



# Anti-Bullying Policy

## Purpose of the policy

This policy aims to outline our approach to creating an anti-bullying environment at Wildwood Nature School and our response to any incidents of bullying. This policy is closely linked with our [Behaviour Policy](#), [Online Safety Policy](#) and [Safeguarding Policy](#) and refers to various strategies in place at the school.

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### 1. What is bullying?

Bullying is a deliberate, aggressive and repeated action, which is carried out with intent to cause harm or distress to others.

Bullying generally falls into one or a combination of the following categories:

- Physical bullying - Unprovoked assault on a person or group which can range from a prod to grievous bodily harm.
- Psychological - Reduction of a person's self-esteem or confidence through threatening behaviour, taunting or teasing.
- Prejudice-based or discriminatory - Any hostile or offensive action that discriminates against another person based on their race, gender, religion, sexual orientation,

disability, family circumstances, appearance, or any other feature of their lives which can be used to wound or humiliate them.

- Relational - Ostracism/rejection by a peer group.
- Verbal - The use of language in a derogatory or offensive manner, such as swearing, racist or sexist abuse, sexual innuendo, spreading rumours, etc.
- Homophobic - Any hostile or offensive action against lesbians, gay males, bisexuals or trans-gender people, or those perceived to be lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or trans-gender.
- Sexual - A behaviour, physical or non-physical, where sexuality or gender is used as a weapon against another. It is any behaviour which degrades someone, singles someone out using sexual language, gestures or violence, and victimising someone for their appearance. Sexual bullying is also pressure to act promiscuously and to act in a way that makes others uncomfortable (see our [Safeguarding Policy](#), sections B.3 and B.4).
- Cyber - Using mobile phones or the internet to deliberately upset someone (see our [Online Safety Policy](#), section 5.5, for a detailed description of Cyber/online bullying)

## 2. Our anti-bullying ethos

Our whole ethos and the approach of the school is to nurture compassionate relationships with self and others. The need to bully comes from a diminished sense of self and the need to feel superior to others and/or put them down. Since we put understanding needs at the forefront of how we interact with the children attending Wildwood Nature School, our aim is to support each child to have their needs met, therefore addressing some of the root causes of bullying.

At Wildwood Nature School, we also explicitly teach children how to feel good about themselves, the effects of their words and actions on others, and how to build relationships and community. Our well-being curriculum, which is taught through twice daily circles, as well as being woven into our cross-curricular topics, includes detailed teaching about emotions, self-awareness, mindfulness, compassion, friendships, managing hurtful behaviour, conflict resolution, nonviolent communication (Giraffe language), community-building, respecting self and others, beliefs and values. We have high expectations that our rigorous well-being curriculum will support our students to have high self-esteem, know themselves well and to be able to navigate friendships and peer relations with respect and compassion. Our ambition is to be a school where bullying does not take place.

### 3. Responses to incidents of bullying

If an isolated incident of bullying does occur, this will be quickly noticed by the adults due to our high adult:child ratios and close relationships with all children. Adults will:

- follow the guidelines for de-escalation (see [Behaviour Policy](#))
- listen to both children's feelings and needs
- offer an opportunity to resolve the relationship using Giraffe language (Nonviolent Communication) (see [Behaviour Policy](#))
- keep a written record of the incident on an *Incident Report Form* and in our *Bullying Log*, noting which category the bullying falls into
- inform both children's parents
- continue to monitor both children and their relationship
- provide frequent opportunities for them to strengthen their relationship
- offer activities that will support them to resolve the root cause of the need to bully

Below are examples of 4 different levels of bullying and our possible responses to them:

Please note: even though we have categorised certain types of bullying within each level, this is just as a guide. It will be the severity, rather than the category, of the bullying that will be taken into consideration in each incident when choosing a response.

1. Looks; expressions; body language; subtle social exclusion - all possibly not even noticed by the target.

#### **Example**

Adult becomes aware of subtle signs certain children are displaying towards other children that could be precursors to more overt bullying.

