to concentrate
- Anxiety, depression, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Reluctance to leave the classroom at the end of lessons or school day
- Choosing the company of adults
- Frequent visits to the medical centre with symptoms such as stomach pains or headaches, especially at particular times or during particular lessons
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Difficulty in sleeping, nightmares
- Talking of suicide or running away
- Reluctance to eat in the school dining room

6. Tackling bullying: pupils

6.1 If a student is being bullied we would advise the following:

- stay calm and try to remain strong. Tell the bully to STOP and get yourself out of that situation quickly;
- speak to a member of the pastoral team as soon as possible. Telling does not make you a 'grass' but not telling means that the bullying is likely to continue.
- be assured that any allegation of bullying is taken very seriously and we will act upon it. The school retains records of what has happened and will consult with the pupils and parents involved;
- If you feel you are being bullied by a member of staff you should take the same action as if it were another pupil, reporting the matter to someone you trust.

6.1.1 The role of the 'bystander':

- talk to a member of staff so they can act;
- intervene and stand up for the person being bullied – challenge the behaviour and do not simply walk away - be an 'upstander' not a 'bystander';
- do not add to rumours being spread about a student and be very sceptical of them.

There are many opportunities at school - including PHSE and assemblies -which will target both the unacceptable nature of being a perpetrator, but also the importance of not being passive and allowing unkind behaviour to go unchallenged.

6.2 Tackling bullying: the school

Each situation is different and the course of action will depend upon the facts and detail. The most important thing is to stop the bullying and ensure the victim is safe. Professional judgement is key in deciding when the time is right to apply more sanctions, but factors such as repeat behaviour, or bullying of a more serious or threatening nature, are likely to define the type of approach required.

All reports of bullying are taken seriously and investigated immediately;

- it is not possible for any person who receives a report of a bullying incident to promise that it will be kept confidential. However, the action to be taken will be discussed with the victim (the victim's parents will also be kept informed in the Junior Section) and everything that happens will be carefully recorded. The victim will be supported throughout the process;
- we aim for a positive resolution: revenge is not helpful for the victim or appropriate;
- sanctions may be imposed (see below) but guidance and help will also be available for the perpetrator(s) to help change her/their behaviour;
- staff will monitor the situation to ensure that the bullying does not continue. If bullying recurs, further action will be taken;
- the school keeps a log of all bullying incidents which is monitored in order to identify trends and inform preventative work in the school and future development of policies and procedures;
- as with any pastoral matter, minutes and notes of conversations between staff, pupils and parents will be taken and kept in the appropriate pupil file on CPOMS;
- all Foundation schools are committed to the eradication of bullying.

We therefore do all we can to prevent it by fostering a School ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable. Teachers use a range of age-appropriate methods to help prevent bullying and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. Teachers also use praise to reward and celebrate the success of all children in a range of different contexts, thus creating a positive environment and a sense of community and pride.

The process below details how bullying will tend to be investigated at Wakefield Girls' High School.

This refers to referrals made by pupils and everyone is encouraged to report promptly any suspicions of bullying to the most appropriate member of staff (Head of Year/ Deputy Head, Pastoral / Director of Junior Section/ Head).

Pupils who have been bullied will be given support determined by the Head of Year or the Form Tutor (or other appropriate teacher) in consultation with the Pastoral Deputy Head and the student.

1. If bullying is suspected or reported the incident will be investigated and dealt with initially and immediately by the teacher approached
2. If a member of staff witnesses an act of bullying, they will either investigate it themselves or refer it to the appropriate Class Teacher/Form Tutor/Head of Year/ Director of Junior Section or Deputy Head, Pastoral
3. If a racial element to the bullying is suspected the Deputy Head (Pastoral)/ Director of Junior Section/ Head must be informed immediately
4. The teacher will record the details of the incident and inform a senior member of staff. All members of staff are given guidance on the School's Anti-Bullying Policy and on how to react to and record allegations of bullying in addition to challenging any form of anti-social or negative behaviour
5. Staff are encouraged to implement the policy in all areas of school life and the policy applies equally to a school trip, or playing competitive team sports in the same way as it does in the classroom
6. The senior member of staff will interview all the parties and make a record. Staff teaching the bullied pupil and the form tutor will be informed
7. The senior member of staff will determine the appropriate strategy and a plan of action to combat the bullying, Parents will be kept informed by the Director of Junior Section/ Deputy Head, Pastoral
8. Any sanctions against the bullies will be determined by the Director of Junior Section/ Deputy Head, Pastoral

Changing the attitude and behaviour of bullies will be part of the responsibility of the positive procedures used by the school. However, the school recognises that sanctions will also have to be used against bullies (please see section 9).

7. Responsibilities

7.1 Governing Body

The governing body will nominate a governor who will liaise with the Head and the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (see below) over all anti-bullying strategies, and

individual cases where appropriate. This includes an aspiration to completely eliminate bullying.

The governing body will discuss, review and endorse agreed strategies on the initiative of the 'nominated governor', and in any case will discuss the Head's annual report on the working of this policy.

7.2 The Head

The Head will:

- ensure that all staff implement the School Anti-Bullying strategy and that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the School policy and know how to deal with incidents of bullying;
- set the climate of mutual support and praise for success, so making bullying less likely;
- determine the strategies and procedures;
- ensure that all staff have an opportunity of discussing strategies and reviewing them;
- discuss development of the strategies with the school Leadership Team
- ensure appropriate training is available;
- ensure that the procedures are brought to the attention of all staff, parents and pupils;
- report annually to the governing body.

