



WEST TOWN LANE ACADEMY

WHERE LEARNING IS AN ADVENTURE

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

WEST TOWN LANE
ACADEMY

Children's rights:

Article 12 – Children have the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them.

Article 14 – Children have the right to think and believe what they want, and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights.

Article 19 – Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for, and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them.

Article 29 – Education should develop each child's personality to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, and their own and other cultures.

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Communications Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Education Act 2011
- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2021) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education 2021'

Rationale:

This policy is designed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils at West Town Lane Academy. Bullying is considered, by us, to be a safeguarding concern and we know the importance of an effective approach to anti-bullying. We recognise that bullying can occur in school and we will always take concerns of bullying with the utmost severity; we are committed to dealing with bullying promptly and efficiently. This policy is designed to be used by parents/carers, children and staff so that they can work together to reduce incidents of bullying.

Purpose:

To ensure the safety and security of all pupils.

To ensure that bullying is discussed as part of our curriculum and pupils know that they can speak out against bullying.

To promote preventative and restorative strategies.

To approach all incidents in a consistent manner.

To maintain an ethos of equality and respect, with cases of bullying at an absolute minimum.

What is Bullying?

We are members of the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA). The ABA believes bullying is; *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.*

Our staff believe bullying can be defined as; *choosing to hurt somebody, face to face, online or physically. It is usually targeted at people who are believed to be weaker than others, sometimes because they are different.*

Our children have defined bullying as; *being mean to someone over and over again. Sometimes it's hurting their feelings or sometimes it's hitting them or kicking them. It usually happens when grown-ups aren't looking. It can happen online.*

There are four key elements to these definitions:

- hurtful
- repetition
- power imbalance
- intentional

In line with the Anti Bullying Alliance guidance, bullying can take many forms, and can be broadly categorised into six main groups:

- 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 Prevention:

Our school takes many measures to prevent cases of bullying in the first instance, and to recognise what is, and what is not bullying. The curriculum will address bullying through whole school and phase assemblies. Bullying will be discussed by all year groups, as well as based on the pupils'/class needs through the PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) programme 'Jigsaw'. Cyber bullying will also be addressed during these sessions as part of our E-Safety curriculum. Within 'Jigsaw' lessons, children are taught to know their own minds, to operate from a position of self-awareness and self-valuing, and to develop the capacity to empathise with others. Our school promotes community cohesion as well as British Values. All PSHE lessons following the 'Jigsaw' programme contribute to one or more of these values in some way. We may extend the PSHE curriculum to meet the needs of our pupils if certain issues pertaining to bullying arise at a time when the 'Jigsaw' scheme may not be addressing these areas.

As a Rights Respecting Schools, every class must have a Charter and bullying is discussed as part of this work. The school will have a Rights Action Group (RAG) and anti-bullying will be part of their action plan. Our RAG members work alongside our Anti-Bullying Ambassadors. These are a group of pupils who are trained to identify bullying incidents and report them. Pupils may pass on concerns to our ambassadors if they do not feel confident to speak with an adult.

Our core RADAR (Respect, Adventure, Determination, Achievement and Resilience) values and our 3 school expectations of Be Safe, Be Ready to Learn, Be Respectful underpin the messages we give and the learning we do around anti-bullying.

We understand that vulnerable pupils are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some people may have towards those who are different from themselves. Vulnerable pupils may include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils who are adopted.
- Pupils suffering from a health problem.
- Pupils with caring responsibilities.
- Pupils from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Pupils with certain characteristics are also more likely to be targets of bullying, including, but not limited to:

- Pupils who are LGBTQ+, or perceived to be LGBTQ+.
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) pupils.
- Pupils with SEND.

Responding to Bullying:

Children and parents will all know the procedures in place for reporting alleged bullying or concerns about bullying. Children should report alleged incidents to their class teacher/teaching assistant in the first instance. Alternatively, they could speak to an ambassador who will pass on their concerns for them. If a child is unable to verbalise their concerns over bullying, they can write their concern (or just their name) down and put it in the class worry box. The class teacher will then act upon this. At WTLA we appreciate that a parent/carers may be the first person children share their concerns with. In this instance, parents/carers should speak with their child's class teacher at their earliest convenience.

All concerns will be listened to and will be logged using CPOMS (online software where safeguarding, wellbeing and pastoral concerns are logged) with phase leaders informed. Incidents logged on CPOMS by a staff member should include the following information;

- Type of bullying reported
- Incident details and frequency
- Child's voice
- Action and review points.

We acknowledge that bullying may not be explicit or reported, so parents/carers and staff should look out for signs that a child may be the victim or perpetrator of bullying. These may include but are not limited to; increased levels of anxiety, change in behaviour, withdrawal from friendship groups, lack of engagement with school and other activities, low self-esteem. Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental health issues, so are still worth investigating. Pupils who display these signs will be approached by a member of staff to determine the underlying issues causing this behaviour.

In any case of alleged bullying, the class teacher/phase leader will first establish the facts and build an accurate picture of events over time. These investigations may involve speaking with the alleged perpetrator, victim, witnesses and parents if appropriate. If the allegation of bullying is upheld, a member of SLT will be informed and a restorative approach with the perpetrator and victim will be used.

