



WELLESLEY PREP SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

This policy applies to all parts of WELLESLEY PREP SCHOOL including the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Updated: Sept 2026
Review date: September 2027

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

At WELLESLEY PREP SCHOOL, our community is based upon respect, good manners and fair play. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can develop his/her full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed, but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other. This can be summarised through our code of conduct which requires children to: encourage each other, try their hardest, be truthful and fair, be well-mannered and value kindness above all else.

WELLESLEY PREP SCHOOL prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting the school in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions. This policy is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils on our website and on request. It is also available and known to staff, including junior and recently appointed staff.

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable. This policy applies to all day pupils in the school, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

We always treat bullying, including allegations of bullying, very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the school's policy on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles described in the Code of Conduct. Bullying can be so serious that it causes psychological damage, eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide, and, whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

The policy is drawn up following DfE guidance 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017 update) and Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff (2014) and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

It is reviewed annually. Parents are made aware of access to this policy on the school website via email. The school manages personal data in line with statutory requirements.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

"Bullying may be defined as: *Behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally*". Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies.

Bullying is the intentional hurting, harming or humiliation of another person by physical (including sexual), verbal (including email, chat room and messaging apps), and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory.

Bullying can also be a single incident, such as a pre-planned post on social media, organised harm or premeditated public humiliation.

Prejudice based and discriminatory based bullying may involve actions or comments concerning protected characteristics, which might be racist, sexual, sexist or homophobic, which focus on religion, cultural or home background, disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape), gender, special educational needs or where a child is adopted or in care or is a carer. Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve everyone - pupils, other young people, staff and parents.

The school recognises that harmful attitudes towards women and girls, including misogyny, sexist language, sexualised comments and gender-based harassment, can be precursors to more serious harmful behaviours. Such behaviour will never be dismissed as banter, part of growing up, or accepted social interaction.

The school recognises that children who identify as LGBT, and children who are questioning their gender, may experience additional vulnerability to bullying, harassment and discrimination. Any concerns relating to these pupils will be managed in accordance with safeguarding principles, individual risk assessment and current statutory guidance.

Bullying can cause serious physical, emotional and psychological damage.

CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like mobile phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal

behaviour. Whilst much of this can occur outside of school, all staff should be aware of the filtering and monitoring systems in place at Wellesley.

Cyberbullying may include the use of artificial intelligence (AI), deepfake technology, AI-generated images, videos or audio recordings, and image manipulation applications ("nudification" tools) intended to humiliate, intimidate, abuse, threaten or exploit another person. The creation, possession or sharing of such material may constitute bullying, sexual harassment, child-on-child abuse or criminal behaviour and will be treated as a serious safeguarding concern.

The most common places where cyberbullying occurs are:

- Social media, such as Discord, Facebook (less so now), Instagram, Snapchat, and Tik Tok
- Text messaging and messaging apps (WhatsApp) on mobile or tablet devices
- Instant messaging, direct messaging, and online chatting over the internet
- Online forums, chat rooms, and message boards, such as Reddit
- Email
- Online gaming communities

Special Concerns

With the prevalence of social media and digital forums, comments, photos, posts, and content shared by individuals can often be viewed by strangers as well as acquaintances. The content an individual shares online – both their personal content as well as any negative, mean, or hurtful content – creates a kind of permanent public record of their views, activities, and behaviour. This public record can be thought of as an online reputation, which may be accessible to schools, employers, colleges, clubs, and others who may be researching an individual now or in the future. Cyberbullying can harm the online reputations of everyone involved – not just the person being bullied, but those doing the bullying or participating in it. Cyberbullying has unique concerns in that it can be:

Persistent – Digital devices offer an ability to immediately and continuously communicate 24 hours a day, so it can be difficult for children experiencing cyberbullying to find relief.

Permanent – Most information communicated electronically is permanent and public, if not reported and removed. A negative online reputation, including for those who bully, can impact college admissions, employment, and other areas of life.

Hard to Notice – Because teachers and parents may not overhear or see cyberbullying taking place, it is harder to recognize.

All concerns must be reported to the DSL and records of any incident made in the appropriate way.

