



SIR THOMAS RICH'S

Anti-Bullying Policy

This Policy was drawn up in accordance with 'Every Child Matters' (DfES, 2004), The Education and Inspections Act (2006), The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (2014), National Healthy Schools Anti-Bullying Guidance (2007), DCSF SEAL Anti-Bullying Guidance (2008), The Equality Act (2010), DfE *Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies* (2017).

Last reviewed: March 2023

Responsibility: The School's senior management team (SMT) draws up and implements the policy on bullying. It is the responsibility of the Governors (Personnel Committee) to review the policy regularly and monitor its implementation.

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1. Introduction

The aim of this policy is to improve the identification and control of bullying with a view to eliminating the problem; to promote the moral, physical well-being and development of all pupils by allowing them to:

- be healthy
- stay safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic well-being.

The School aims to create a happy and productive atmosphere in which all children can confidently achieve the *Every Child Matters* aims. The School recognises that bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals. It can be a barrier to their learning and have serious consequences for their mental health.

The School recognises that it has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children as well as a pastoral responsibility to ensure pupils are protected from harm. The safeguarding of pupils who may have experienced bullying will be achieved by placing the interests of the pupil at the centre of any intervention.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy, the ICT policy, the Relationships and Sex Education policy, the Behaviour and Discipline policy and seen in the context of all other policies.

2. Definition

Bullying is defined as any persistent action that causes pain, anguish, distress or upset. It may be physical violence (aggression, intimidation, threats) or mental/verbal (teasing, taunting, name-calling). Bullying may be motivated by prejudice and can relate to ethnicity, gender, gender identity, body image, sexual orientation, family circumstances and religion or other protected characteristics. All bullying including transphobic, biophobic,

homophobic, racist, ageist and sexist bullying is unacceptable (see Single Equality policy and Sex and Relationships Education policy). This could be face-to-face bullying or via the internet through e-mails, chat rooms or social networking sites. It can also be over the phone via text messaging, social media posts or verbal messages. The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people can forward content at a click. Cyber-bullying will be treated in the same way as other forms of bullying (see Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and ICT Acceptable User policy).

3. Education

As part of the School's Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education programme (PSHE), which includes the School's Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum, all pupils are given the opportunity to consider bullying, codes of behaviour, discrimination, victimisation and peer pressure. It is as important, when dealing with bullying, to influence the personal development of the potential bully as it obviously is to deal with it from the point of view of the victim. The work allows pupils to consider what constitutes bullying and victimisation, how to cope with the problem and what to do to get help. Students are introduced to how groups can exert pressure on pupils, for better or worse, including how individuals can be assertive and say "no". The School encourages pupils to develop positive attitudes and raise their self-esteem. These messages are reinforced in school assemblies (whole school, Key Stage and Year assemblies) and in Form Tutor time.

4. Identifying bullying

There are several indirect ways of discovering the incidence of bullying e.g. symptoms such as spurious illness, erratic attendance or isolation may draw the attention of staff to a possible victim of bullying. However, the School has found that staff are normally informed of bullying either directly by the victim or by their parents or by witnesses. The School is keen to maintain this openness, which it believes to be a result of:

- a)** a trusting school in which there is an expectation of, and high value placed upon, mutual respect amongst pupils and staff; and that
- b)** incidents are dealt with effectively, i.e. the pupils are listened to and appropriate and considerate action is taken.

5. Procedures

Whenever a complaint is made, action is always taken to demonstrate that bullying is never acceptable.

The incident is discussed with the victim, who is encouraged to tell the whole story. It is explained to them that the "bully" will be spoken to, s/he will be told that his actions are causing distress and that s/he must stop. The victim is told that if incidents continue, s/he must tell someone - teacher or parent - otherwise the bully will "win" and the problems will get worse. The responsible teacher will check with the victim that the problems have ceased. At this stage, sanctions may or may not be used dependent, for example, upon whether the "bully" may have been unaware of the consequences of their actions and may not have intended harm, and because the School will not wish to exacerbate the situation and perhaps cause recriminations and worsen the problem.

The bully is then spoken to, as above. It sometimes turns out that the "victim" has contributed to the incident; they are not always completely innocent. It is usual then to get both (or all) parties together to get to the bottom of what happened and to ensure that all see the unfortunate results and their contribution to the escalation and that there is no recurrence.

The teacher who has investigated the incident notes the main details and any action taken. A copy of the notes is circulated to the Form Tutor(s), the relevant member of the SMT and copies are placed onto the files of all parties (via CPOMS). CPOMS automatically logs all incidents. If the incident involves any form of racism or is motivated by prejudice on grounds of religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because

a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities, this would also be noted. Letters may be written home if appropriate; we would normally ensure that parents of both parties are kept fully informed.

6. Serious or persistent bullying

In the case of serious bullying (physically violent or unrelenting despite earlier cautions as detailed above) the bully will be punished. The bully will be warned that his/her actions are intolerable and that they must stop. His / her parents will be informed and outside agencies may be involved as appropriate to try to improve behaviour. An exclusion may be imposed, which could ultimately be permanent. Victims and bullies will be supported through bespoke programmes designed by Heads of Year to address their needs (see Behaviour policy and Exclusions policy).

If a criminal offence has been committed the School may inform the Police.

If physical harm has been caused, the advice of a First Aid trained member of staff will be sought immediately and the School will follow the Pupils with Medical Needs policy.

7. Avoidance

Staff are aware that bullying can happen to all children and young people, and it can affect their social, mental and emotional health. Experience suggests that much bullying in schools occurs in playgrounds, therefore, at least two members of the teaching staff are on duty throughout the lunch-hour and morning break as well as Prefects. Pupils may work quietly in their form rooms at lunchtime or in the Learning Resources Centre if they do not wish to go outside.

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact. Low-level disruption including prejudiced based language should not be left unchallenged or dismissed as banter as this can lead to a reluctance to report other behaviour. The School aims to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and isn't acceptable (see Behaviour policy) and help stop negative behaviours escalating.

PSHE, RSE, tutor time and assemblies offer a platform where pupils can openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as:

- religion
- ethnicity
- disability
- gender
- sexuality
- appearance
- family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities.

Staff training further contributes to the provision of a safe and inclusive environment where staff can be made aware of their responsibilities, can develop an understanding of how to resolve problems, seek support and be able to respond to the needs of their pupils.