THE WEBBER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

Anti Bullying Policy 2026/2027

This policy applies to all pupils at the Webber Independent School, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

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The Webber Independent School Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy has regard to the updated DfE guidance *'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (2013 updated 2026).* It also draws on *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and Working Together to Safeguard Children (updated 2026)* as well as considering the DfE guidance on using AI in education settings*).* The policy also considers the way in which the school can ensure that the aims of the Equal Opportunities Policy are fulfilled in ensuring the rights of those with protected characteristics are upheld.

In relation to online safety, reference should also be made to the school's policy on the appropriate and safe use of technology.

"It is a basic entitlement of all children that they receive their education free from humiliation, oppression and abuse. Education is compulsory in our society and therefore it is the responsibility of all adults to ensure that it takes place in an atmosphere which is caring and protective."

D. P. Tattum

1. Aims

The overall aims of this policy are the prevention of bullying and, should instances of bullying occur, to help staff and pupils to deal with it effectively.

In this respect, the school seeks:

- To ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment, without fear of being bullied
- To ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware of the nature and types of bullying that may occur, both in and out of school, and their causes and effects
- To ensure high expectations of pupils' behaviour, as detailed in the school's behaviour policy
- To use all pupils, staff and parents as a positive resource in the elimination of any form of bullying, drawing on peer pressure as a means of preventing bullying
- To ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware that bullying is totally unacceptable
- To ensure that everyone is aware of their responsibilities in addressing bullying issues
- To provide regular staff training in relation to the prevention of and response to bullying
- To develop effective strategies to prevent bullying
- To provide a consistent school response to any bullying and have clear procedures for dealing with incidents
- To provide support for both victim and bully

2. Definition

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, by an individual or a group, which intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally and possibly causing psychological damage. It is usually repeated over a period of time, where it is often difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

It can happen anywhere, both in and out of school.

Bullying can have a negative life-long impact. It can make it difficult for children to learn and can have a lasting detrimental effect on their lives. Young people who have been bullied can become anxious and withdrawn, depressed or aggressive. Some turn to substance misuse as a way of dealing with it emotionally and, at worst, bullying has been a factor in suicide. (Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour).

Bullying can take various different forms, including:

- Racial/Religious/Cultural – where someone is made to feel inferior because of their background, culture or religion.
- Sexual/sexist - 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 pressured to act promiscuously and to act in a way that makes others uncomfortable.
- Homophobic or transphobic - bullying based on sexual orientation or those questioning their gender
- Special Needs or Disability - any exploitation of a particular aspect of a child's disability and/or special educational needs
- Because a child is adopted or a carer
- Cyber-bullying via technology. For example, internet/mobile phones, email, social networks, text messages, online sexual harassment, sending of unwanted photographs or asking for/pressurising others to do so. (Please refer to the separate section, below.)
- The creation and sharing of digitally altered or wholly AI-generated "nudes and semi-nudes" (deepfakes/deep nudes) as a severe form of digital bullying, harassment, and coercion

Bullying can include name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, pushing, taking belongings, inappropriate touching, producing offensive graffiti, spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours or regularly excluding someone from groups or games. It is also bullying when a young person is pressured to act against their will by others or is harassed by unwanted conduct, which violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or humiliating environment.

Non-intended hurt

Not all hurtful behaviour is deliberate or intended to harm or hurt; there are instances of behaviour that are a consequence of thoughtlessness, unkindness or meanness. Any behaviour which a reasonable bystander would say was calculated or intended to hurt or upset the victim is wrong and may well constitute bullying behaviour. It is possible that in some instances bullying behaviour is not malicious and can be corrected with advice without the need for disciplinary sanctions. It must be made clear that these forms of bullying behaviour are equally

unacceptable. It is not a justification for a bully to say they did not believe, or were not aware, the victim was upset or hurt by their actions; a repetition of such behaviours over time should lead to other actions in line with this policy and the behaviour policy.

3. Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

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

- Is unwilling to go to school
- Is frequently absent from school
- Regularly has homework which is not done or lost
- Changes his or her usual routine
- Becomes anxious, withdrawn or is lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries him- or herself to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to achieve less well in school work
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- Has tuck money or other money continually "lost"
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Stops eating
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous or jumpy when a cyber message is received
- Is evasive or gives improbable excuses in relation to any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems or circumstances, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

4. Action against Bullying

It is essential that all adults in the school community know what to do when they suspect that a child is being bullied and which member of staff to contact. Whether bullying occurs in school, out of school or on-line, staff will have a range of appropriate strategies on which to call:

- Skilled observation to recognise and respond to the symptoms noted above.
- Ready receipt of reports of bullying behaviour, which are then investigated, acted upon and the information relating to the alleged bully and their victims reported as appropriate.

