



WESTMINSTER
SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING, -ABUSE AND -DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Author: James Kazi
Lead: Under Master

Date: September 2022
Review Date: September 2025



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INTRODUCTION

Westminster School and its staff are fully committed to the development of each pupil's moral, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing and development: this is best achieved when all members of the community (staff, pupils and parents) are positively engaged. Challenging prejudice, promoting justice and committing to fairness, equality and inclusion in all our interactions with individuals and communities are central tenets of the School's Ethos, Values and Vision.

Bullying, abuse and discrimination are unacceptable anti-social behaviours at all times (including outside of School and online) and that any instances of such affect everyone in the community. At Westminster, respect and care for one another is promoted; but there is always a risk that inappropriate behaviour will occur in any institution. The aim of the School's Anti-Bullying, -Abuse and -Discrimination Policy is therefore to foster a supportive, caring and safe environment in which pupils and staff can live and learn without fear of being harmed, and thus be able fully to benefit from the opportunities available at the School. The policy will also identify a means of redress, and both empower and enable individuals to challenge the behaviours of others if they themselves are subject to inappropriate behaviours. To this end, it will be made quite clear to the whole community of staff, pupils and parents that bullying, abuse and discrimination are unacceptable and that any instances of such will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter, investigated and sanctioned appropriately.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. It can also include behaviours that are not always intentional on the part of the instigator, but are experienced as bullying and might reasonably be perceived as such by others.

Bullying can take many forms (for instance, "slurs" and epithets; cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming [which can include the use of images and video], gossip, undermining behaviours and social exclusion) and is sometimes motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between individuals, or perceived differences.

Stopping physical violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously the School's first priority, but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; judgements will need to be made about each specific case.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the instigator and the victim. This could involve instigators 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 (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to isolate someone socially. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

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

Abuse

Abuse is behaviour by an individual or group, either repeated over time or as a single significant incident, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. This can include sexual violence or harassment and may also be a form of serious and sustained bullying. As a result of this, harm is caused which manifests as physical injury or the victim's development is permanently affected.

Assault refers to actual physical violence or the threat of such.

Harassment is the unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic (as defined in the Equality Act 2010) that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for someone. Specifically, sexual harassment can include many things, such as verbal comments, sexist name calling online, comments and the sharing of sexual images without consent.

Discrimination

Discrimination is behaviour by an individual or group that insults people, distresses them, or treats them in an unjustified or prejudiced way based on one or more of the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation).

In practical terms in the context of a school, discrimination can also occur as a result of an individual's cultural background, linguistic background, special educational needs, or academic or sporting ability (the list is not intended to be all encompassing).

Such behaviour can be direct, such as where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more characteristics. Or it can be indirect, such as where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same characteristic at a particular disadvantage.

Victimisation

Victimisation is retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.

SCOPE

For all members of the School's community, the School's Ethos, Values and Vision form the foundation on which appropriate behaviour is defined.

Bullying, abuse and discrimination might take place on the School's site (including in the boarding environment), beyond the School's site, or online. For the purposes of the School's response, it is unlikely to make much difference where or how the offence happened, or whether the victim was a member of the School's community or not.

In the case of staff, the scope of this policy naturally overlaps with the School's Code of Conduct for Staff. In the case of both staff and pupils, the scope of this policy naturally overlaps with the School's Safeguarding Policy.

ESTABLISHING A POSITIVE CULTURE

Context

The School sets out its expectations of how people should behave in the community through the Ethos, Values and Vision of the School. Every year, staff, pupils and parents are given a copy of the General Regulations and Expectations of Westminster.

For pupils

Abbey and Year Group assemblies focus on the Expectations of Westminster, especially the following:

- Respect
- Inclusivity
- Kindness
- Politeness
- Generosity of spirit.

These expectations stress the importance of inter-personal relationships and the value of respect for all. These are picked up on in tutorials and parents are encouraged to discuss key themes at home with their children.

The issues of bullying, abuse and discrimination play a prominent part in the School's RSHE and Wellbeing programme; the programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the School. It focuses on the issues of tolerance and kindness in relation to individual differences and parents are again encouraged to discuss key themes at home with their children.