THE SCHOOL'S APPROACH TO BULLYING

SIGNS OF BULLYING

Changes in behaviour, that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied, include:

- Unwillingness to return to school
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing or are damaged
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Diminished levels of self-confidence
- Frequent visits to the school office with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches etc.
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiencing nightmares etc.
- Talking of suicide or running away
- Staff should recognise that mental health concerns may be both a consequence of bullying and an indicator that safeguarding intervention may be required. Persistent emotional distress, self-harm, suicidal ideation, eating disorders, anxiety and depression should be reported to the DSL and considered as part of wider safeguarding assessments

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

It is the responsibility of all staff to identify and investigate any instances where a pupil may seem distracted or upset. All forms of bullying are possible at Wellesley Prep, but the most likely forms are social exclusion due to small class sizes and friendship groups (potentially more prevalent amongst girls) and physical bullying (prevalent amongst boys). With these issues in mind (and considering the whole spectrum of bullying) staff are expected to adhere to the following preventative measures:

Staff & School

- Watch, Listen & Talk. Every member of staff should watch and listen to the pupils closely when they are at play or talking to one another. If any signs of bullying are spotted or if they hear anything of concern, they should aim to have a 'non-leading' chat with the potential victim at the earliest possible convenience without alerting the potential bully. If concerns are not alleviated, then the member of staff should discuss the issue with the tutor and then they or the tutor could raise it at the next staff briefing. The situation can then be escalated to the Deputy Head/DSL (Mr Dan Bickford) as appropriate.
- Vigilant supervision – especially at break times, in corridors and during changing times. This must extend into residential trips, away fixtures or school trips.
- All staff are required to read Keeping Children Safe in Education Part One in full, alongside all safeguarding and anti-bullying policies, as part of induction and annual safeguarding updates.
- All use of the internet on-site is closely monitored. No child is allowed to bring in their own device or use a school device unsupervised. Teachers direct and monitor the websites and apps used during lessons via direct supervision. All school-owned devices used by Year 7&8 and SEN pupils are updated.
- Staff are aware of our filtering and monitoring systems
- Our ethos, rules, RSHE & PSHE programme and assembly themes all help to foster a caring, family orientated school which is anti-bullying by its very nature. This will deter potential bullies but also, hopefully, make bullying such a rare event that it is quickly and easily identified. Equal treatment is paramount, and any form of racial, religious or sexual prejudice will be taken very seriously by the school
- We encourage close contact between the form tutors and parents/guardians and would always make contact if we were worried about a pupil's well-being.
- We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the school, involving our pupils.
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.
- A "Buddy" bench is placed in the playground which gives children a chance to sit at if looking for support. Children are trained to see this and act accordingly.
- A Peer Listening room has been established whereby Year 8 pupils (after receiving training from the Head of Wellbeing) are available to listen to pupils' concerns on a drop-in basis at break times.
- Staff must be aware that SEND children may be more likely to experience bullying (either as a victim or perpetrator)
- Staff must also be aware that girls are statistically more likely to be victims of bullying of a sexual nature. This must be always passed on to the DSL.

Pupils

- Our code of conduct encourages and produces high standards of behaviour and respect within our community.
- Pupils attend regular assemblies on anti-bullying which also deals with positivity, resilience and perspective as measures for dealing with bullying.
- The school prefects and members of the school council will be coached sensitively on the signs of bullying and encouraged to talk to staff if they have any initial concerns.
- All new pupils (including our youngest pupils) are briefed on the School's expected standards of behaviour. They are told what to do if they encounter bullying. We guarantee that whistle-blowers who act in good faith will not be penalised and will be supported.
- All our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying (or a breach of our rules) is taking place in line with our policy on whistleblowing. It is made clear to them that inactivity as a bystander could result in far worse consequences for both the victim and the bully.
- Pupils' responsibilities for the well-being of each other are discussed in PSHE lessons, tutor group sessions and assemblies about the Code of Conduct.

Responsibility for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of all safeguarding arrangements and policies rests with the Proprietor. This policy is reviewed annually.

CYBERBULLYING - PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Mr Angus McDonald (Head and DDSL), Dan Bickford (Deputy Head and DSL), Miss B Gibson-James (Head of Pre prep and DDSL), Mr Scott Baldwin (Assistant Head and DDSL), and Mrs Jo Douglas (Nursery Manager and DDSL) work to support all staff to understand online safety. This is backed up further by the training provided on SSS learning and in person. The DSL takes responsibility for it all. The ICT curriculum (as well as PSHEE and assembly rota) teaches children to stay safe online.

The children are made aware of the risks posed by adults or young people, who use the internet and social media to bully, groom, abuse or radicalise other people, especially children, young people and vulnerable adults. There are three recognised areas of risk online:

- **content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material;
- **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; and
- **conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm.

