

# Anti-Bullying Policy

## Policy Objectives

This policy aims to encourage boys to see Rokeby as a safe place in which any allegations of bullying will be treated with the utmost seriousness by a caring and supportive adult and that bullying, in any form, will not be tolerated.

- All staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is and what it is not.
- All staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported. New staff have an induction process where they are taken through this policy.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.

We have specific and full procedures for dealing with bullying: if it is felt that a case cannot be handled internally, it will be referred to the appropriate professional agency, such as social services. All complaints should be taken seriously, monitored and pursued. Acting against bullying is a part of our duty of care to our pupils.

## Proactive anti-bullying

We also take a proactive approach by educating boys to be supportive and kind in various ways including working with the School Council, a 'buddying' system which involves older boys in supporting younger boys, PSHE sessions, form tutor personalised care with Year Head oversight, and regular assemblies where issues are discussed and considered together. The '7 Step Peer Support Approach to Solving Bullying' outlined below is a new initiative designed to take boys involved in bullying incidents through a process which aims to ensure that the situation is fully resolved and not simply suppressed.

## What is bullying?

Bullying is an intention to hurt another person. It may take many forms and what one child may regard as teasing another may feel to be bullying. Any **repeated** behaviour which makes another child feel uncomfortable or threatened should be regarded as bullying.

Bullying may be general or based on individual traits. It may also be racial, religious, cultural, sexual or sexist, homophobic or against those with a disability as well as cyber-bullying (see Verbal, below).

Isolated incidents of teasing, for example, may not be bullying. Sustained teasing would be considered to be bullying.

## Bullying can be:

- Physical – pushing, hitting and kicking etc.
- Verbal – teasing, name-calling, racial taunts and insults. This includes cyber-bullying using the internet, text messages, cameras, social websites or email.

- Emotional – being deliberately unfriendly, excluding or tormenting (e.g. hiding property).

## **Signs and Symptoms**

- Children who are suffering as victims of bullying may show changes in behaviour, such as shyness and nervousness, feign illness and/or be reluctant to come to school.
- They may show changes in their work or sleep patterns.
- They may lose their appetite.
- They may appear despondent, listless or unhappy.
- They may become easily upset or irritable.
- They may have physical signs such as scratches, bruises, missing or ripped clothing.
- Other pupils are observed to be sniggering or nudging one another when the pupil enters the room or answers a question.
- The bullied pupil may spend a lot of time alone or find himself left out of activities; it may get to the point where he is reluctant to take part in the first place.
- He may not want to go on the school bus.
- He may become aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable.
- He may start bullying other children or siblings.
- He may be afraid to use the internet or a mobile phone.

These signs and symptoms could indicate other problems and need to be thoroughly investigated but bullying should be considered as a possibility.

Bullying may cause upset, extreme distress, and may encourage psychological damage, even suicide. Bullying at Rokeby School is considered unkind and therefore is against the school ethos (maxim: Smart, Skilful and Kind).

## **Procedures**

- A climate of trust must exist between staff, boys and their parents to encourage victims to report early and for witnesses to feel able to come forward.
- Any incident needs to be instantly investigated involving the victim, the accused and any eye witnesses amongst staff and pupils.
- The initial interview may be with the form tutor: the interview should be non-confrontational. There should be a mutual agreement that the pupil being bullied is unhappy and everyone should try to improve the situation. The Year Head and Director of Pastoral Care should be kept informed. If the situation is considered to be serious, the Headmaster should be informed.
- A written and dated record should be kept of the incident, the investigation and outcome in the school file and on the Pupil Management System.
- Patterns may then be identified. To support this, the school holds Year Head meetings and Pastoral Care Committee meetings to track repeated scenarios.
- A note should be put on the staff room notice board to ensure extra vigilance by staff both outside on duty and in the classroom.
- The staff involved should try to resolve the matter in a reasonable and sympathetic way (see the 7 step approach below), seeking to ensure that the future conduct of the alleged bully (and possibly the victim) does not cause further conflict between them. With younger boys this may be enough to prevent further occurrences as they are

often unaware of their actions. Young children will often lose interest if they know they are being monitored or watched. At this stage it is preferable to resolve the matter without recourse to formal disciplinary procedures. To confront the alleged bully constructively is more likely to effect change.