The course of action then taken will depend on the severity of the report, age of the children, attitude of the children concerned and timescales.

Possible action includes:

- An investigation and discussion with the children concerned. This may be all that is required to prevent further cases. Staff would monitor this situation and outcomes would be recorded and phase leaders informed. Relevant staff members would be informed for monitoring and prevention purposes. The perpetrator should fully understand the consequence of their actions and apologise without reservation.
- When the above step has not been sufficient, and bullying is ongoing it would be appropriate to put other measures in place such as a 'check in' adult for the victim, sessions with the learning/behaviour mentor for victim and/or perpetrator, alternative lunchtime supervision or lunchtime support. Clear expectations and boundaries will be outlined and shared with the perpetrator. Sanctions such as a missed lunchtime play will be used as appropriate.
- When bullying is severe/persistent and the previous steps have not been effective, it would be appropriate to ask parents/carers to attend a meeting. A Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) may be drawn up by the school. This would have more formal monitoring including weekly reviews led by senior leaders.
- Social Skills education is available on a 'small group' basis for those children who would benefit where appropriate.

- Lunchtime exclusions may be issued by the school in extreme cases, or where the above measures have not worked. Exclusions can be used by the school in persistent cases or where the school feels other children would be in danger.

At WTLA we understand some incidents of bullying may occur outside of the school. When incidents are reported from outside of school e.g online/cyber bullying, the same steps will be followed as outlined above. In extreme cases, where the bullying that has taken place may be deemed a crime, the police and social care services may be informed. This will be at the discretion of the Head Teacher and parents will be informed.

What is Online/Cyber Bullying

Cyberbullying can take many forms and can go even further than face-to-face bullying by invading personal space and home life, and can target more than one person. It can also take place across age groups and target pupils, staff and others, and may take place inside school, within the wider community, at home or when travelling. It can sometimes draw bystanders into being accessories.

Cyberbullying can include the following:

- Threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages
- Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips
- Disclosure of photographs or videos with the intent to cause distress
- Silent or abusive phone calls
- 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 via instant messaging
- Unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites, e.g. Facebook

NB. The above list is not exhaustive, and cyberbullying may take other forms.

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to cyberbullying. The school views cyberbullying with the same severity as any other form of bullying and will follow the actions set out in this policy if they become aware of any incidents.

Our Academy recognises that support for the alleged perpetrator may also need to be put in place and we understand the wide range of reasons someone may bully someone else. These include but are not limited to; low self-esteem, difficulties in personal life, witnessing bullying in the home environment. Work with our learning/behaviour mentor will explore this to tackle the problem at its roots.

The school may choose to have awareness campaigns at times if the level of bullying rises in school or it is felt that the profile needs to be raised. Children should all learn the harm that bullying can cause and parents and carers will be expected to co-operate with the school over any issue of bullying and take the matter seriously.

Record keeping

The DSL will ensure that robust records are kept with regard to all reported or otherwise uncovered incidents of bullying – this includes recording where decisions have been made, e.g. sanctions, support, escalation of a situation and resolutions.

The head teacher and DSL will ensure that all decisions and actions recorded are reviewed on a regular basis for the purposes of:

- Identifying patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour on the part of certain pupils that may need to be handled, e.g. with pastoral support.
- Reflecting on whether cases could have been handled better and using these reflections to inform future practice.
- Considering whether there are wider cultural issues at play within the school, e.g. whether school culture facilitates discriminatory bullying by not adequately addressing instances, and planning to mitigate this.
- Considering whether prevention strategies could be strengthened based on any patterns in the cases that arise.

Conclusion

At WTLA incidents of bullying are rare and children's wellbeing is of the utmost importance to us. Children should enjoy coming to school and so enjoy learning. We will always act promptly where incidents of bullying occur ensuring that the victims are supported and the perpetrators are taught different ways of dealing with situations.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with our Behaviour Policy, E-safety Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and PSHE Policy.