Members of the pupil leadership teams, (house monitors, peer supporters, heads of house and school monitors) get to know younger pupils through visiting dayrooms and joining Fifth Form and Lower Shell at lunch. As such they are able to check on the behaviour of younger pupils and to act as a conduit of information to staff where inappropriate behaviours are occurring. Additionally, pupil leaders attend pupil voice meetings of younger year groups.

All members of staff will check any poor behaviour and report patterns of behaviour. Teachers are expected to arrive in good time for class; to be a vigilant presence around School; and to report anything they feel concerned about to the Under Master. Tutors, housemasters and matrons are also expected to be around the house both in the daytime and, in the case of boarders, when the pupils are going to bed. The School additionally operates a system of supervisory "Duty Masters" to ensure that key areas of the campus are properly supervised by teachers at key times.

For staff

The School's Ethos, Values and Vision are the foundation for all policies and drive the direction of the School. Regular reference is made to these fundamentals when decision-making and exploring the development of the School.

The recruitment of staff includes significant exploration of a candidate's awareness, appreciation and understanding of the School's Ethos, Values and Vision. Such tenets are regularly revisited at INSET once staff have joined the School.

ZERO-TOLERANCE APPROACH

Each concern will be approached individually, on a case-by-case basis, and "zero tolerance" should not be taken to imply that the School has a fixed response. Rather, "zero tolerance" means that the School will take seriously, investigate and respond appropriately to every single instance of bullying, abuse or discrimination brought to its attention.

The School makes clear its zero-tolerance approach in a number of ways.

For pupils, it is embedded in the School's Expectations of Westminster, which are discussed, alongside other relevant material, with all pupils as part of the RSHE and Wellbeing curriculum. Heads of Year will also reinforce the message in year group assemblies; tutors and RSHE and Wellbeing teachers will similarly espouse during tutorial meetings in classes respectively, where these issues can be discussed in smaller groups. The School Counsellor similarly briefs the School's peer supporters who will be alert to issues arising amongst the pupil body and will be able to champion appropriate behaviours.

For staff, it is also embedded in the School's Ethos, Values and Vision, as well as the Expectations of Westminster. Such matters are essential parts of INSET and also covered through the School's Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct for Staff.

RESPONSES

The School reserves a full range of sanctions for those who are found to have bullied, abused or discriminated against someone in any context. These range from a simple warning up to the most serious sanctions, including staff being dismissed or pupils being permanently excluded.

Any repetition of inappropriate behaviour is likely to result in an extremely serious sanction.

THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY IN ADDRESSING INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOURS

All adults (parents and staff) are expected to act as positive role models, as are all pupils.

All staff and parents have a responsibility to encourage pupils to reflect on pupils' conduct, analysing and reflecting on motives and behaviour.

Everyone has a role to play in addressing instances of inappropriate behaviours.

Signs of which to be aware

See Appendices A, B and C for warning signs, inappropriate behaviours and indicators. See Appendix D for the Anti-Cyberbullying Code.

Advice on bullying, abuse, discrimination, cyber-safety and cyber issues is given to parents at certain parent events (organised in conjunction with the Head of RSHE and Wellbeing) and also at the various pastoral forums hosted by housemasters.

Actions on

The School requires anyone who becomes aware of bullying, abusive or discriminatory behaviour to report it quickly and appropriately.

Active bystanders

The intention is that a culture is fostered which deters silence or passive bystanding in the face of inappropriate behaviours. On the contrary, the School seeks to promote a culture in which both the target and anyone else who hears of an incident are prepared to call out and report the matter. The School seeks to embed that culture by constantly reiterating that helping one's peers and friends by being an active bystander is a positive action. The School takes a very dim view of those who see or know that abuse, bullying or discrimination is going on, but fail to do or say anything, either to peers at the time or to senior staff shortly afterwards. Such failures may well be interpreted as involvement in the offence: the School will always consider appropriate sanctions for passive bystanders.

Victim-shaming

The School will act where individuals make unkind comments about peers who have raised legitimate concerns over the treatment of themselves or others: again, appropriate sanctions will always be considered.

