



Anti-Bullying Policy

1. The purpose and scope of this policy

Wendover Online School works with children and families as part of its activities. The purpose of this policy statement is to:

- prevent bullying from happening between children and young people who are a part of our organisation or take part in our activities
- make sure bullying is stopped as soon as possible if it does happen and that those involved receive the support they need
- provide information to all staff, volunteers, children and their families about what we should all do to prevent and deal with bullying.

This policy statement applies to anyone working on behalf of Wendover Online School, including senior managers, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students.

Separate documents set out our:

- Staff code of conduct
- Behaviour for Learning policy
- Safeguarding policy.

2. What is bullying?

Bullying includes a range of abusive behaviour that is:

- repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally.

Find out more about bullying and cyberbullying here: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying-cyberbullying>

3. Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in the UK. The [NSPCC](#) provides summaries of the key legislation and guidance on:

- bullying and cyberbullying
- online abuse
- child protection in each nation of the UK.

We believe that:

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and operate in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- bullying causes real distress and affects a person's health and development
- in some instances, bullying can cause significant harm
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- everyone has a role to play in preventing all forms of bullying (including online) and putting a stop to bullying.

We will seek to prevent bullying by:

- developing a code of behaviour that sets out how everyone involved in our organisation is expected to behave, in face-to-face contact and online, and within and outside of our activities
- holding regular discussions with staff, volunteers, children, young people and families who use our organisation about bullying and how to prevent it
- providing support and training for all staff and volunteers on dealing with all forms of bullying, including racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic and sexual bullying
- putting clear and robust anti-bullying procedures in place.

Our regular discussions with staff, volunteers, children, young people and families will focus on:

- group members' responsibilities to look after one another and uphold the behaviour policy
- practising skills such as listening to each other
- respecting the fact that we are all different
- making sure that no one is without friends
- dealing with problems in a positive way
- checking that our anti-bullying measures are working well.

4. Responding to bullying

We will make sure our response to incidents of bullying takes into account:

- the needs of the person being bullied
- the needs of the person displaying bullying behaviour
- needs of any bystanders

- our organisation as a whole.

We will review the plan we have developed to address any incidents of bullying at regular intervals, in order to ensure that the problem has been resolved in the long term. More information about responding effectively to abuse of any kind, including bullying, can be found in our safeguarding policy.

5. Diversity and inclusion

We recognise that bullying is closely related to how we respect and recognise the value of diversity.

We will be proactive about:

- seeking opportunities to learn about and celebrate difference
- increasing diversity within our staff, volunteers, children and young people
- welcoming new members to our organisation.

6. Prejudice-based bullying

Bullying can occur in many different contexts, we work hard to ensure that everyone at Wendover understands bullying can be prejudice-based because of protected characteristics:

Sexual – unwanted physical contact or abusive comments and harassment.

Race*– discrimination against someone or teasing / humiliating them due to their race or ethnic background.

Religion or belief*– discriminating against someone, teasing / humiliating them because of their religious beliefs.

Sexual orientation*– discriminating against someone, teasing / humiliating them because of their sexuality.

Transphobic or sexist*– discriminating against someone, teasing / humiliating them because of their gender or gender identity.

Disability* – physical or mental regardless of whether that disability is seen or unseen.

Age* - discriminating against someone, teasing / humiliating them because of their age.

Pregnancy and maternity* - discriminating against someone, teasing / humiliating them due to pregnancy or maternity.

Marriage or civil partnership (in employment only)* - discriminating against someone, teasing / humiliating them due to relationship status.

*These characteristics are all protected under The Equality Act of 2010. These types of bullying all constitute 'hate crimes' and may be reported to the police.

7. Cyberbullying

Cyber bullying is the use of ICT, commonly a mobile phone or the internet, deliberately to upset someone else. It can be used to carry out all the different types of bullying; an extension of face-to-face bullying. It can also go further in that it can invade home/personal space and can involve a greater number of people. It can take place across age groups and school staff and other adults can be targeted. It includes threats and intimidation; harassment or 'cyber-stalking'; vilification/defamation; exclusion or peer rejection; impersonation; unauthorised publication of private information or images; and manipulation. Further information is in Appendix 1.

Under UK legislation, cyberbullying can be considered a criminal offence under the following legislation:

- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Communications Act 2003
- Defamation Act 2013

In addition, under Section 1(1) of the Protection of Children Act 1978, it is a criminal offence deliberately and/or knowingly to either make, take, or permit to be taken, distributed or showed indecent photographs of children. Anyone using indecent, sexualised photographs, of children as a part of cyberbullying (including 'upskirting') can be prosecuted.

