



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Member of Staff Responsible	Headmaster, Senior Deputy Head
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Distribution:	All staff

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 encourage an environment of good behaviour and mutual respect and parents and staff alike are expected to reinforce this message consistently with the boys.

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. This policy has been written with due regard to the DfE advice Preventing and Tackling Bullying (October 2014).

This policy applies to all pupils in the School, including those in the Foundation Stage.

What is bullying?

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

Bullying may be general or based on individual traits. It may also be racial, religious, gender specific, cultural, sexual or sexist, homophobic or against those with a disability, special educational needs, because the child is adopted or is a carer or has learning difficulties, as well as cyber-bullying.

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

Boys who find themselves as bystanders are actively encouraged to do the 'right thing' and report bullying incidents to staff. Parents are actively encouraged to be aware of the part they can play to prevent bullying regarding their child or another. This is reiterated at parent information evenings.

Bullying can be:

- Physical – pushing, hitting and kicking etc.
- Verbal – teasing, name-calling, racial taunts and insults.
- Cyber-bullying using the internet, text messages, cameras, social websites or email.
- Emotional – being deliberately unfriendly, excluding or tormenting (e.g. hiding property).

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others. Cyberbullying can involve social networking sites, games, emails and mobile phones used for text messages and as cameras.

Cyberbullying is a particularly intrusive and often faceless form of bullying and as such, can be particularly damaging. The school takes this area very seriously and issues very clear rules to boys regarding the use of these technologies and the school's expectations of them to use such technologies responsibly and respectfully.

Boys and parents agree to acceptable use of ICT via the Rokeby ICT Policy for Boys and the guidelines within that document are underlined regularly during a boy's education at Rokeby by way of reminders in lessons, online safety training and other assemblies.

Additional information can be found at: www.cyberbullying.org

Bullying:

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).

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, PSHEE sessions, form tutor personalised care with Year Head oversight, and regular assemblies where pastoral/social issues are discussed and considered together. Acronyms such as **STOP** (Several Times On Purpose) and **TAG** (Tell them you don't like it, Ask them to stop, Get help) are used to help boys understand this area.

With regard to **anti-cyberbullying**, the school ensures the active management of hardware, software and connectivity. The vigilance of teachers and parents has a big part to play in the safeguarding and protection of pupils in this regard. In-school use of ICT is monitored and the system 'Securus' monitors the ICT network and alerts staff to use of bullying or threatening language – see the ICT Student Policy. The school ICT system also has an effective filtering system in place to block access to social media sites and other potentially harmful material.

Through **PSHEE** lessons, the School teaches children the importance of the responsible use of technologies and educates the boys regarding the potential harm which misuse of these technologies can cause. Annual visits from Childnet (for the boys and their parents) and/or other experts in this field also underpin these 'stay safe online' messages across the school.

Staff are also trained in all matters pertaining to Safeguarding, including the issues regarding cyberbullying. If a member of staff suspects a case of cyberbullying, they should follow the procedures outlined below.

Staff are trained to alert SLT regarding any issues and concerns regarding online safety. This is taken very seriously and fully investigated.

Children are taught how to stay safe, be resilient and how to gain support when required through PSHEE lessons and this is underpinned throughout the assembly programme and across lessons and wider school life.

Staff meet regularly and formally to ensure the welfare of individual children and those with concerns is being monitored, to ensure that a holistic picture is being maintained.

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. Children are taught to confide in a **trusted adult** regarding any incidents of bullying which occur **either inside or outside school**.

Children are encouraged to **report any incidents of bullying to staff in person or via the SOS boxes or via their parent or any other trusted adult**. This information is then reviewed by senior staff and appropriate action is taken.

Reported incidents of low level teasing/unkindness must be logged by staff and transferred at a suitable stage to the school management system (isams) so patterns can be established.

Any alleged incident needs to be instantly investigated involving the alleged victim, the accused and any eye witnesses amongst staff and pupils.

Remember: **any repeated behaviour which makes another child feel uncomfortable, unhappy or threatened should be regarded as bullying.**

Procedure Stages:

1. Upon report of alleged bullying, all involved parties are interviewed
2. All facts are recorded on a Bullying Action Plan and communicated to staff
3. The incident is recorded on the central bullying record
4. The bully undergoes suitable sanction/improvement plan/offered pastoral support
5. The victim is offered suitable support and reassurance
6. Both sets of parents are informed
7. The situation is carefully monitored by staff and any reoccurrence is taken very seriously

See detailed description of each stage below:

Upon any report of alleged bullying:

- Has an **initial interview with the form tutor and/or Year Head** taken place?