SEEKING ASSISTANCE

The School always treats bullying, abuse and discrimination, including allegations of such conduct, extremely seriously. All members of the community should feel confident that the School will listen to any concern about inappropriate conduct and respond to it promptly and robustly.

Confidentiality can never be promised, but those making an allegation should be reassured that the information that is shared will be handled sensitively, carefully and on a "need to know" basis.

For pupils

Pupils who feel worried are encouraged to talk to someone, whether it be a friend, a peer supporter, the head of house or a school monitor; a matron, a teacher, a house tutor, a parent, a housemaster, the School Counsellor, the Chaplain or the Under Master. This message is reiterated in the "If You Have A Concern" notice, which is on House notice boards and appears in the Almanack (this includes contact details for external agencies).

For parents

Parents who have concerns about their children should always contact the housemaster at the earliest opportunity, so the matter can be promptly investigated.

For staff

Staff should share concerns with their line manager or a senior member of staff. If neutral advice is sought, colleagues in the Human Resources department are always willing to discuss matters.

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

The five principles of receiving a disclosure should be followed (as detailed in the School's Safeguarding Policy):

- Receive
- Reassure
- Respond
- Record
- Report.

Initially, an individual might wish to keep the matter confidential, but it must be made clear that confidentiality cannot be maintained; a senior member of staff must be informed immediately in cases of suspected bullying, abuse or discrimination.

Where a particular incident is dealt with initially by a school monitor or head of house, they must tell the relevant housemaster(s) what has happened and the action they have taken. The housemaster should then decide whether further actions need to follow.

It is recognised that for those boarding pupils who are subject to bullying, abuse or discrimination (off line) it is very difficult for them to avoid such ill-treatment for long periods of time as they do not go home as often as day pupils. As such, it is especially important that boarders are encouraged to seek support promptly.

Incidents of unacceptable behaviour might have to be reported to outside agencies, although the vast majority of concerns that are raised can be dealt with here in School. Only when the most serious incidents arise is it sometimes necessary to speak to agencies outside of School because certain regulatory thresholds have been crossed. Such incidents might include, for example, any criminal activity, serious physical assaults and sexual violence. The Children's Services departments of the pupils involved and the Police are the most likely external agencies to be contacted.

APPROACHES TO ADDRESSING INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

For pupils

The School's Safeguarding Policy may also refer.

The housemaster should discuss the matter with the Under Master in the first instance who may refer the matter to the Police and / or Children's Services, where appropriate. Parents of both the victim and the person against whom allegations have been made will usually be informed and involved via the housemaster(s) (though the victim's views must be taken into account).

For staff

The School's Code of Conduct for Staff, Disciplinary Procedures for Staff Policy and the Safeguarding Policy may also refer. The Safeguarding Policy is particularly pertinent in the context of transferrable risk, where an individual has behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The line manager should discuss the matter with a member of the Human Resources team in the first instance.

Actions on

There is no fixed or absolute course of action; it will depend on the circumstances, but will always seek to be fair and proportionate.

Some actions might be:

- To monitor the situation and see if anything further occurs. (This response is usually only if the incident appears to be low-level and one-off, or a genuine mistake.)
- To carry out an assessment of risk in respect of the victim, the instigator and anyone else involved.
- To get both parties together to talk. The instigator may be unaware that their conduct might be inappropriate; the victim may be anxious about such a meeting and safeguards would need to be put in place to ensure that both parties are willing to talk and the meeting is chaired sensitively. In cases where a group has instigated behaviours against a victim, the group needs to understand the point of view of the victim and a group meeting may be necessary, but those mainly responsible need to be addressed individually to make them understand their responsibility.
- To sanction against the instigator, both making it clear that this must never happen again, and encouraging the instigator to see the victim's point of view. Sanctions will be judged on a case-by-case basis and in consultation with all parties concerned. It may range from a warning, through to a period of gating to temporary or permanent exclusion, depending on the specific circumstances.