Most cases of cyberbullying will be dealt with through the school's existing Anti-bullying Policy and Behaviour for Learning Policy. Some features of cyberbullying differ from other forms of bullying and may require a particular response. The key differences are:

- Impact: the scale and scope of cyber bullying can be greater than other forms of bullying.
- Targets and perpetrators: the people involved may have a different profile to traditional bullies and their targets.
- Location: the 24/7 and anywhere nature of cyber bullying.
- Anonymity: the person being bullied will not always know who is bullying them.
- Motivation: some pupils may not be aware that what they are doing is bullying.
- Evidence: unlike other forms of bullying, the target of the bullying will have evidence of its occurrence.

It is possible that a member of staff may be a victim and these responses apply to them too.

8. How do we teach about bullying?

In order to work on preventing bullying at Wendover Online School, we aim to deliver a robust programme through our PSHE programme and also through the Group Tutorial lessons where students learn about the importance of preventing bullying and cyberbullying, understanding how it may manifest and what can be done to establish a community based on respect and understanding. Anti-bullying learning and reflection is embedded through both programmes so that students are allowed the opportunity to develop an understanding and appreciation of others and to understand the impact of bullying on individuals. Opportunities to discuss bullying are presented across the curriculum as well.

9. How can bullying be reported?

Students, parents and concerned members of the community can report bullying instances or concerns via several routes:

- Email: This can be sent directly to a member of staff, who will forward to the Head of Key Stage.
- To the Principal, who will forward to the Head of Key Stage.

Alternatively, students and parents / carers can report worries or concerns verbally via phone call to the Principal, Head of Pastoral or Head of Key Stage.

All reports will be treated confidentially and where necessary referred to the Pastoral Lead to establish an appropriate course of action. Students and parents often worry that by reporting concerns, the problems will get worse. At Wendover Online School we work with students and parents to ensure that timely and sensitive responses are undertaken and reviewed to prevent bullying behaviours continuing or escalating. The school will always try to work in a systematic and timely manner in terms of any reported significant incidents. All reported incidents will be reviewed by the pastoral staff, Heads of Key Stage and DSL, in order to establish an appropriate response. Incidents and responses will be logged on the internal Behaviour Log.

10. Range of Responses/Support for the Victim

Wendover Online School recognises that any bullying may be distressing for the victim of bullying and their family. In response to the incident, the school will seek to offer support to those concerned which may involve the following responses:

- Access to emotional support for the student via the Pastoral Lead or their 121 Tutor or other internal or external agencies as appropriate.
- A meeting with parents to discuss the concerns and associated safety/response plan.
- Advice and guidance on where and how to seek help if the student feels worried or hurt outside school hours.
- Restorative conversations facilitated by Wendover staff if the student feels this approach would be supportive.
- A review meeting with Head of Key Stage to ensure that the concerns have not reoccurred.

- To review the opportunities for the Victim and Perpetrator to meet in class and consider alternatives where necessary.

11. Range of Responses for Perpetrators or Bystanders

There are a range of actions and sanctions that the schools may apply to any bullying incident. This range includes the following list of potential actions.

- A verbal warning that the behaviours constitute bullying and that any further reoccurrence would be treated as bullying formally.
- Contact with a parent/carer.
- Intervention work (group work/activities/assemblies/workshops/restorative actions) led by school staff.
- Restorative discussions with the victim if deemed appropriate and safe. Restorative Justice approaches support the student who is bullying others to redress their actions, understand the impact of their actions and to enable the victim to feel safe and understood.
- Access to support, advice and guidance from key pastoral care staff to ensure any issues affecting the student exhibiting bullying behaviours are addressed appropriately in consultation with parents/carers.
- Involve the police or other appropriate external agencies where appropriate.
- Internal Exclusion from lessons – followed by a readmission meeting with parents/carers at which the student will need to agree to follow specific expectations in line with the Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Suspension
- Exclusion – this will usually only be considered in the case of repeat offenders.

12. Promoting the positive use of technology

The school will:

- Make positive use of technology across the curriculum.
- Use Continuing Professional Development opportunities to help staff develop their practice creatively and support pupils in safe and responsible use.
- Explore ways of using technology to support assertiveness, self-esteem and to develop friendships.
- Ensure all staff and children understand the importance of password security and the need to log out of accounts.

