

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Rationale

Although incidents of bullying do not occur very often at Ratcliffe, it is vital that all students feel safe and free from harassment in the school environment. It is equally important that students, parents and staff feel secure in the knowledge that any report of an incident of bullying is treated with the utmost seriousness by the school. The Anti-Bullying Policy, alongside other school pastoral policies with regard to behaviour management and rewards and sanctions, assists in achieving the aims of the school's Mission Statement.

Aims

The aims of the Anti-Bullying Policy are as follows:

- To create a happy, well-ordered and caring community;
- To raise awareness among students, parents and staff as to what constitutes bullying behaviour;
- To communicate to students, parents and staff why bullying is unacceptable, that it will not be tolerated and that victims will be supported;
- To reduce incidents of bullying through the implementation of appropriate strategies, preventative and proactive as well as reactive;
- To ensure that students have knowledge of, and access to, a support structure within the school so they can share worries and seek help;
- To implement strategies for treating bullies and victims which effect appropriate behaviour changes.

Implementation

The principle underlying the Anti-Bullying Policy is that a student who is a victim of bullying, or who witnesses an incident of bullying, should feel free to approach any member of staff for help. The member of staff is expected to act in accordance with school policy. All staff have a vital part to play in making it clear that bullying is not tolerated, in being vigilant and proactive if they note what may be developing into a bullying relationship and in being approachable and willing to offer help and support to any student who feels the need to discuss an incident.

Information intended to raise awareness of the nature of bullying and the signs to look out for are contained in Appendix 1 of this policy.

The following procedures with regard to bullying **must** be followed:

- **Prevention**
 - Opportunities to reinforce the values of the school's Mission Statement are taken through school and year assemblies, tutor time, and night prayer for boarders.
 - The PSHCE programme covers the topic of bullying.
 - Appropriate opportunities are taken within the curriculum to consider issues relating to bullying.

- Incidents of bullying are reflected upon and discussed when they occur so that lessons can be learned.
 - Information for students about what to do if they are being bullied is displayed around the school, including telephone numbers for the independent listener and other organisations that can help (See Appendix 3).
 - Through appropriate training and induction, all staff are made aware of the school's anti-bullying policy, including new staff and support staff.
 - Teaching staff, ancillary staff, prefects and monitors contribute to a suitably deployed supervisory presence around the school.
 - All staff are asked to be vigilant and to be willing to take appropriate action if they suspect that a student is being bullied.
- **Reporting, Investigating and Managing Incidents of Bullying**
 - 1) Staff to whom an incident is reported, or who first discover an incident, must:
 - stay calm and avoid making snap decisions or attaching blame;
 - make the situation safe, if necessary;
 - report the matter to the Head of Year / Housemaster/Housemistress / Head of Junior Department / Head of Nursery School (as appropriate) in the first instance.
 - 2) **Staff must write, sign and date an account of any incident as soon as possible after reporting it.** Copies must be given to the Head of Year / Housemaster/Housemistress / Head of Junior Department / Head of Nursery School (as appropriate) and to the Second Deputy Head if necessary. Incidents can be reported using the red 'Notification of a Problem with Student' form or in a separate written account.
 - 3) **It is vitally important that all written records of incidents are stored appropriately by the relevant member of staff.** This is usually the Head of Year / Housemaster/Housemistress / Head of Junior Department / Head of Nursery School (as appropriate), but records of more serious incidents are kept by the Second Deputy Head and/or the Headmaster.

Junior Department and Nursery School

It is recognised that younger children may require a different response as their understanding of personal relationships develops. The following guidelines are specifically given to staff in the Junior Department and the Nursery School (though many of them are applicable to the Senior School as well):

If there is evidence of a child bullying another child or children then staff action is as follows:

- intervene to stop the child harming the other child or children;
- explain to the child doing the bullying why his/her behaviour is inappropriate;
- give reassurance to the child or children who have been bullied;
- help the child who has been bullying to say sorry for his/her actions;
- ensure that the child who has been bullying receives praise when he/she displays acceptable behaviour;
- do not label children who bully;
- when a child has been bullying, this is discussed with his/her parents and a plan is worked out for handling the child's behaviour;

- when a child has been bullied, this is shared with his/her parents, explaining that the child who did the bullying is being helped to adopt more acceptable ways of behaving and that his/her parents have been informed.

- **Follow Up**

It is important to note that not all incidents will require use of all of the following steps. In many cases, a quiet word of warning is sufficient to modify behaviour. In all cases, the level of response is determined by the facts that emerge from an investigation into an incident.

