Anti-Bullying Policy

Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell staff and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a member of staff.

Definition

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over an extended period of time, targeted at an individual(s), and where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. Where children are in conflict with each other (e.g. fights, name-calling that goes both ways, prolonged unkindness by both parties etc.) this is unlikely to be categorised as bullying (but nevertheless remains unacceptable). Bullying may also be in the form of prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying. It can be difficult to determine whether individual occurrences are bullying, or whether they are incidents caused by another factor, or are part of children simply falling out and having friendship difficulties; pupils will be helped to work this through.

The four main types of bullying (over time) are:

- Physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft)
- Verbal (e.g. racist remarks)
- Indirect (spreading rumours, tormenting).
- Cyber (all areas of internet, such as social media, email and internet chat room misuse, mobile threats by messaging and calls, misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera &video facilities)

Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or not wanting to come to school. Pupils must be encouraged to report bullying in school. Children with special educational needs or disabilities may be especially vulnerable and may find communication difficult. Staff must be aware of this and be more vigilant.

This policy is designed to ensure that as a school we are alert to signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it. Bullying behaviour must be challenged to ensure the safety and happiness of the pupils.

Aims

- To promote a secure and happy environment free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behaviour
- To take positive action to prevent bullying from occurring through our work in class, circle time, PSHCE, positive behaviour management etc.
- To show commitment to overcoming bullying by practicing zero tolerance
- To inform pupils and parents of the school's expectations and to foster a productive partnership, which helps maintain a bully-free environment
- To make staff aware of their role in fostering the knowledge and attitudes which will be required to achieve the above aims

Our Anti-Bullying Policy will build upon our Behaviour Policy. The policy will provide a framework within which any actions against bullying can be implemented and their effectiveness reviewed. Bullying is unacceptable and no child should be subjected to it.

Procedures

All reports of bullying are to be taken seriously and should be investigated. All members of the school community (children, parents, staff and Governors) have the responsibility of speaking out against bullying on every possible occasion.

The following steps should be taken when dealing with incidents:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached.
- If there is evidence of bullying, that member of staff should approach a member of the SLT who will investigate further.
- Class teachers will be kept informed.
- Where the incident is confirmed as part of a wider experience of bullying, parents may be informed
- Sanctions and reflective / restorative conversations will be used as appropriate, including maintaining records

The majority of pupils in school may not be involved in bullying behaviour, but they are likely to know if it is happening. It therefore becomes a collective responsibility.

When bullying situations arise in school, it is important to have dialogue with parents. However, for the purposes of confidentiality, it may be difficult for the school to explain to a victim's parents fully what sanctions or actions have been taken against a perpetrator; it would not be appropriate to discuss other children.

Children must have the confidence to report any incidence of bullying to an adult connected to the school, knowing that he/she will be listened to and taken seriously. The child should be told who their main point of contact is; usually this will be the class teacher. The matter then will be drawn to the attention of a member of the SLT. Suffering in silence does not make the problem go away. The child should understand that if the adult does not know about it, they cannot help to sort it out.

When a concern has been identified a record need to kept which may include the following:

- In what ways have they been bullied?
- How often have they been bullied?
- Where does bullying take place?
- Who do they tell when they have been bullied?
- What action has been taken and by whom?
- What systems can be put in place for the future?

Interviews with children may be a useful way of getting detailed information about bullying behaviour. A good relationship is needed between the interviewer and the child. Confidentiality is a difficult issue in interviews and sometimes interviewers may need to disclose information to others. They should make it clear to the pupils that they will discuss with them how and in what way they will use any information disclosed.

Method of Shared Concern

1. This method starts with a series of brief individual chats with each pupil involved, ideally in a quiet space.
2. The pupils doing the bullying are seen first. The talks are non-confrontational, the premise is that there is a problem - it has been witnessed by others that the bullied pupil is unhappy and has experienced bullying. The teacher follows a calm but firm approach with each pupil, which leads to mutual agreement that the bullied pupil is unhappy at the present time, and is concluded by each pupil agreeing to help in some way.
3. A discussion with the bullied pupil then follows. This primarily involves being supportive - including reflecting on their own actions and whether there are strategies they can use which will help.
4. The situation should be monitored daily by staff.