13. Contacts

Principal: Sarah Bacon sarah.bacon@wendoverschool.com 07800 804041

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Rachel Smith rachel.smith@wendoverschool.com

Wendover Online School 24-hour emergency contact number: 01604 859331

Policy review

This policy is designed to set good practice standards. However, the school recognises that best practice develops over time and, as such, will update it regularly in light of experience and as a result of changes in legislation or its own internal organisation and policies. As with all Wendover policies, this policy will be reviewed according to our comprehensive policy review calendar.

Date of policy: August 2024

Date of review: August 2025

Appendix 1: Further information on cyberbullying

The Department for Education recommends various resources for dealing with cyberbullying including The UK Safer Internet Centre at www.saferinternet.org.uk and CEOPS Thinkuknow at www.thinkuknow.co.uk. There is also information on the use of social media for online radicalisation at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-use-of-social-media-for-online-radicalisation>.

Cyberbullying is an aggressive intentional act carried out by an individual or group using electronic media repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot defend him or herself. Seven categories of cyberbullying have been identified:

1. Text messaging: sending picture or video-clips
2. Phone calling
3. Email messaging
4. Defamatory blogs
5. Personal websites
6. Personal space
7. Online personal polling sites

These forms of bullying, regardless of whether or not they take place within school time, have a direct impact on the health and happiness of the intended victim. In the event that such bullying emanates from an individual or group within Wendover Online School, the perpetrators will be subject to disciplinary action.

The advantages of technology are obvious to everyone and, used correctly, are a valuable resource. Sadly, there are those with less well-adjusted attitudes who will seek to use these forms of communication to hurt people. The advice provided below is offered by Kidscape, a registered organisation whose purpose is to counteract all forms of bullying. You may wish to visit their website at <https://www.kidscape.org.uk/> for more information.

How to deal with cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is any bullying behaviour that takes place through electronic means. Typically, it might include posting or sending offensive or hurtful comments and/or videos, sending threats of harm or encouraging someone to hurt themselves, spreading rumours or impersonating another person to cause them harm or embarrassment.

Get help

It's very important that you share with someone you trust what is happening and ask for their help and support.

- **Your family:** It's important to let either your parent or carer, or someone you trust in your family know what is happening. Together you can consider what to do next, and at the very least they can give you emotional support during this difficult time.

- The school: If the cyberbullying involves other children in your school then it's important to share with the school what is happening, providing any evidence that you have. Talk to a teacher or member of staff that you trust.
- The platform: Most platforms will give you the option to report or flag cyberbullying and other harmful behaviour. <https://reportharmfulcontent.com/> can give you very good advice on what to do next, and have a helpline if you need further support.
- The police: Some forms of cyberbullying could be a matter for the police. For example, if someone is threatening to harm you, or encouraging you to harm yourself.

Managing the situation

Choose not to respond: Most people who cyberbully and/or troll others are looking for a response. Our advice would be not to 'feed the trolls' - it is nearly always best not to respond. Some platforms will give you the option to mute the person and their comments. That way you don't have to be exposed to their hurt and hate.

Block the person or people: You always have the option to block or unfollow the person or people that are hurting you. If they are part of your school group this may feel more difficult but see whether you have the option to mute them or their comments to prevent further hurt. If it feels safe, you may also want to talk to them about the harm they have caused and ask them to delete their comments. There can be times when people don't realise they've caused hurt or embarrassment.

Increase your privacy: It's very important that you trust the people who you let into your online space. Make sure you have the highest possible privacy settings (ask a friend or an adult for help if you're not sure how to set these) and think carefully about who you want to see your content, and what you are prepared to share with a big audience. Remember what you post could also be shared with people you don't know and almost anything you make public is outside of your control. Always think before you post.

Take care of yourself: Going through a cyberbullying incident can be very difficult. It's okay to feel angry and sad but you will get through it. If one thing is for certain, it is the speed at which people online move on to something new! You might find it helpful to come off the platform where it is happening for a short period of time. Meet up with a friend, go for a walk, watch a film. Anything that takes your mind off what is happening. Surround yourself with positive people and things and you will start to feel better. Also - things always feel worse at night (when a lot of cyberbullying happens) and so it can be a good idea to come off the platform (or offline altogether), do something that makes you feel better, have a good sleep, and you may find you look at the situation differently in the morning.