- Heads of Year / Housemaster/Housemistress / Head of Junior Department / Head of Nursery School (as appropriate) take responsibility for initial investigations of any reported incidents;
- students are interviewed in order to ascertain what happened;
- written statements may be required from all parties involved, signed and dated;
- if it is decided that further action is required then the Second Deputy Head is informed;
- the students involved (both bully and bullied) may be brought together with a member of staff present to try to talk it through, with the aim of apology and reconciliation, if this is appropriate;
- clear guidelines for future behaviour are issued to both parties and a code of conduct agreed. Students should know that the situation will be monitored and know of consequences for bully if bullying continues. The sanctions which might be applied are set out in the Rewards and Sanctions Policy;
- parents of bully and bullied should be kept informed, where necessary, at appropriate times during an investigation;
- Form Tutors / Class Teachers, Heads of Year / Housemaster/Housemistress / Head of Junior Department / Head of Nursery School (as appropriate) monitor the situation;
- if no improvement is seen then the Second Deputy Head implements further sanctions;
- a student who persistently makes life unhappy for others may face suspension from school or being asked to leave the school in extreme cases.

Monitoring

The Anti-Bullying Policy is monitored by the Second Deputy Head through liaison with the Head of Nursery School and the Head of Junior Department, who evaluate the effectiveness of the policy in the Nursery School and the Junior Department.

In the Senior School, the Second Deputy Head monitors the policy through discussions with key post holders through the Pastoral Meeting and the Heads of Department meeting, and discussions with students, in addition to checking the records of incidents which are reported and through feedback from parents if appropriate.

The Governors will (evaluate and review) the anti-bullying policy, and will ensure that it is non-discriminatory.

The Second Deputy Head will ensure that staff receive regular training updates.

Links to Other Policies

Boarding Policy

Child Protection Policy

Pastoral Care Policy

Rewards and Sanctions Policy

School Development Plan

Staff Development Plan

Further Information

A simplified version of this policy is made available for all students, in appropriate formats, throughout the school, on printed sheets and in Information Handbooks. Parents are informed of the policy through the Parents' Information Handbooks. Details of the levels of awareness of the anti-bullying policy are contained in Appendix 2.

Review

The anti-bullying policy is reviewed annually by the Second Deputy Head in the summer term.

Latest review – December 2009

Appendix 1 – Important Information about Bullying

The following information is intended to raise awareness of some of the important signs and symptoms that are displayed by both those who bully and those who are bullied.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone. Bullying can take many forms – physical, verbal or psychological. It may be carried out by individuals or groups and is characterised by repeated behaviour against the victim. The three main features are:

- deliberate aggression;
- unequal power relationships;
- behaviour which results in pain or distress.
- bullying can cause psychological damage and even suicide.

Bullying includes:

- threats of violence, both verbal and non-verbal;
- actual violence;
- ignoring or shunning;
- teasing;
- name calling;
- interfering with property;
- deliberately damaging another's possessions or work;
- racially offensive remarks and/or behaviour;
- sexually offensive remarks and/or behaviour;
- offensive remarks about a physical or other disability;
- incitement by others to commit an act of bullying;
- graffiti designed to intimidate and/or embarrass;
- ridiculing, mimicking, sarcasm;
- demanding money, material goods and/or favours through intimidation or force;
- vandalism;
- intimidation;
- deliberately trying to turn friends against one another by spreading false rumours;
- any other behaviour which is intended to cause distress to others.

Amongst other examples bullying can be:

Verbal or image

Being insulting, abusive, offensive, hurtful; spreading rumours; using sarcasm; teasing; using peer pressure on other students to make them act in ways that cause them to underachieve or to lose self esteem.

It can be spoken or written or placed on computer/mobile text messages or images on camera phones/internet sites/chat rooms/social networking sites.

Racist

Offensive mimicry; racist taunts or jokes; wearing of provocative badges or insignia; racist graffiti; making fun of customs, accent or dress; refusal to co-operate or work with others of a different culture

Homophobic

Because of sexuality or focusing on the issue of sexuality

Emotional

Behaviour or body language which others find intimidating, unfriendly, threatening, tormenting; excluding from friendship or working groups

Peer pressure to behave in inappropriate ways

Physical

Violence of any form - pushing, kicking, punching, hitting, taking, damaging or hiding belongings

Students but particularly girls frequently experience friendship issues in the early years of secondary school. These can be very distressing, but are not usually classified as bullying. However, girls will be supported in handling such issues in a mature fashion.

