

Principles and Values

Winchmore Tutors takes bullying and its impact seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that known incidents of bullying will be responded to. Bullying will not be tolerated. The company will seek ways to counter the effects of bullying that may occur within lessons or in the local community. The ethos of our company fosters high expectations of outstanding behaviour and we will consistently challenge any behaviour that falls below this.

Objectives of this Policy

- All tutors, non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All tutors, non-teaching staff should know what the company policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.

All of us have encountered bullying at some point in our lives, but we all deal with it differently. The aim of this policy is to work together to ensure that our lessons are a safe place for children and adults to be; whether they are directly or indirectly affected by bullying or not.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is unacceptable behaviour used by an individual or group, usually repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

In other words, bullying is considered to be, “unacceptable behaviour which occurs **‘lots of times, on purpose’**.”

Bullying can be short term or continuous over long periods of time.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical - pushing, kicking, biting, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racial - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic - because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Direct or indirect Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber bullying - All areas of internet, such as email and internet chat Twitter, Facebook misuse, Mobile threats by text messaging and calls
- Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities, tablets, games consoles.

Bullying may be related to:

- Race
- Gender
- Religion
- Culture
- SEN or disability
- Appearance or health condition
- Home circumstances, including Young carers and poverty
- Sexual orientation, sexism, or sexual bullying, homophobia

Bullying can take place in the classroom, playground, toilets, on the journey to and from school, on residential trips and cyberspace. It can take place in group activities and between families in the local community.

Perpetrators and Victims

Bullying takes place where there is an imbalance of power of one person or persons over another. This can be achieved by:

- The size of the individual,
- The strength of the individual
- The numbers or group size involved
- Anonymity – through the use of cyber bullying or using email, social networking sites, texts etc

Staff and tutors must remain vigilant about bullying behaviours and approach this in the same way as any other category of Child Abuse; that is, do not:

- a). wait to be told before you raise concerns or
- b). deal directly with the matter.

Children may not be aware that they are being bullied; because they may be too young or have a level of Special Educational Needs which means that they may be unable to realise what others may be doing to them.

Staff and tutors must also be aware of those children who may be vulnerable pupils; those coming from troubled families, or those responding to emotional problems or mental health issues which may bring about a propensity to be unkind to others, or may make them more likely to fall victim to the behaviour of others.

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Bullying has the potential to damage the mental health of a victim. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

Signs and Symptoms for Parents, Staff and Tutors

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do make less effort with school work than previously
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or " go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home hungry (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received
- lacks eye contact
- becomes short tempered
- changes attitude towards people at home.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other social, emotional and/or mental health problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated

Outcomes

All known/reported incidences of bullying must be reported to the Winchmore Tutors Designated Child Protection Officer.

Parents/carers of the perpetrator may also be questioned about the incident or about any concerns that they may be having.

The child displaying unacceptable behaviour, may be asked to genuinely apologise (as appropriate to the child's age and level of understanding). Other consequences may ensue – for example parents being informed about their child's behaviour and requests that the parents/carers support Winchmore Tutors with any sanctions that it takes (See Behaviour Policy). Wherever possible, the pupils will be reconciled.

In some cases, outside agencies may be requested to support the company or family in dealing with a child continually demonstrating unacceptable behaviour towards others – e.g. police or counsellors.

In serious cases (this is defined as children displaying an on-going lack of response to sanctions, that is, no change in behaviour of the perpetrator and an unwillingness to alter their behaviour choices), support from behaviour outreach, counselling, reduced timetables, or even fixed or permanent exclusion will be considered.

During and after the incident(s) have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be recorded in the Safeguarding log and monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

The Designated Child Protection Officer will record and review any incidents in the log, along with sanctions and reconciliation.

Prevention

The ethos and working philosophy of Winchmore Tutors means that all staff and tutors actively encourage children to have respect for each other and for other people's property. Good and kind/polite behaviour is regularly acknowledged.

Staff and tutors will reinforce expectations of behaviour as a regular theme in line with our behaviour policy.