On-site, we prevent exposure to these areas of harm with the following measures:

- Every year group is taught about e-Safety through the ICT curriculum which covers blocking, removing contacts from 'buddy lists', use of social media and sharing personal data. Rules regarding Responsible Internet Use are clearly displayed.
- An internet filtering and monitoring system (for all pupil logins) which blocks all inappropriate content but not to the detriment of effective teaching and learning. All concerns filtered out are sent to both DSL and DDSL with specialist knowledge of online safety.
- The effectiveness of the school's filtering and monitoring systems will be formally reviewed and documented at least annually. The school will ensure that filtering and monitoring arrangements remain appropriate to the age range of pupils, safeguarding risks identified within the school, and emerging online threats.
- All school-owned devices are updated, and filtering and monitoring put in place for Year 7&8 and SEN pupils.
- A ban on all personal mobile devices (unless children need a mobile for after-school logistics, in which case the phone should be kept in the school office for the day) with the Wi-Fi being inaccessible to any user without the appropriate security details.
- The school operates a clear mobile phone policy designed to minimise safeguarding risks and disruption to learning. Staff, pupils and parents should understand the safeguarding rationale underpinning restrictions on mobile devices and personal technology.
- All ICT based activities are fully supervised by staff.
- Raising awareness about online safety and cyber-bullying. Pupils are made aware of the fact that the school's responsibility for their welfare does not end at the end of the school day or at the school gates. They know that we expect them to apply the principles of the school's code of conduct to their behaviour online either during their interactions with one another or the wider public. If the school intercepts evidence to the contrary, we will apply our anti-bullying policy and/or rewards and sanctions procedures as if the behaviour took place in person and on-site.

The latest resources regarding online safety promoted by DfE can be found at:

- www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- www.disrespectnobody.co.uk
- www.saferinternet.org.uk
- www.internetmatters.org
- www.childnet.com/cyberbullying-guidance
- www.pshe-association.org.uk
- educateagainsthate.com
- www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-use-of-social-media-for-online-radicalisation

Recent tangible examples of the school promoting awareness include:
 Discussions with Year 7 & 8 pupils regarding digital profiles in 2024/25.
 Frequent communication (via school newsletter) and direct emails from Head of Digital Learning and Deputy Head/DSL regarding online safety.
 Communications with parents outlining the school's stance on mobile phone usage amongst children. Explanation of and expectation of pupils to adhere to Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for all school technology (annually). Talks given by DSL/DDSL on "Preparing children for a digital world" twice in 2023. e-Safety links and advice sent out at the start of lockdown in March 2020, in January 2019 and again (via Zoom) in 2021 and 2022 the school had in guest speakers from NSPCC and an independent consultant to discuss staying safe online. These talks were also given to parents. In November 2018 and December 2020, the school completed an online survey, the results of which were discussed and shared with staff, pupils and parents. In 2022 a workshop was run by an external speaker on social media.
 All staff annually complete the Channel Prevent Training online which looks at the danger of online recruitment from extremist organisations. Alongside this, and as part of the whole school approach to safeguarding training, all staff complete an annual e-Safety training course online.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH REPORTED BULLYING

- A bullying incident should be treated as a safeguarding and child protection concern where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, or where bullying forms part of wider child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment, sexual violence, online abuse, exploitation or other safeguarding concerns in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents. Records of any incidents are kept securely on the management drive in order that patterns of behaviour can be identified and monitored. The DSL (Dan Bickford)) regularly looks at the pastoral tracker on ISAMS to pick up incidents not highlighted already, or to establish patterns in children's behaviour which may be relevant.
- Where appropriate, concerns may result in the provision of Family Help support, targeted early intervention, or referral to statutory safeguarding services.

If an incident of bullying (on or off site) is reported, the following procedures are adopted:

- The member of staff to whom it was reported, or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the pupils involved.

- He/she will inform an appropriate member of the pastoral team (Deputy Head) as soon as possible.
- The teacher and Deputy Head will interview the victim(s) and bully(s) individually and write up details on ISMAS. It is impossible to predict the next stage of the process, but it will be decided collectively by the teacher and Deputy Head. At this stage the credibility and severity of the accusation would have been verified, and the two members of staff can decide on the next steps including whom to inform (parents, form tutors, other members of staff).
- In all situations the teacher and Deputy Head would organise an appropriate number of follow up sessions with all pupils involved to ensure a positive conclusion to the matter.
- The School may exclude a pupil, either temporarily or permanently, in cases of severe and persistent bullying and if the support put in place for the bully does not result in the modification of behaviour to an acceptable level.
- In very serious cases (and certainly if a criminal act has been committed), and only after the Head has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to Social Services.
- The thresholds for either reporting a bullying incident to an external agency or deeming a bullying incident to be a safeguarding issue are not exact. The Deputy Head (DSL) and the Head will make decisions on these thresholds on a case-by-case basis, always erring on the side of caution and seeking the advice of external agencies whenever needed. Criminal activity will always be reported to the police.
- It is important to see the perpetrator as a potential victim too. It is essential that investigations look at why that person/persons has behaved in this way.

BULLYING

Bullying, harassment and victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying, including cyber-bullying, is unacceptable (please refer to our bullying policy for more information, including information on cyber bullying).