It is important to note that, where a case of inappropriate behaviour comes to light, attention will also be given to the individual who has instigated the behaviour, with whom the incident must be discussed, and in the case of pupils, parents (where possible) should also be informed; all of this is in order to find out the cause of the behaviour and to seek to change it. Indeed, both parties (and the wider peer group) may need follow-up support for some time.

Where a sanction (other than in cases of permanent exclusion or dismissal) has been decided to be the appropriate course of action, rehabilitation of the instigator will be an important part of the process. Discussions with, as appropriate, the Under Master, Head Master, senior managers or Bursar may all form part of the School's response. Colleagues in Human Resources, the School Counsellor and Chaplain are both able to help in this respect, too.

RECORD-KEEPING AND RECORDING

For pupils

The Under Master will usually coordinate all actions in cases of bullying, abuse or discrimination and keep a written record of each incident and how it is resolved; this record will be used to monitor any possible patterns.

After any such incident the housemasters and Under Master will review the case in detail to look for ways to avoid similar cases arising in the future and to enable an adjustment in supervision if needed. All incidents which come to light are reported to the Head Master, usually by the Under Master in his role as the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Head Master may not be involved in the detailed resolution of the situation, but he will always be aware of the action taken and its efficacy.

For staff

An allocated member of the Human Resources team will usually coordinate all actions in cases of bullying, abuse or discrimination and keep a written record of each incident and how it is resolved; this record will be used to monitor any possible patterns.

All incidents which come to light are reported to the Head Master and / or the Bursar. The Head Master and / or the Bursary may not be involved in the detailed resolution of the situation, but they will always be aware of the action taken and its efficacy.

After any such incident the line manager and another senior member of staff will review the case in detail to look for ways to avoid similar cases arising in the future and to enable an adjustment in supervision if needed.

For pupils and staff

Bullying by or of a member of staff, or by or of a parent (whether face-to-face or via email), will be regarded as a very serious matter and dealt with by the Head Master (usually with the assistance of the Under Master).

APPENDIX A

WARNING SIGNS

In the case of pupils, the School engages with feeder schools to find out as much relevant information as possible so that those arriving at the School can be supported most effectively. Additionally, surveys and regular engagement by staff with pupils help to inform perspectives once pupils are at Westminster.

In the case of members of staff, the School encourages members of staff to make line managers aware of any concerns that may be had.

For both pupils and staff, the following are typical warning signs for those who may be likely to be subject to or instigate inappropriate behaviours.

- A previous history of bullying, abuse or discrimination either as victim or instigator.
- A previous history of unkind or thoughtless behaviour.
- A lack of awareness of the impact of personal comments on others.
- An apparent unawareness of the inappropriacy of jokes or opinions.
- Repeating nicknames or personal comments for effect.
- Talking over others at mealtimes or around campus.
- Dominating conversation such that shyer peers talk less than normal.
- Entering others' rooms uninvited, and perhaps remaining longer than necessary.
- Borrowing others' possessions without asking.
- Asking to borrow things or share food in a way that makes it awkward to say "no".
- Monopolising particular seats in a communal space.
- Cultivating friendships with overly assertive people resulting in a power imbalance.
- Overly physical behaviour such as barging around the campus, pushing or grabbing peers.
- A tendency to be the centre of noisy or excited gatherings.
- Socialising with groups whose appearance can destabilise otherwise settled situations.
- Appearing furtive, evasive or defensive in communication with others.

Inappropriate behaviour is often based on perceived difference. This means that the instigator notices someone is different and turns them into a victim because they are vulnerable. Individuals may be particularly vulnerable to bullying because they are new to a particular environment, or because of a perceived difference in economic or family situation (for example, adoption) or an interest in things (such as academic work, classical music, acting, sport) which are considered unfashionable by a dominant peer group. In particular, people with protected characteristics may be vulnerable.