Additional time is spent during morning and afternoon circles to focus on elements of the Well-being curriculum such as respecting and celebrating our differences, self-esteem and compassion towards others. The children demonstrating such behaviour are closely observed to prevent the potential bullying attitude from developing.

2. Name-calling; more overt social exclusion; verbal / relational bullying.

### **Example**

3 children start to play a game together. They run up to another child, start laughing, and say "You can't play with us, you've got to stay here by yourself cos you're stupid." There have been similar incidents between these children.

An adult observing the scene takes a moment to centre themselves, with brief grounding and breathing exercises. The adult explains the situation to another adult.

Adult says to the targeted child, "I noticed that those children were behaving a bit unkindly to you. I wonder how that's made you feel? I'd feel quite sad and hurt if someone said those things to me. Is there anywhere in your body that's feeling like it needs support or to move? Is there anything I can do to help you right now?"

Adult supports the targeted child to process any emotions and in any other way they need.

Another adult approaches the 3 children who excluded the other child, making sure to maintain a neutral posture and calm tone of voice.

"Hey, would you mind stopping your game and come here to talk to me? Let's sit here on these logs. I heard that you were using some unkind words just now. In our school, it's so important that everyone feels welcome and accepted and we do that by using kind words. Remember our Giraffe language? Can any of you explain why you didn't want [child] to play with you? Can we think of something we can do to make [child] feel better?"

This adult works with the 3 children to find the root cause of the issue and to come up with a solution, and a way to apologise.

The incident will be recorded in the Bullying Log and both sets of parents will be told about the incident.

The next day, or maybe in a few days, the targeted child will have the option to have a conflict resolution meeting with the other 3 children. For the next few weeks, specific attention will be given to all 4 children to support their emotional well-being, self-esteem and to work on Giraffe language and showing compassion.

### 3. Persistent and ongoing targeting of a specific child; psychological / cyber bullying

#### **Example**

One child seems particularly angry one day and doesn't want to join in with any of the activities.

An adult notices this as it seems very out of the ordinary. "Hey, you don't quite seem like yourself today. Are you feeling angry? The way you're clenching your fists and the look on your face is making me think so, but please let me know if that's not the case. Is there anything you'd like to tell me or talk about? I'd really like to help you work things out."

The child then reveals that last night, another child had sent multiple rude messages on social media. The adult asks if the child told their parents; they didn't. The adult takes the child into the office and gets the child's phone so they can show the screenshots of the messages. The messages were sent by another child in the school and the tone is demeaning and aggressive. After further discussions, the child reveals that this isn't the first time but they were worse than normal. The adult supports the child to figure out that they need some alone time in the hammock with a book for the rest of the afternoon, rather than joining in with the activities.

The adult takes a moment to centre and ground themselves, and then finds the other child who sent the messages. They sit down on the beanbags in the sensory area.

"I'm feeling a bit upset because I've seen some messages that you sent on the internet last night that feel really out of character for you. I know you as a kind, funny and confident person. I still think you're all those things, but I know that no one is unkind to others unless they're not feeling good on the inside. I'd really love to help you if something is making you feel insecure or upset. Is there anything you'd like to talk to me about?"

Adult then spends time with the child processing emotions and finding the root cause of the behaviours. There are opportunities for journalling, movement and artwork to help the child.

At the end of the day, both sets of parents are informed about what has happened. The parents of the child who sent the messages are invited in for a meeting with the adult who dealt with the situation and the head of school, within the next couple of days.

Once both children have had time to decompress and process emotions, a session of conflict resolution takes place between them and a mediator. As a phase group, focus

is given towards the impact of our words on others, online safety and bullying, and compassion, during morning and closing circles. If the targeted child requests, there will be an opportunity for a restorative justice session with the larger group.