Who Bullies and Who is Bullied?

It is not possible in the policy to give comprehensive answers to these questions. The following points try to illustrate the diversity of circumstances that might lead to bullying relationships.

Young people who bully may:

- be excessively criticised at home;
- feel undervalued;
- live in a family where aggression is valued or the norm;
- witness hostility within their parents' relationships;
- be struggling to cope academically.

Young people who are bullied may:

- be unable to manage everyday social situations with ease;
- have a distinctive appearance or stand out in some way, e.g. accent, behaviour, intellect, tastes, known or assumed sexual orientation, home background, racial background, disability, etc;
- experience difficulties forming friendships;
- be late developers and therefore less mature than their peers, socially or physically or both;

- be physically less strong.

What Are the Signs of Bullying?

The following signs may indicate that a young person is being bullied. He/she may:

- suffer damage or loss to items such as clothing, property and school work more often than might be considered normal;
- suffer unexplained injuries;
- become withdrawn and be reluctant to say why;
- display a reduction in educational attainment, either gradually or suddenly;
- be reluctant to go to school;
- be reluctant to travel to and from school by bus, indicating problems during the journey;
- display unusual patterns of behaviour with regard to money and/or possessions;
- become depressed;
- be reluctant to eat or play normally;
- appear generally unhappy, moody and/or irritable;
- visit the Medical Centre more frequently than usual.

Taken individually, the above may not be due to bullying, but a combination of even some of these signs could be a reason to suspect it. If a child is showing signs of, or is experiencing, any of the above it might be an indication that all is not well and that the child is not happy. If this is the case, whatever the circumstances, further investigations are appropriate.

Victims of Bullying

Students who feel that they are being bullied should feel confident about reporting any incident and should have as many ways of reporting it as possible, for example:

- telling a friend who will pass the information on to an adult;
- telling a prefect or monitor who will pass the information on to an adult;
- telling his/her Class Teacher or Form Tutor;
- telling his/her Head of Year/Head of Junior Department/Head of Nursery School;
- telling a member of the boarding staff;
- telling a member of the chaplaincy team;
- telling a member of the senior management team;
- telling any other member of staff.

Incidents of bullying reported by students are always taken seriously. Information reported to staff is treated as confidentially as possible.

Appendix 2 – Awareness of Procedures with regard to Bullying

All Staff

All members of staff must follow the school's procedures when a bullying incident occurs (see above).

Staff must also:

- discuss issues of bullying if they arise in the classroom;
- note and report any significant changes in a student's behaviour to his/her Form Tutor / Class Teacher or Head of Year / Housemaster/Housemistress / Head of Junior Department / Head of Nursery School (as appropriate);
- watch for interaction between students which may indicate bullying;
- note and report to the Form Tutor / Class Teacher or Head of Year / Housemaster/Housemistress / Head of Junior Department / Head of Nursery School (as appropriate) any students who are consistently left out by others;
- intervene, as far as possible, to encourage the inclusion of all students;
- be vigilant in informing the Form Tutor / Class Teacher or Head of Year / Housemaster/Housemistress / Head of Junior Department / Head of Nursery School (as appropriate) of unexplained absences from classes or activities.

Students need to know:

- the aims of the school's anti-bullying policy;
- the school's definition of bullying behaviour;
- the signs to look out for in case a friend is being bullied;
- the ways in which they can report an incident of bullying;
- that they will be taken seriously if they report an incident of bullying;
- that any information they give will be dealt with as confidentially as possible;
- the methods used by the school to prevent bullying from occurring;
- an outline of the school's procedures when an incident of bullying is reported, including the possible sanctions that might be used against those who bully.

This information is summarised in a separate document for students that is displayed around the school and it will be included in the appropriate student handbooks.

Parents need to know:

- the aims of the school's anti-bullying policy;
- the school's definition of bullying behaviour;
- the signs to look out for in case they suspect their son/daughter is being bullied;
- that they will be taken seriously if they report an incident of bullying;
- the person they should contact if they suspect their son/daughter is being bullied. This would normally be the Head of Year / Housemaster/Housemistress / Head of Junior Department / Head of Nursery School (as appropriate), but contact can be made with any member of staff;

- the methods used by the school to prevent bullying from occurring;
- the school's procedures when an incident of bullying is reported.

This policy is included in the annual Parents' Information Handbooks.