Child-on-child abuse

Child-on-child abuse features physical, emotional, sexual and financial abuse of a child/young person by their peers. It can affect any child/young person, sometimes vulnerable children are targeted. For example:

- Sexual harassment
- Sexual violence
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Image-based abuse
- Sharing of sexual images without consent
- Abuse using AI-generated content

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Financial exploitation
- Child-on-child coercion, control or intimidation
- Bullying motivated by protected characteristics
- Staff should be aware that young carers may face additional safeguarding, emotional wellbeing and attendance challenges. Appropriate support will be offered and concerns shared with the DSL where necessary.
- Staff should recognise that children with medical conditions may face additional barriers to recognising abuse, reporting concerns and accessing support. These pupils may require additional safeguarding consideration.
- Those living with domestic abuse or intra-familial abuse in their histories
- Young people in care
- Those who have experienced bereavement through the loss of a parent, sibling or friend
- Black and minority ethnic children are under identified as victims but are over identified as perpetrators
- Both girls and boys experience child on child abuse however they are likely to experience it differently i.e. girls being sexually touched, victims being upskirted, assaulted or boys being subject to homophobic taunts/initiation/hazing type (rituals and other activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group) violence.
- It is influenced by the nature of the environments in which children/young people spend their time - home, school, peer group and community - and is built upon notions of power imbalances
- Sharing nudes and semi-nude images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- Child-on-child abuse involves someone who abuses a 'vulnerability' or power imbalance to harm another and have the opportunity or be in an environment where this is possible.
- Staff should be mindful that early information sharing is vital for the effective identification, assessment and allocation of appropriate service provision, whether this is when problems first emerge, or where a child is already known to local authority children's social care.
- Hazing is a term regarding initiation rituals that often involve humiliation and abuse.
- Patterning is another term that refers to the filming of children being physically abused or humiliated and sharing this on social media.

While perpetrators of child-on-child abuse poses a risk to others they are often victims of abuse themselves.

Any signs of child-on-child abuse should be reported to the DSL/DDLSs. In addition to this the pastoral tracker (ISAMS) should be updated and a "note of concern" must be filled out. Children should be aware of the signs and dangers of this through their PSHE curriculum (which includes "Relationships" as a theme

throughout the year groups) and feel comfortable in passing their concerns to their form teacher, or any other member of staff. All staff should be aware of any concerns and pass this onto DSL/DDSL and tutors to ensure quick action is taken and information shared amongst the staff body. Mobile phones are not permitted on the school site, but should there be events outside of school that impact upon a child's safety this should be shared with both the school and parents. Attention should be made to the dangers of sexting in schools (see "The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS)."

The OFSTED report (March 2021) into Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence in schools highlights the scale of the (growing) problem

*Child-on-child abuse also included sexual harassment; either physical, verbal or online.

- If a child is involved in any form of abuse as the perpetrator, he/she must also be regarded as a victim. In both cases parents must be informed, met with in person by the DSL and a clear strategy put in place to ensure the situation is closely monitored. This should include a Risk Assessment and a Child Care Plan.
- Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up."
- Potential victims, who already feel guilt or shame, should feel listened to, believed and that the school does not view a disclosure as inconvenient.

WELLESLEY PREP SCHOOL HAS A ZERO TOLERANCE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT OR VIOLENCE

WELLESLEY PREP SCHOOL HAS A ZERO TOLERANCE OF ANY FORM OF RACIAL ABUSE

EYFS CHILDREN

Even the youngest children are encouraged to behave towards each other with kindness and consideration. They have to learn to look after their own possessions and to respect other's possessions. We expect them to be honest, helpful and polite, and to work hard and to listen to others. They should respect everyone and learn to value differences and diversity. At WELLESLEY PREP SCHOOL, the Head of Pre Prep/DDSL (Miss B Gibson-James), is in day-to-day charge of the management of behaviour in the Early Years. She will check the efficiency of the policy and to monitor if any patterns of bullying are developing.

We explain to children why some forms of behaviour are unacceptable and hurtful to others. We rarely need to impose sanctions but sometimes we may remove a treat for hurtful behaviour. Occasionally, a child may be sent to see the Head of Pre-Prep, who will explain the inappropriateness of a particular action, but such instances are rare. Parents are always informed via a note in the homework diary when any sanction or reproof is needed and, in cases of repeated instances of hurtful or inappropriate behaviour, they will be invited into the

School to discuss the situation with their child's Teacher and the EYFS Coordinator and to agree a joint way of handling the difficulty.

Copies of our Behaviour Management Policy for our EYFS children are in their homework diaries for parents and their children to read together.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Parents are encouraged to use our complaints procedure (which is published on our website) if they feel that their concerns about bullying (or anything else) are not being addressed properly.