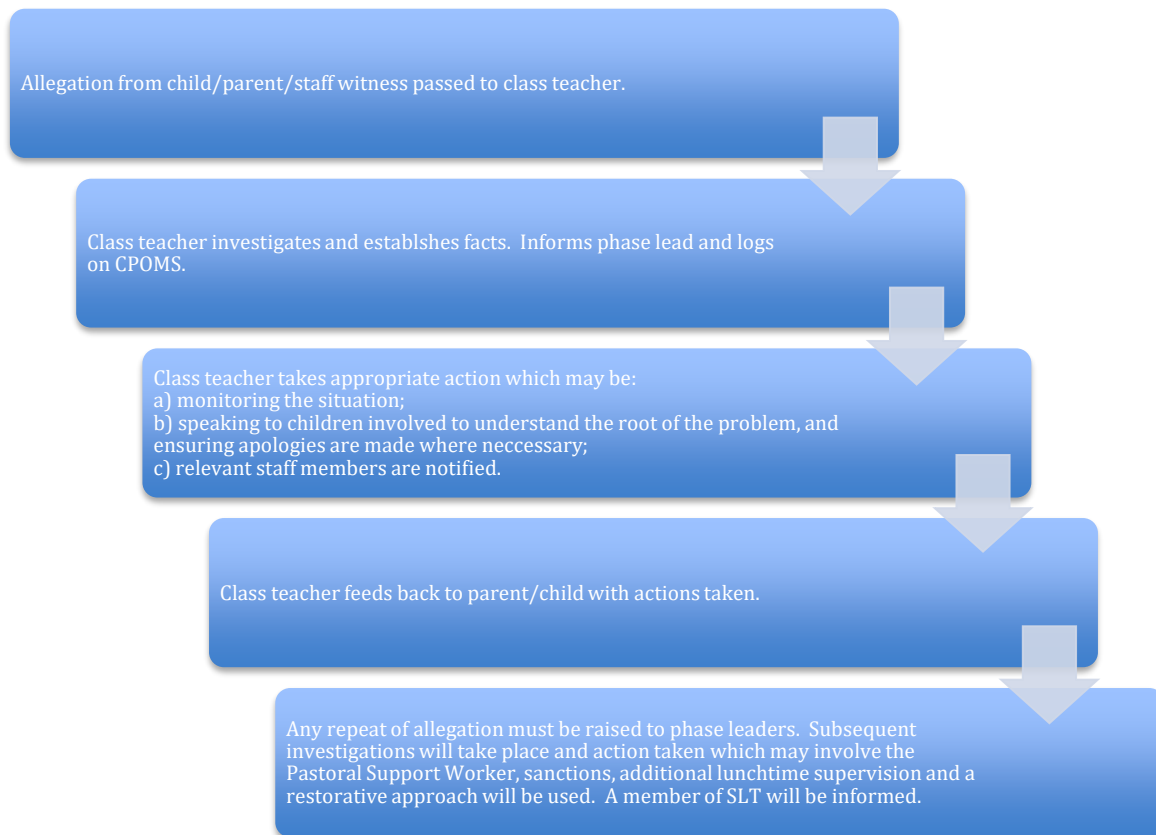
Our Academy recognises its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, Education Act 2011 and all sections relating to children with Special Educational Needs. West Town Lane Academy is strongly committed to protecting and safeguarding children, and expects all staff, parents and volunteers to embrace this commitment. A bullying incident should be addressed as a safeguarding concern under the Children Act 1989, when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a pupil is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' and should be reported following the school's safeguarding and child protection policy. West Town Lane Academy is fully aware of its' responsibility under the Prevent Duty 2015 as set out by the DfE (Department for Education) and recognises that its responsibilities to prevent and protect children from extremism fit within its duty of child protection and safeguarding.

.....*Chair of Governors*

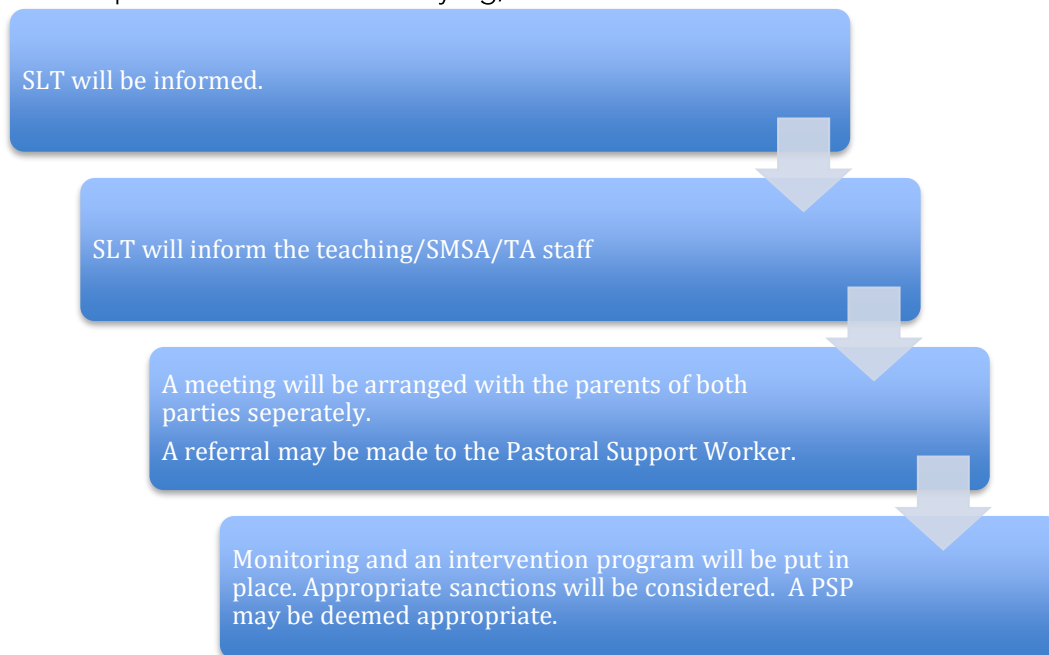
February 2024

The flow chart attached to this policy is a useful guide to the steps the school will take to deal with reports of bullying;

First allegation of bullying;



Serious/persistent cases of bullying;



Review Date: February 2026