There should be a mutual agreement that the pupil allegedly being bullied is unhappy and everyone should try to improve the situation. The Deputy Head/Head of Lower School should be kept informed. If the situation is considered to be serious, the Headmaster should be informed.

The staff involved should try to resolve the matter in a reasonable and sympathetic way, seeking to ensure that the future conduct of the alleged bully (and possibly the alleged 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.

- If the allegation is looked into by the school and if they find insufficient evidence of bullying, the school will meet with the parents of the alleged victim and go through the findings carefully with them. At this stage, they will also explain what measures can be put in place for the situation to improve even if not recognised as bullying as such e.g. if the issue is friendship based, some actions will be recommended.

The allegation will be recorded on isams and on the '**Bullying Record – Alleged and Actual**' and actions will be also be recorded on isams.

In the event that an **episode of bullying/persistent unkindness** (see appendix) appears to have occurred, further action needs to be taken:

- Has communication been sent to the Deputy Head or Head of Middle or Lower School to ensure that a **central record is held of all bullying/alleged bullying incidents?**

These records are kept to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach and to enable any patterns to be identified.

Before taking matters any further the member of staff involved should speak to the Deputy Head or the Head of Lower School about the next steps.

- Has a **written action plan been agreed** and launched? (*template available on staff shared drive*)

The content of the plan will vary from case to case but should involve manageable actions to help the bully desist from their previous behaviour. The victim should also be made aware that there is a plan in place and what they should do should the bully deviate from the plan. The plan must be saved/available for view on isams.

Parents should be informed of the matter/plan in writing.

The plan needs to be reviewed at an agreed time to ensure all has been followed and progress has been made. The conclusions should be communicated to parents.

As well as a plan to be written and followed, the staff involved will also follow the school's Behaviour, Conduct and Discipline policy, as appropriate.

- Parents of the parties involved are likely to be asked to attend a meeting with the Headmaster, Deputy Head, Head of Middle or Lower School and other appropriate staff in order to try and resolve the situation.

It may be appropriate for the bully to **agree to a behaviour contract** aligned to a **Behaviour Management Plan** and have regular meetings with their Form Tutor, Year Head or other to monitor and try to help to change their behaviour. The Form Tutor should follow up the situation on a regular basis.

- **Has a written and dated record been kept of the incident?**

This would include detailed communication (including emails) which should be inserted into isams and also a clear chronology/actions and recommendations recorded in isams at the same time.

In addition:

- a. The relevant Year Head will keep the wider staff updated regarding recent bullying incidents to ensure extra vigilance by staff both outside on duty and in the classroom.
- b. Patterns may then be identified. To support this, the school holds regular Year Group Meetings to track repeated scenarios.
- c. Bullying incidents should be treated as a child protection concern where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Such incidents would constitute 'peer on peer abuse' and would be treated with utmost seriousness.

- d. Depending on the nature of the incident and whether it reaches the appropriate threshold, the school will take the decision whether to involve relevant external agencies such as police/children's social care.

It is hoped and expected that most incidents will be resolved successfully and very quickly as outlined above. However:

- e. If the bullying behaviour continues it may be necessary to isolate the bully during play-time and/or lesson time. Parents of both parties and the appropriate staff should be kept fully informed.
- f. If deemed necessary, eg in the case of cyber-bullying or assault, the appropriate professional agency may need to be informed.
- g. The school will continue to follow the school's Behaviour, Conduct and Discipline policy, as necessary if the bullying continues.
- h. The final sanction is for the Headmaster to exclude the bully from school, either on a temporary or permanent basis, after consultation with the Chair of Governors.

PHSEE, Parental Support and other bullying issues

The school has a PSHEE programme which looks at the issues relating to friendship and the 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*.

As a school we use other educational tools such as assemblies, projects, drama and stories to identify the differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language.

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, so that the principles of the school policy are understood, legal responsibilities are known, and action is defined to resolve and prevent problems. Ongoing discussion and practice are also facilitated by the Form Tutor/Year Group meetings and Pastoral Care Committee meetings.

With regard to cyber-bullying, whilst recognising that these matters often occur outside of school time, we are keen to ensure that we work together with parents in creating a community which demonstrates all-round support for children. Note: If it comes to the school's attention that a boy or teacher is being intimidated or insulted, the school will take appropriate action to support the individuals concerned and its own reputation.