- Use of the school curriculum, for example in subjects such as PSHE, Circle time, story time, drama, English and history, to embrace the topic of bullying, including its dangers, how to prevent it and the steps to take when it occurs.
- Development of the RSHE curriculum in order to address appropriate and inappropriate behaviours in relationships and in regard to sexual and homophobic bullying and harassment, and how to deal with these if they encounter them
- Use, as above, of other elements of school life, including assemblies, form periods, house meetings, school council and visiting speakers.
- Use, as above, of focussed projects, such as an annual Anti-Bullying Week, elements of SEAL/SEAD* and focussed training, for example in safe use of the internet.
- Availability of this policy on the school's website to enable parents to understand the school's approach and work together with staff.
- Close parent/teacher liaison to ensure that both home and school work together to help and support the victim and moderate the behaviour of the bully.
- Where appropriate and following discussion with the headteacher, engagement with outside assistance, such as an educational psychologist, social worker or the police - in helping children who bully others.
- Ensuring that staff are fully aware of times and places when bullying is most likely to occur; organisation of the school day and supervision arrangements reduce the likely incidence of bullying. This includes supervision of changing and showering areas, monitoring the use of washrooms and cloakrooms at break times and the regular coverage of secluded areas at break times by duty staff.
- A good proportion of PE and games lessons and other physical activity to enable pupils to burn off energy and aggression.
- Use of the house system, buddy groups, Mental health Champions and strategies such as a friendship stop as part of the school's pastoral care to encourage vertical bonding between age groups, giving older pupils a sense of responsibility and younger children a chance to externalise feelings and anxieties that they may not share with an adult member of staff or even their own family.
- All children are given the opportunity to speak to their form/class teacher or tutor. This person is someone they feel comfortable with, who knows the child well and understands that the child may turn to him or her. Where it is recognised that a child may not be comfortable turning to his form teacher or tutor, alternative arrangements will be put in place.
- Familiarity of all staff with this policy; staff will sign to say that they have read and understood this policy.
- Through staff training and by regular discussion at staff meetings, raising the awareness of all staff to the dangers of bullying, how to prevent it, what action to take to resolve problems, and developing an understanding of the legal responsibilities and the sources of support available.
- Dove-tailing this policy with the school behaviour policy so that all concerned are aware of the appropriate procedures and sanctions.
- Where appropriate, training in, or drawing on, external expertise in specialist skills to understand pupils' specific needs, for example to assist staff in being vigilant and in taking appropriate action in relation to the vulnerability to bullying of pupils with SEND.

- Minor behaviors (such as misogynistic remarks, casual harassment, or low-level peer conflict) exist on an escalatory continuum. Staff must challenge these behaviors instantly and report them to prevent escalation into severe sexual harassment or violence

* Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning and Social and Emotional Aspects of Development (EYFS)

5. Cyberbullying

The school is conscious of the dangers of cyber-bullying, in relation to both safeguarding and anti-bullying strategies. A range of measures is set in place to guard against it. The school's firewall and filtering systems are organised and monitored to ensure, so far as is possible, that pupils are protected from inappropriate content, including extremist materials and those designed to radicalise. The school recognises that no filtering system is perfect and, in their ICT and PSHE lessons, pupils learn the steps they should take, should they encounter inappropriate content.

We understand the increasing nature of child on child abuse can now involve generated imagery or content utilising AI including digitally altered imagery such as "deep fakes" or " deep nudes" and creation, manipulation, or distribution of digitally altered images, visual content, or wholly AI-generated imageryas a severe form of sexual harassment, cyberbullying, and child protection violation.

All incidents involving the sharing of nude or semi-nude images (whether self-generated, peer-taken, or AI-generated) mandate an immediate safeguarding response, regardless of whether the imagery is claimed to be "consensual" or "non-consensual".

The school also recognises that systems can only protect the pupils whilst using school equipment in school. The UK Safer Internet Centre has published guidance as to what "appropriate" filtering and monitoring might look like. South West Grid for Learning (swgfl.org.uk) have created a tool to check whether a school or college's filtering provider is signed up to relevant lists.

In line with the guidance in KCSIE 2026 the school recognises that children and young people have other ways of accessing the internet through the mobile network; and that this may be used to harass and bully others. The school has appropriate policies to address this through its policies on mobile use, as outlined in the safe and appropriate use of technology policy.

In their ICT and PSHE lessons they, therefore, learn about appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and how to keep themselves safe whilst online away from the school premises. This includes the development of their resilience to resist radicalisation and how to protect themselves and take action if they encounter other forms of online bullying and harassment, including sexual bullying. Similarly, the school provides information for parents and periodically runs workshops to enable them to gain a greater understanding of how they can help to keep their children safe online at home.

In their ICT and PSHE lessons, through assemblies and focussed workshops, pupils also learn at an age-appropriate stage about the dangers of cyber-bullying via technology, for example through mobile phones, email, social

networks, text messaging and photography. They are given guidance on how to resist and report such approaches, including exercising prudence in the use of personal information on social networking sites.

Further information can be found in the school's e-safety policy, which can be found as a section of the safeguarding policy.

6. Procedures to Follow

This policy only works if it ensures that the whole school community understands that bullying is not to be tolerated and understands the steps that will be taken both to prevent and to respond to bullying.