7.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (Deputy Head, Pastoral) will:

- be responsible for the day-to-day management of the school anti-bullying policy
- to ensure that all children know that bullying is wrong and that it is unacceptable behaviour in this School
- ensure that there are positive strategies and procedures in place to help both the bullied and bullies;
- keep the Head informed of incidents;
- arrange relevant staff training;
- determine how best to involve parents in the solution of individual problems;
- work with the Head to produce a termly report and annual update for the Governors.
- If necessary, complete a Risk Assessment in order to safeguard pupils. This will be completed in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education and may follow advice from Wakefield Safeguarding Children Partnership.

7.4 Governors

Clearly if wider child abuse is suspected then the [WGSF Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#) will apply and should be referred to.

7.5 All School Staff

All school staff have a responsibility to:

- know the policy and procedures;
- be observant and to ask pupils what is happening to them;
- deal with incidents according to the policy;

- never let any incidence of bullying pass by unreported, whether on-site or during an off-site activity;

7.5.1 Staff Training

The Deputy Head, Pastoral is responsible for arranging a programme of pastoral staff development, which will include anti-bullying strategies. This will include training for education support staff and governors as well as teachers.

This policy is communicated to staff through INSET and is available via Firefly and the school website.

8. Anti-Bullying Education in the Curriculum

WGHS raises the awareness of the impact of bullying through the PSHE curriculum, school assemblies, use of tutorial time and in other programmes of study as appropriate.

- the Deputy Head, Pastoral is responsible for initiating and developing with appropriate colleagues an anti-bullying programme as part of the PSHE curriculum; and
- teaching staff are responsible for introducing anti-bullying material in their programmes of study as appropriate.

Changing the attitude and behaviour of bullies plays a major part in the strategy used by the School.

9. Sanctions

Any of the school's formal punishments can be used against bullies as appropriate - please refer to the Senior Section [Behaviour Policy](#) and Junior Section [Behaviour Policy](#). Any sanctions will be imposed in a fair, proportionate and reasonable manner. Work will also be undertaken to re-educate the offender.

The reporting of bullying may not always lead to the direct punishment of those accused, but, if the complaints are shown to be well founded and/or the behaviour continues, the full range of sanctions are available, including exclusion and expulsion. The sanctions are used to communicate disapproval of the bully's behaviour and to reassure the victim that the bullying will stop. It also conveys to the school community as a whole that bullying is not tolerated at Wakefield Girls' High School.

10. Involvement of Parents

We believe that it is essential to work with parents in order to establish our ethos and resolve any issues that may arise, swiftly. Parents, as well as all staff and pupils, should know that the school will not tolerate bullying and will take a positive approach to educating pupils to combat it. Parents of pupils who are being bullied and parents of the bullies will be involved in the solution to the problem as appropriate and at the discretion of the school.

If a parent suspects that their daughter is a victim of bullying, they should contact their daughter's form tutor or Head of Year in the first instance. In any serious case of bullying parents will be informed by the school and may be invited in to discuss the matter. The Deputy Head (Pastoral) will keep in regular contact with parents until the issue is resolved.

Parents will be informed of the policy and procedures and the possibility of permanent exclusion following gross acts of bullying and 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 community. This includes responsibility to manage the use of pupil's personal electronic devices and mobile phones so as to ensure that they have access only to age appropriate software, and applications.

11. Involvement of Pupils

Pupils will be involved in the positive strategies through both the school councils and forms/tutor groups. Pupils will have an input into the PSHE anti-bullying programme, and will be consulted on how it could be developed.

A major part of the programme will consist of educating pupils in how to cope with bullying. The programme will involve assemblies, projects, drama, stories, literature, historical events and current affairs amongst others.

11.1 Counselling

The school is prepared in appropriate cases to arrange counselling for both bullies and the bullied.

12. Monitoring and Review

The Deputy Head, Pastoral will keep and consider reports on serious incidents, and make a termly report, with statistics, to the Head. The Head may do this herself in some cases. The Head will consider the reports with the Senior Leadership Team to determine what can be learned from the incidents and how they were handled with a view to improving the school's strategies.

13. Links to Other Policies

- [WGHS SS Behaviour Policy](#)
- [WGHS JS Behaviour Policy](#)
- [WGSF Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#)
- [WGSF ICT Acceptable Use Agreement](#)

14. Key Contacts

- Senior Section SLT member with lead responsibility for anti-bullying:
Mr James Harris
- Pastoral team:
Head of Year 7: Mrs Kelly Lindley
Head of Year 8/9: Mrs Becky Manson/Mrs Natalie Phillips
Head of Year 10/11: Mrs Laura Margereson/Mrs Elizabeth Maher
Head of Sixth Form: Mrs Kirsty Varley (Assistant Head)
Assistant Head of Sixth Form: Mr Chris Murtland
- Junior Section SLT member with lead responsibility for anti-bullying:
Mr James Harris
- Pastoral team:
Director of Junior Section: Mr Sam Rowley

Wellbeing and Pastoral Lead: Mrs Vanessa Hutchinson

- School Nurse: Mrs Sally Christie
- School counsellor: Ms Rowan Imolc
- Childline: 08001111
- NSPCC: www.there4me.co.uk
- Samaritans: 116123
- www.kidscape.org.uk Parent Advice Line: 07496 682785
- www.parentlineplus.org.uk

15. Additional information

This policy was written in conjunction with the following documentation:

- “Keeping Children Safe in Education”(September 2023)
- “The Use and Effectiveness of Anti-bullying Strategies in Schools”: April 2011
- “Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for Head teachers, staff and governing bodies” March 2014
- “Preventing and tackling bullying - Advice for Head teachers, staff and governing bodies” July 2017
- “Characteristics of Bullying Victims in Schools” – DFE Research report 2010
- “The Annual Bullying Survey 2016” – Ditch the Label