Once conflict has been resolved, there'll be some time put aside for these 2 children to do specific activities together to help restore and rebuild their relationship.

4. Persistent and ongoing targeting of a specific child; physical / sexual / prejudicial / homophobic bullying

### **Example**

Amara and Joey have been experiencing conflict for 2 months. There have been incidents of Amara excluding Joey from games and calling him names at school, and Joey has brought in examples of harassment online from Amara. These incidences of bullying (in person and cyber) have been addressed with both children and their parents. Two attempts have previously been made at resolving conflict between the children, which seemed to work for a short time but then issues arose again.

Today, an incident arose that involved elements of physical, prejudicial and sexual bullying (name-calling that led to physical assault) by Amara towards Joey, while in the woods.

One adult takes Amara off for a walk in the woods to help her calm down, release her anger and possibly find out what has sparked her behaviour today.

Another adult sits with Joey and his close friend. The adult helps Joey to release the shock and trauma of the incident with some gentle shaking and breathing exercises. He has some hot chocolate and food around the fire.

Because of the severity of the situation, both sets of parents are called. It's decided that it's best for everyone if Amara's parents come to collect her and she stays at home for the rest of the day.

After school, all staff and the head of school meet to discuss possible options. It's decided that Joey and Amara will be put in separate learning groups for a month or until they feel they can be around each other again. This means they will have minimal contact with each other at school. This incident is recorded in the bullying log, as we're the previous incidents. Because of the nature of this incident, it's also recorded as a safeguarding concern for Amara.

Amara's parents have agreed to stop her online activity until the situation is resolved.

The school has recommended a course of 6 art therapy sessions for both students.

After a month of having some space and some therapy sessions, another attempt at conflict resolution will begin between Amara and Joey. This will then be followed by a restorative justice session involving the children in their phase. In each of their learning groups, a big focus will be placed on activities that support self-esteem and relationship-building.

Please see our [Behaviour Policy](#) for a detailed description of *Conflict Resolution*, *Restorative Justice* and *Protective Physical Handling* at Wildwood Nature School.

#### 4. Recording and reviewing

All incidents of bullying will be recorded in our *Bullying Log*. This is so that we can document any patterns of behaviour and ensure that we have adapted our care and environment to support those involved and affected.

Specific incidents will also be recorded on an *Incident Report Form* as necessary. Some incidents might require staff to fill out a *Report of a Safeguarding Concern Form* for one or all of the children involved. Please see our [Safeguarding Policy](#). Cyber bullying will be reported to the online safety lead and will be recorded on an *Online Safety Incident Report Form*.

#### 5. Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all staff members at Wildwood Nature School to model compassion and to explicitly teach children how to relate with kindness and respect to each other. We have created an environment where all members of the school community - staff, children and families - feel responsible for noticing any signs of bullying and feel safe and secure enough to bring it to a staff member's or the head of school's attention.

If an incident of bullying occurs at school, it is the responsibility of the member of staff who witnesses or first hears of the incident to respond (as per this policy and our [Behaviour Policy](#)) and to de-escalate and support all children involved. It is also their responsibility to ensure that the incident is reported in the *Bullying Log* and complete an *Incident Report*

*Form, Report of a Safeguarding Concern Form, or Online Safety Incident Report Form* as necessary. This member of staff must also inform all sets of parents of the children involved. If it is a serious incident, or the bullying has been going on for some time, the head of school and/or SEND leader will also be involved in communicating and working with parents as necessary.

The head of school will dedicate one staff meeting a term to reviewing the *Bullying Log* with the rest of the staff to discuss any patterns that need attending to or additional support put in place.

If the bullying incident, or pattern of bullying, is a safeguarding concern, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will take on the responsibility of pursuing the matter with any relevant outside parties. Please see our [Safeguarding Policy](#).

Please see our [Behaviour Policy](#) for a detailed description of how we communicate with families and outside agencies.

### **Policy review**

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