5. If needed, a final discussion is held (which could be in class time) where a public agreement for reasonable behaviour is reached, and long-term strategies for maintaining co-operative behaviour are owned by the group.

Children often find it hard to achieve a middle ground between 'best friends' and 'enemies'. Teachers need to point out that solutions do not have to involve becoming best friends with the bullied person.

Pupils who are being bullied need to be introduced to strategies to cope with their situation: who their first point of contact is, how to respond to situations, how to boost their self-esteem and how to remain calm in stressful situations. There are many techniques and one might be role-play. Rehearsal gives pupils confidence to use the technique outside.

Outside the Classroom

The teachers and midday supervisors need to work together and communicate on incidents, likely incidents or problem areas (school grounds).

When monitoring bullying, it is useful to observe the children at play. Sometimes what looks like fighting or bullying can simply be rough and tumble play or play fighting. This is something that some children usually enjoy.

Children in play fights often:
- Are smiling or laughing;
- Make mock blows or kicks, which do not connect or do so softly;
- May take turns in being on top, or chasing each other;
- Do so openly but are ignored by other pupils.

Children who are fighting often:
- Are both being physical with each other
- Are equally angry and feel there is injustice on both sides
- Are triggered by a particular incident or 'fall-out'

Pupils who are being attacked or physically bullied often:
- Try to move away from the aggressor;
- Do not take turns, the aggressor maintaining the dominant role;
- Are seeking help from adults or others rather than fighting;
- Get considerable attention if in view of other pupils.

Knowledge of pupils who have been persistently involved in bullying or being bullied can help supervisors be more vigilant. They also need to watch for pupils being isolated whilst recognising that some pupils are quite happy being by themselves.

Pupils who have been bullied may be supported by:

- Being offered an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff
- Reassuring the pupil
- Offering continuous support
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence
- Discussing what happened

Pupils who have carried out the bullying may be supported by:

- Discovering why the pupil became involved
- Establishing the wrong doing and need to change
- Teaching them more appropriate forms of behaviour.
- Informing parents or guardians to share concerns and help change the attitude of the pupil.

Within the curriculum, the school will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying through reflective discussions, PSHE, assemblies and subject areas, as appropriate, in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour.

Bullying Outside of School Hours / Offsite – including Cyber

- It is acknowledged that children's behaviour out of hours can have a detrimental impact on pupils' experience in school. We will always listen to and do our best to work closely with families and support pupils who have experienced bullying or issues out of school.
    - However, school staff cannot manage, supervise or formally investigate incidents of bullying (or reported bullying) in parks, at home etc.
    - We always welcome two-way communication with parents about ongoing issues and would monitor any known problems to the best of our ability, especially with due regard to safeguarding implications.
- Parents are responsible for managing pupils' behaviour and wellbeing off-site.
    - We always encourage parents to speak to one another to try to resolve any issues arising out of school.
- The above also applies to cyberbullying – we will always try to help children navigate their online world appropriately, and where possible, we may sanction or challenge certain behaviours especially if they directly relate to school (e.g. threats to hurt someone at school next day etc.). We specifically advise against allowing pupils access to social media (especially where this is age-restricted). Ultimately, if parents allow access to social media platforms etc. (especially where children are under-age), they retain primary responsibility for tackling any issues which may arise from the use of these.
    - Parents should take screen-shots of cyber bullying incidents if possible to share with school, so that we can effectively support victims.
- If we are aware of persistent or serious bullying incidents out of school we would support families with signposting to other agencies who may be able to help (e.g. Early Help).

Staff Responsibilities

- To implement procedures to confront bullying in any form.
- To listen to all parties involved in incidents.
- To investigate as fully as possible.
- To take appropriate action, or refer the matter to the SLT for further action.
- To promote the use of a range of teaching and learning styles and strategies which challenge bullying. These may include the use of PSHCE, buddies etc.
- To foster, by example, the values we as a school believe in.
- To promote the use of interventions which are least intrusive and most effective.
- To record incidents of bullying (or reported bullying)
- To retain records for monitoring purposes.

