

Anti-RHSC Bullying Policy

To be read in conjunction with the Behaviour and Discipline Policy

Our challenge

We are committed to providing a caring and friendly environment for all our students so that they can learn in a safe and secure manner. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, students and parents should feel comfortable and confident that they can inform us of incidents with the belief that these will be dealt with promptly and effectively. The school always seeks to improve and increase the ways in which students and parents can inform us of any bullying that is occurring. Anti-bullying messages and reporting routes feature prominently on the school website and around the school building, and feature regularly in tutor time, assemblies and lessons.

Objectives of this Policy

For all students, parents, teaching staff, non-teaching staff and governors to understand:

- What bullying is.
- The difference between bullying and other unpleasant behaviour.
- What the school policy on bullying is.
- How bullying incidents should be reported and followed up.
- That as a school we take bullying very seriously and that bullying will not be tolerated.

Bullying defined

- 'Behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally'.
(Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007), Safe to Learn)
- 'The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person by another, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be carried out physically, verbally, emotionally or through cyberspace.'

(Anti-Bullying Alliance)

Bullying can take a number of different forms. The main types of bullying are:

- Emotional bullying: Being unfriendly, deliberately excluding someone from an activity, hiding things or behaving in a tormenting way.
- Physical bullying: Any use of physical force or violence.
- Verbal bullying: The use of name calling, teasing, rumour spreading.
- Racist bullying: Treating someone differently because of their ethnic background; this may include racist taunts.
- Sexual bullying: this may include unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- Homophobic bullying: Bullying behaviours based on sexuality and prejudice about this.
- Cyber bullying: Bullying behaviours that take place using current technologies such as computers and mobile phones and often involve social networking sites.
- Bullying aimed at students with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities.

How the school can find out / notice a problem

This is a 'telling' school. We encourage all students to report incidents of bullying to a trusted adult or peer. We believe the earlier we know about a problem the easier it is to resolve, so all parents must believe that it is always right to tell the school. In some cases, students may try and keep quiet about what they are experiencing. These students may exhibit certain behaviours that could provide a sign that things are not right. These include:

- A sudden desire not to go to school, perhaps making excuses and claiming more illnesses.
- Fear over a certain aspect of school life, for example walking to or from school or travelling on the bus.
- Changes in usual routine.
- Appearing generally anxious, withdrawn or lacking in confidence.
- Changes in interest in school work.
- Asking for more money; possessions that go missing.
- Changes in eating or sleep patterns at home.
- Becoming unreasonable, aggressive or attention seeking at home.
- Unexplained physical marks.

If parents are concerned that there is an unexplained change in their child's behaviour, happiness or general well-being, they should make contact with the school via the form tutor or pastoral leader who will investigate fully and deliver appropriate action/support. The school website also allows bullying to be reported in both the Parents' and Students' areas.

Investigative principles

In reality, there are many different types of bullying incident and staff will respond to each case differently. At all times the emphasis will be on:

- Respecting the feelings and fears of the victim and their families.
- Taking all allegations seriously.
- Promptly carrying out thorough investigations which are sensitive to the demands of the situation.
- Maintaining discretion and not putting students at any greater emotional risk.
- Being as open and honest as possible about the outcomes that have been reached without breaching student confidentiality.
- Offering support where it is needed.
- Understanding that those demonstrating the bullying behaviour will frequently require behaviour improvement support.

Promoting the anti-bullying message

We employ a range of methods to prevent bullying. These include:

- Creating a caring community
- Anti-Bullying Week: Year group focus on the types and impact of bullying.
- Increased focus through Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and the wider curriculum), discrete units within Key Stage 3 PSHE and Citizenship on bullying and conflict resolution.
- Regular assemblies about bullying and anti-social behaviours that can affect the well-being of other students.
- Student involvement in peer mentoring training programmes.
- Development of the anti-bullying message by the student body.
- High visibility anti-bullying posters throughout the school.
- Developing and maintaining a culture whereby students feel that they can report incidents to their Form Tutor or any other member of staff.
- The use of Student Leaders and Prefects.

Procedure for when bullying is reported

1. Incident/concern is reported to a member of school staff.
2. Information is passed on to appropriate pastoral leader.

3. The incident is investigated. This will include speaking to the student concerned, the alleged bully/bullies and any witnesses. Staff may also be asked if they have seen any behaviours of concern if necessary.

Based on the evidence and the circumstances of the case, a range of different actions can be taken. These include:

- Punishment of students as necessary – detentions, fixed term exclusions.
- Mediation and Restorative Justice - particularly in the case of friendship disputes.
- Meetings with parents of all students involved.
- Referral to other agencies such as the Police/Youth Offending Team/Douglas Bader School.
- Work with the bullies to help them change their behaviour.
- Information shared with selected teaching and support staff.
- Victims asked to maintain a bullying log.
- On-going support via the pastoral system for the victim of bullying. This may include working with a mentor, counsellor or other relevant agency.

Recording

- Information about the incident is recorded on the e-portal and within individual student files.
- Information is logged by the appropriate pastoral leader.
- In cases of racist or homophobic bullying the incident is recorded on the appropriate form and copies sent to LEA and other bodies as necessary. Principal to report this information to governors.

Monitoring of the situation continues after the issue has been resolved.

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