Before taking matters any further the member of staff involved should speak to Mrs Rosalind Patten, Director of Pastoral Care, about initiating the **7 Step Peer Support Approach to Solving Bullying** (see below).

It is hoped and expected that most incidents will be resolved successfully and very quickly as outlined above. However, where there is a more difficult matter which is more complex the school may initiate the following procedure:

### **7 Step Peer Support Approach to Solving Bullying**

This approach involves a “**No blame support group**” for serious bullying problems, not for just teasing etc. It involves these **7 steps**:

1. Take an account of the effect of the bullying on the ‘target’ from them, allowing them to express themselves at length - pictures or writing may help depending upon their age/preference.
2. Arrange a meeting of those involved in the bullying – 6/8 children is an ideal number. The victim is not present, but the meeting involves the bully/bullies, colluders and some “healthy” peers who are invited to attend. (Seeing the victim and bully together is an imbalance of power.)
3. Explain to the group that you are worried about a problem for the target and recount their story, naming them, so that their distress is described or shown in a clear way using their writing/picture to reinforce the effect that the bullying is having upon them.
4. Do not attribute blame, but say that you know members of the group can do something to help. (Going into blame leads to going into defence.) Convey to them that we all share responsibility for the well-being of the boys at Rokeby.
5. Ask all group members if they can make some suggestions which might help using the “I” language of intent, eg I’ll sit next to him at lunchtime. For older boys a problem-solving approach can be taken, but for younger ones it might be more effective to ask for ways in which the story of the target could be given a “happy ending.”

*Parents of both bully and victim will be informed of the outcome and of any action taken.*

## **Ongoing issues (if there is still no improvement)**

Whilst it is expected that the above approach will completely resolve the situation, the school will resort to the following if the bullying scenario continues:

- If the bullying continues it may be necessary to isolate the bully during play-time and/or lesson time. Parents of both parties and the appropriate staff (see above) should be informed.
- It may be appropriate for the bully to sign a behaviour contract and have regular meetings with the Director of Pastoral Care to monitor and try to help to change their behaviour. The form tutor and Head of Year should also follow up the situation on a regular basis.
- If the bullying continues it becomes a disciplinary matter and appropriate sanctions will follow. The school will follow the school's Behaviour, Conduct and Discipline policy, along with support for the victim and the bully.
- Parents of the parties involved may be asked to attend an interview with the Headmaster, Director of Pastoral Care and other appropriate staff in order to try and resolve the situation.
- If deemed necessary, eg in the case of cyber-bullying or assault, the appropriate professional agency will be informed.
- The final sanction is for the Headmaster to exclude the bully from school, either on a temporary or permanent basis, after consultation with the Chairman of Governors.

## **PHSE and Parental Support. Other bullying issues.**

The school has a PSHE programme which looks at the issues relating to friendship and the more negative issues of teasing, rough play and bullying in a constructive way. It attempts to educate and engage the boys in understanding the issues and seeking to co-exist with their peers in a mutually supportive environment. It encourages collaboration and cooperation as well healthy competition, as outlined in the school ethos and supported by the school maxim: Smart, Skilful and *Kind*.

We aim to cooperate in a partnership with parents in all of these issues and will seek to involve parents as fully as possible in working with us to tackle these issues.

Staff are trained by INSET and by ongoing discussion and practice facilitated by the Form Tutor/Year Head meetings and Pastoral Care Committee meetings.

We are also willing to offer advice and support with cyber-bullying and text-bullying. Whilst recognising that these matters usually occur outside of school, we are keen to ensure that we work together with parents in creating a community which demonstrates all-round support for children.

In all of the above we seek to resolve situations in the most appropriate way and without either under or over-reacting. This can be challenging but we always aim, in partnership with parents, to achieve the right balance in support of the individuals involved.

**Mrs R Patten**  
**Director of Pastoral Care**  
**Updated April 2010**