Concerns need to be shared and recorded so that emerging patterns can be investigated. Incidents will be dealt with on an individual basis and related to emerging patterns. Governors are given anonymised data on bullying and harassment.

The school and Governing Body retain the right, as the final resort, to suspend and, if necessary, exclude a child who does not respond to efforts to rectify his/her anti-social behaviour and hence continues to present a danger to other children. It is not intended that this provision be used in this school, as we will always aim for a restorative approach.

Bullying of Groups with Protected Characteristics

The school considers all bullying to be unacceptable. However, in line with Equalities legislation, and in recognition of the particular vulnerability of certain groups, staff must be especially vigilant regarding bullying linked to protected characteristics (disability, transgender, sexuality, race, religion). All these issues are discussed at the appropriate level as part of pupils' PSHCE teaching.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The school will review this policy regularly and assess its implementation and effectiveness.
The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

Help Organisations

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) 0808 800 5793
Children's Legal Centre 0845 345 4345
KIDSCAPE Parents Helpline (Mon-Fri, 10-4) 0845 1 205 204
Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222
Youth Access 020 8772 9900
Bullying Online www.bullying.co.uk

Visit the Kidscape website www.kidscape.org.uk for further support, links and advice.

Anti-Bullying Policy Summary for Pupils

Purpose

The school has lots of information for parents covering the whole topic of bullying (our 'Anti-bullying Policy'). However, this summary has been created to give a brief overview which helps you as a pupil to understand how we want to deal with any bullying in school.

What if I'm being bullied?

- Someone being mean to you isn't always the same as someone bullying you. We can all make mistakes sometimes and say or do unkind things. Whilst the school never accepts the behaviour of anyone who is being mean, this isn't always 'bullying'. Your teacher will help you to talk through this if you're unsure.
- If someone is repeatedly mean to you, *particularly if you've not done anything unpleasant to them*, this could be bullying. You must tell your teacher, and explain that this isn't a 'one off', but is something that happens a lot.
- Always tell the truth first time – it's really important and helps us to deal with what's going on.

What will the teacher do?

- The first thing will be that the teacher will talk with you and try to find out what has been going on. After that, they will probably talk to the other child (or children) who are involved. The teacher may talk to anyone else (particularly adults) who were around who might have seen what happened.
- If things are serious, the teacher might talk to one of the Leaders in school and explain what's been happening. They will then explore things with the bully and with you.

Should I tell my parents?

- It's always good to talk to your parents if you are having problems in school. Don't do this *instead* of talking your teacher though, do this *as well* as talking to your teacher if you can.
- Always tell them the truth, it's really important that everyone knows exactly what's going on.
- The teacher or the headteacher might want to talk to your parents too, this is just to help get the problem sorted.

What will happen if I tell? Will things get worse?

- At RMS, we really care about you – this means that one of the most important things is being honest if you're upset.
- It might be that your teacher talks with you and helps you deal with a problem without even needing to speak to another child. Sometimes, things that children feel are 'bullying' are actually just falling out, arguing or fighting. Telling your teacher might help sort this out.
- If you do tell and you are being bullied, one of the things that the teacher / headteacher will say to the bully is that they *must not* make things harder for you. If that bully comes back and is mean to you or says anything about you telling (like calling you a 'grass'), you must tell your teacher again straight away. The bully will be in a lot of trouble and this should stop things getting any worse.

What will happen to the bully?

- We will help the bully to change their behaviour. This is the most important thing.
- You won't always see what we do with a bully, or the conversations that we may have with them. We like to keep discussions like this private, because this is respectful. Just because you may not have seen something being said, doesn't mean it hasn't been.

Should I forgive a bully?

- Yes. This can be really hard, but, if a bully stops hurting you and is sorry, it is good to try to forgive them. Some bullies are mean because they are upset themselves. Showing them forgiveness could help them too.