Staff and tutors must be careful not to highlight differences of children or an individual child, even if this is done in jest. This gives other children advocacy to use this difference to begin calling names or teasing.

Staff and tutors must be vigilant regarding groups of friends together. Friendship groups may bring about the imbalance of power and must be led towards welcoming others to join them and not excluding others from their group.

Staff must reinforce a general message that children do not have to be friends with everyone else, but they must be respectful of everyone else's feelings and be kind to each other.

If a child feels that they are being bullied then there are several procedures that they are encouraged to follow: (not hierarchical)

- Tell a friend
- Tell your School Council rep or Anti-Bullying Team
- Tell a teacher, tutor or adult whom you feel you can trust
- Tell a parent or adult at home whom you feel you can trust
- Ring Childline and follow the advice given

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using technology. Whether on social media sites, through a mobile phone, online group tuition or gaming sites the effects can be devastating for the pupil involved. Research shows that most children have been involved in cyberbullying in some way, either as a victim, perpetrator, or bystander. By its very nature, cyberbullying tends to involve a number of online bystanders and can quickly spiral out of control. Children and young people who bully others online do not need to be physically stronger and their methods can often be hidden and subtle. The impact of cyberbullying can be particularly severe as the victim feels that they cannot escape the bullying which can take place at school or at home.

Social media can create a false sense of security; it can be easier to say and reveal things online that wouldn't be said face to face; be cruel, aggressive or flirtatious. It is important for pupils to remember that there are offline consequences to online behaviour. Comments intended to be funny can often be misinterpreted online whereas if said face to face could be acceptable as facial expressions, body language, tone of voice and context all help to ensure that comments are taken the right way. Social networking can increase existing social pressures and reinforce a sense of isolation; for instance by people purposefully not liking a young person's status update or photo so they seem unpopular, or by excluding them from group chats. Online bullying involves a large audience and this increases the pressure.

What are the signs of cyberbullying?

It is not easy to spot the signs as it can happen all the time, which is a feature that makes it different to others forms of bullying. Be alert to changes in behaviour, for example:

- Being upset, withdrawn or outraged after using the internet or mobile phone.
- Unwillingness to talk, or secretive about online activities and mobile phone use.
- Spending much more or much less time texting, gaming or using social media.
- Many new phone numbers, texts or email addresses show up on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet.
- Not wanting to go to school and/or avoiding meeting friends and school mates.
- Avoiding formerly enjoyable social situations.
- Difficulty sleeping
- Low self-esteem.

Recording of Bullying Incidents

When an incident of bullying has taken place, staff and tutors must be prepared to record and report each incident.

All cases of bullying must be reported to the Designated Child Protection Officer.

This would include incidents where staff or tutors have had to become involved and speak with children, and/or where parents have raised concerns regarding bullying. Confirmed cases of bullying must be recorded following the standard procedures, as with any Child Protection incident.

All incidents of bullying will be discussed with all relevant staff, tutors and parents of the children involved, in order that everyone is vigilant and that further incidents by the same child(ren) may be prevented from happening in the future.

Advice to Parents

As the parent of a child whom you suspect is being bullied:

1. Report bullying incidents to the designated child protection officer or other relevant school officer
2. In serious cases parents may be asked to come into a meeting to discuss the problem
3. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted
4. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying will be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
5. An attempt will be made to help those using unacceptable behaviour towards others, to change their behaviour.

Do Not:

1. Attempt to sort the problem out yourself by speaking to those whom you think may be behaving inappropriately towards your child or by speaking to their parents.
2. Encourage your child to be 'a bully' back.

Both of these will only make the problem much harder to solve.

HELPFUL ORGANISATIONS:

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) 020 7354 8321

Children's Legal Centre 0845 345 4345

KIDSCAPE Parents Helpline (Mon-Fri, 10-4) 0845 1 205 204

Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222

Youth Access 020 8772 9900

Bullying Online www.bullying.co.uk

Visit the Kidscape website www.kidscape.org.uk for further support, links and advice.