Appendix 3

The following telephone numbers are also posted around the school in case any student wishes to make use of them:

Childline	0800 1111
Social Services	0116 253 1191
Ofsted	08456 404045
Drug Helpline (11 to 19yr olds)	0800 776600
Alcohol Helpline (11 to 19yr olds)	0116 222 9545
Eating Disorders Association – youthline - BEAT	0845 347650
Bereavement care – youthline	0808 8081677
Samaritans	08467 909090

Cyber-Bullying

Cyber-bullying has become an increasing problem in recent years. The following information has been incorporated into the Parent Handbook. Staff are asked to follow this guidance when they are advising students who are victims of cyber-bullying.

Most technology is used very responsibly. Young people generally use the internet or mobile phone in a positive way as part of their personal, social and academic development. Unfortunately technologies are also occasionally being used negatively. The School expects that its students will not use technology outside school as part of cyber-bullying and that both student and parents will co-operate with any reasonable investigation of that technology by the School.

Cyber-bullying is the use of information and communication devices and services to bully, harass or intimidate an individual or group, for example:

The following technology may be involved:-

- Mobile phones Email Instant Messenger
- Chatrooms and message boards
- Webcams Social networking sites
- Virtual worlds
- Video hosting sites
- Gaming sites and consoles
- Virtual learning environments

The law has recognised that there is no longer a clear boundary between behaviour within a school and the external behaviour of its students. Unpleasant messages or images may be sent outside school time. Naturally we would expect parents to play

the main role in dealing with any out-of school incidents. If there is clear link between behaviour at school and inappropriate behaviour when students are not on the school premises (and not under the charge of a member of school staff) we reserve the right to take such action as is reasonable with a view to regulating conduct. This may involve a ban on bringing a mobile phone onto school premises or a search through a student's phone by a senior member of staff where a student is reasonably suspected of involvement in an incident of cyber-bullying.

The guidance for parents and students below is adapted from *Let's Fight it Together*, an anti-bullying package produced in 2007 by the DCSF and Childnet International. Parents are asked to talk through and discuss this guidance with their child.

Key Safety Advice for Students and Parents

How to prevent cyber-bullying: advice to students

- Remember that anything you place on technology (examples listed above), can be made public within seconds. You have very little control over this. Nothing is guaranteed to stay private. Whatever you send to others can travel world-wide and could stay on-line for ever. University admissions officers and future employers may be able to view messages, films and photos posted years before.
- Be careful what you say on-line or in text messages. It is easy to upset someone by not reading carefully what you have written before pressing the SEND key. Be careful what images you send.
- If you receive a nasty or rude message about someone, or a photo of them, do not forward it to anyone. Doing this means that you will be taking part in the bullying. You could even be breaking the law.
- Keep your password to yourself. Do not let anyone see you key it in. Do not let anyone know it or use it. Change your password regularly. Choose hard-to-guess passwords with symbols or numbers. This makes it harder for others to hack into your account.
- Only give your mobile number or personal website address to loyal friends whom you trust completely. Remember also that some people change friends often, especially in the early teenage years.
- Choose the highest security settings on internet sites; do not rely on default settings.
- Use websites and services that let you **block** someone who is behaving badly or bullying you, and use the blocking facility.
- Use websites and services which allow you to report someone who is bullying.
- If you see cyber-bullying taking place, support the victim. **Report** the bully. Bullies get away with bad behaviour if no one tells.

How to respond if you are bullied: advice to students

- Do not reply to bullying messages.
- Do not retaliate by sending unpleasant messages back.
- Use the blocking and reporting facilities of the website.
- If necessary, change your contact details such as your instant messaging identity or your mobile number.
- Save the evidence. Keep copies, records and dates of offending messages, pictures and on-line conversations. Refer to the BBB Locked section of www.websafecrackerz.com to learn how to do this. Evidence will be needed by

school, internet service providers and mobile phone companies. If the cyber-bullying breaks the law, the evidence may be needed by the police for an investigation. Note that internet service providers will remove text or photos only if they break the law or the company's own terms and conditions.

- To get help:-
- tell a parent, teacher or adult you trust
- call a helpline like Childline on 0800 11 11
- check the provider's website to see how to report incidents
- ask your school for support and advice

If the cyber-bullying breaks the law, your parents may decide to contact the police. We hope that the guidance given above is helpful to parents. We advise you to be alert to signs of upset or withdrawn behaviour after your child has used the internet or a mobile phone.

The school regards incidents of cyber-bullying as it does bullying in any other form and the school's Anti-bullying Policy will be applied in the same way.