The school will strive to give all involved parties the support they need in order to move on to enjoy positive friendships at school. This may involve additional support programmes such as ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants).

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.

The school will willingly, thoroughly and actively investigate all allegations of bullying/unkind behaviour reported by boys and/or parents. Regardless of 'hard evidence' found or not found, the school will act on the 'balance of probabilities' in terms of taking action to remedy allegations of bullying. Parents will be asked to support the school's approach. It may be that the school will request that both sets of parents meet with school staff to seek to resolve an ongoing situation.

If parents remain unhappy they should write to the Headmaster, raising the issue as a formal complaint, in line with the parental complaints policy, stage 2. If they choose not to do so, the school will ask them to accept its position.

APPENDIX to Anti-Bullying Policy

Guidance on differentiating between bullying and unkindness. Appendix to Rokeby Anti-Bullying Policy.

There is little doubt that bullies are not kind to others. However, Rokeby School recognises that not every unkind thing boys do constitutes bullying. Boys, especially young boys, are still learning how to get along with others. They need parents, teachers and other adults to model kindness, conflict resolution, inclusion and responsibility.

As a result, boys will occasionally do or say something that is hurtful. While it is important to address the behaviour, it is inappropriate to label them a bully.

Instead, it is important to try to distinguish between hurtful or unkind behaviour and bullying behaviour.

For something to constitute bullying, it must contain three elements. These include an imbalance of power, a repetition of hurtful behaviours and an intention to inflict harm. They also do or say more than one unkind thing to their target. An example might include mocking, name-calling and insulting the target consistently. Finally, the goal of the bully is to harm the other person in some way so that they have more control and power over the victim.

Here are some of the most common unkind behaviours which we do not consider to be bullying:

1. Expressing negative thoughts and feelings

Children are often open and honest with thoughts and feelings.

Young children will speak the truth without thinking about the consequences. For example, a young boy might ask: "Why is 'x' so fat?" These types of unkind remarks are not bullying. They usually come from a place of innocence and an adult should give them ideas on how to say things in a way that it is not offensive.

It is also important that children on the receiving end of unkind remarks learn how to communicate their feelings with the offending adult or child. For instance, it is healthy to say: "I felt hurt when you laughed at my new braces," or "I don't like it when you call 'x' fat."

2. Being left out

It is natural for boys to have a select group of close friends. Although children should be friendly and kind toward everyone, it is unrealistic to expect them to be close friends with every child they know.

It is also normal that a boy will not get an invitation to every function or event. There will be times when they are left off the guest list for birthday parties, outings and playdates. This is not the same thing as ostracizing behaviour, which is bullying. When boys feel left out, it is important to remind them that sometimes they too have to choose not to include everyone.

3. Experiencing conflict

Sometimes boys disagree and even argue. Learning to deal with conflict is a normal part of growing up. The key is for children to learn how to solve their problems peacefully and respectfully. A disagreement does not represent bullying – even when boys make unkind remarks.

A ‘falling-out’ or disagreement with a classmate here and there is not bullying.

4. Teasing

Most boys will be teased by friends and siblings in a playful, friendly or mutual way at times. They both laugh and no one’s feelings are hurt. Teasing is not bullying as long as both children find it amusing. However, when teasing becomes cruel, unkind and repetitive, it crosses the line into bullying.

Joking and teasing becomes bullying when there is an intention to hurt another person. Teasing becomes bullying when children:

- make demeaning comments
- engage in name-calling
- spread unsavoury rumours
- make threats

5. Not playing fairly

Wanting games to be played a certain way is not bullying.

Only when a child begins to consistently threaten other boys or physically hurt them when things do not go his way does it start to become bullying. If a child has ‘bossy’ friends, we need to teach them how to respond to the bossy behaviour. For example, we might teach a boy to say: “Let’s play your way, the first time. Then, let’s try my way.” Also, we seek to teach boys how to develop healthy friendships and talk to them about the importance of only developing the positive relationships and avoiding ‘friendships’ which are becoming destructive in any way.

It is Rokeby School’s intention to engage both staff and parents in this process of educating children and helping them to develop healthy relationships. If a boy or group is finding this difficult, the school will then seek the cooperation of parents in resolving the matter and will also recommend a course of action, including engaging expert help to enable a boy to develop ways of strengthening their relationships with others.