APPENDIX B

BULLYING, ABUSIVE AND DISCRIMINATORY BEHAVIOURS

The following are examples of behaviour that can be associated with inappropriate behaviour:

- Teasing someone by (for example) calling them names or being sarcastic.
- Spreading rumours about someone.
- Making hurtful or abusive comments (including by message, graffiti or notice).
- Using slurs (whether intentional or unintentional).
- Mocking someone by imitating their accent or anything else about them.
- Making gestures towards someone which are designed to belittle or ridicule them.
- Mocking another person's contributions.
- Interfering physically with someone or their possessions.
- Making threatening gestures or remarks.
- Barring somebody's way or otherwise preventing them from moving freely.
- Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, or using other kinds of physical aggression.
- Throwing or kicking things at someone else.
- Social exclusion.
- Misusing seniority or imposing hierarchy.
- Encouraging or attempting to compel others to take part in "hazing" or initiation processes.
- Making inappropriate sexual advances, or sexual harassment. Even if this happens out of School – e.g.: at a party on the weekend – the effects would be felt in School and such incidents would therefore be a matter to be dealt with by the School.
- Punching, hitting, pushing, spitting, throwing things. This can be considered as "assault" and obviously more serious physical attacks could be seen as a criminal offence. Physically intimidating someone or using threatening language or gestures would also constitute bullying, as would damaging or throwing property around; invading rooms, bags, boxes or lockers.

Every example will be considered on its own merit and inappropriate behaviour can occur even if the instigator of such behaviour considers such conduct to be "a joke" or the instigator claims that the victim considers such behaviour to be "a joke".

Inappropriate behaviours impact on the attendance and attainment at school of those who suffer from it and can have a life-long negative impact on some young people's lives. Such behaviours can cause psychological damage and at worst has been a factor in pupil suicide. In this light, although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to such behaviours.

APPENDIX C

INDICATORS

Bullying, abuse and discrimination can all make the victim's life miserable and has no place in a civilised society. Below is a list of some of the noticeable effects such behaviour can have on the victim. Although there may be other explanations, these types of behaviour (especially in combination) are often typical of those who are suffering.

- Become frightened of others and avoid them (or certain places).
- Cut meal-times or become reluctant to sit with peers at meals.
- Change their usual routine, and perhaps begin to miss commitments.
- Seem unwilling to return to School.
- Become withdrawn, anxious, or lose their confidence.
- Run away, or threaten or attempt suicide.
- Have nightmares, or cry themselves to sleep at night.
- Feel ill in the morning.
- Begin to do poorly in their work.
- Have clothes torn or equipment damaged.
- Have possessions which are damaged or “go missing”.
- Have money continually “lost”, ask for money, or start stealing money.
- Have unexplained cuts or bruises.
- Become aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable, and perhaps start to bully others.
- Stop eating.
- Give unlikely excuses for any of the above.
- Beg peers, staff or parents not to say anything about what they have seen or been told.
- Become unwilling to use the internet or mobile phone.
- Become nervous and jumpy when a text or other message is received.

Sometimes this kind of behaviour has a permanent effect on the victim (and even the instigator), changing forever their self-esteem, relationships, career, or the way they see the world.

APPENDIX D

ANTI-CYBERBULLYING CODE

This code explains what cyberbullying is and how not to be a cyberbully; it also contains advice on to how to report it should it happen.

Don't become a cyberbully yourself:

- Don't send unpleasant, threatening or abusive messages:
 - Blackmailing
 - Cyberstalking
 - Grooming
 - Outing
 - Trolling.
- Don't post images that will humiliate others.
- Don't engage in Youth Produced Sexual Imagery (sexting) or pressure others into sending sexual images.
- Don't forward or share unpleasant things that others have sent or shared.
- Don't pretend to be someone you are not:
 - Using someone else's account or password
 - Creating fake accounts
 - Hijacking others' identities.
- Don't bombard someone else's account.

Getting help if there is a problem:

- Remember the school rules on cyberbullying apply at all times, including the school vacations.
- Do not be afraid to ask for help: see the "If You Have a Concern" pages of the Almanack.
- Block the bullies and report them.
- Save any postings or emails as evidence.
- Tell your housemaster or tutor or a peer supporter or even just a friend: they can all help.
- If you think that someone is at risk from sexual exploitation and abuse, contact CEOP: <https://www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting/>.

And finally:

- If you see cyberbullying going on, support the victim and report the bullying. How would you feel if no-one stood up for you?
- For further information visit www.thinkuknow.co.uk.