The Role of the Headmistress

The Headmistress will be informed of any incidents of bullying and will ensure that all incidents are thoroughly investigated and properly logged centrally on CPOMS. The Headteacher will be responsible for ensuring the maintenance of a school bullying log and reporting on a termly basis via the Head's Report to governance. In serious cases this may involve liaison with the central team. The Headmistress will then collaborate with the Pastoral Lead in ensuring that an investigation takes place in every case and each situation is treated seriously. If bullying is found to have definitely occurred, the parents of any children involved will be contacted and informed of what action the school is to take by the Headmistressor Pastoral Lead

The Headteacher will ensure that the Pastoral Leadand all staff undertake appropriate training in taking action against bullying.

The Role of the HPastoral Lead

The main roles of the Pastoral Lead in respect of bullying are:

- Managing and monitoring practices to ensure alignment with the school anti-bullying policy and procedures.
- Maintaining a clear overview of the incidence of bullying and the school's anti-bullying prevention and response strategies.
- Liaison with the Headmistress and between all parties involved, including parents.
- Ensuring that incident slips (or electronic entries) are completed by staff in all cases and that a copy is stored in the incident file.
- On a regular basis, analysis of the incident file so that patterns and trends can be identified and the analysis used to improve policy and practice.
- Promotion and co-ordination of anti-bullying initiatives and projects both within the curriculum and in the wider aspects of school life (as highlighted in 4, above.
- Deployment of appropriate strategies to ensure that bullies change their behaviour and support them in doing so.

- Endeavour to create a culture where pupils feel confident in coming forward to report incidences of bullying including those of a sexual nature

The Pastoral Lead will be fully briefed by the Headteacher, who will ensure that he or she receives appropriate training, guidance and information.

The Role of the Staff

It is essential that all members of staff contribute to creating a school ethos which does not tolerate bullying and minimises the likelihood of incidents ever occurring.

- Staff must ensure that they have read and understand this policy. They must sign to confirm this.
- Staff must ensure that their training in taking action against bullying remains up to date.
- Staff will be aware of and exploit aspects of the curriculum and wider aspects of school life where they can embrace the topic of bullying, including its dangers, how to prevent it and the steps to take when it occurs.
- All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered from bullying.
- All staff should be vigilant and open to the possibility of bullying occurring in the school and should avoid an attitude that is dismissive or suggests that "it doesn't happen here".

In any case where bullying is reported or suspected, staff must follow this procedure:

1. In most cases the incident should be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who is approached.
2. Listen carefully and intently.
3. Reassure the child that you are sympathetic and that the problem will be resolved.
4. Do not ask any leading questions.
5. Do not promise to keep the issue confidential – it is important to maintain the pupils' trust by remaining honest.
6. Make a clear account of the conversation on an incident slip as soon as it has ended, but try to avoid taking notes during discussion.
7. Report the matter as soon as is practical to the Pastoral Lead. In her absence, report the matter to the Headteacher.
8. Discuss with the Pastoral Lead how to proceed with, for example, further interviews, liaison with parents and what action is to be taken, in accordance with the school's behaviour policy.
9. Continue to address the incident as agreed with the Pastoral Lead
10. Ensure that the incident continues to be fully recorded on the incident slip, together with details of what action has been taken.
11. Liaise with the Pastoral Leadto ensure that all staff are kept informed of the incident and action taken, as appropriate
12. Remember that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person. Staff should refer to the section in the Safeguarding Policy on physical restraint

13. Ensure that appropriate support is provided for all parties concerned.
14. A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm; the matter should be reported to the DSL and procedures should be followed, as detailed in the safeguarding policy. This is likely to involve reporting the incident to MK MASH and also to the police if it is believed that the safeguarding situation constitutes a criminal concern.
15. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following the child protection policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

7. Information and Guidance for Pupils

- As a member of the school, we expect you not to have to put up with any form of bullying behaviour. We can and will help to put a stop to it.
- You should feel free to speak out to your mum or dad or any teacher if you are being bullied. We can help you to cope with it straight away.
- When someone else is being bullied or is in distress, inform a member of staff immediately.
- Do not be afraid to report any incidents. Watching and doing nothing can suggest support for the bully. Even if you are just a bystander, you have a role to play in reporting any incidence of bullying.
- If you wish to inform the school of an incident involving bullying or perceived bullying but want to remain anonymous, you can write a note and put it in the "Worry Box" in the school entrance hall.
- Do not put up with bullies in your group of friends. Bullies will soon stop if they are left out or are by themselves.
- Take care how you speak and act towards other pupils. Always aim to be considerate and helpful.

8. Information and Guidance for Parents

- You may not recognise that your child is being bullied. However, changes in their manner, behaviour and general state of health can sometimes be explained by bullying.
- Encourage your child to talk about it, but be patient. It is quite natural for him or her not to want to discuss the matter and not to want you to do anything about it.
- Listen and try not to interrupt.
- Reassure them that you are sympathetic and that it is a problem that can be solved. It happens to most people at some time.
- Ask him or her if there are ways of changing things and help them to try to develop strategies to cope, strategies which should then be practised.
- Try to keep the situation in proportion and so remain good-humoured.

- Encourage your child to talk to their form teacher or tutor about the matter.
- You should feel free to contact your child's teacher to discuss the matter if you are concerned.

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