



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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| Member of Staff Responsible | Deputy Head (Pastoral) |
| Date of Policy | September 2024 |
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| Distribution: | All staff |

Rokeby School is committed to providing a safe and inclusive learning environment for all members of our school community. We celebrate diversity and respect the individuality of each boy and staff member. Discrimination, harassment, and bullying based on protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, will not be tolerated within our school.

Protected characteristics include:

Age
Disability
Gender Reassignment
Marriage and Civil Partnership
Pregnancy and Maternity
Race
Religion or Belief
Sex
Sexual Orientation

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Behaviour Conduct and Discipline Policy, Safeguarding Policy and Management of Unkindness/bullying Grid. When deciding on interventions and sanctions, reasonable adjustments are made for children with SEN or mental health issues.

Policy Objectives

This policy aims to encourage boys to see Rokeby as a safe place where 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 the school policy on bullying and child-on-child abuse and follow it when bullying is reported. New staff have an induction process where they are taken through these policies.
- All pupils and parents should know the school policy on bullying and what they should do if it 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 complete 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 on Preventing and Tackling Bullying (October 2017).

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

What is Bullying?

Bullying is a repeated intention to physically or emotionally hurt another person or group. It may take many forms, and what one child may regard as banter/teasing, another may feel to be bullying. Banter becomes bullying when one person is no longer enjoying it, is feeling upset or uncomfortable, and there is an intention to cause emotional or physical harm. **Any repeated behaviour that intentionally makes another child feel uncomfortable, unhappy or threatened should be considered bullying.**

Bullying may be general or based on individual traits, including protected characteristics. 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 teasing incidents, for example, may not be bullying, although sustained teasing that a boy has made clear he does not like and is not enjoying would be considered bullying.

Boys who find themselves as bystanders are actively encouraged to act as upstanders 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, and parents are encouraged to inform the relevant form/class tutor if their son has been upset by the actions of another.

Bullying can be:

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

Child-on-Child Abuse

Child-on-child abuse occurs when a young person is exploited, bullied and/or harmed by another child or other children and, as such, is closely related to bullying.

Please see the School's Safeguarding Policy for more information.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying involves using information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour by an individual or group intended to harm others. Cyberbullying can involve social networking sites, games, emails and mobile devices used for messaging 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

Signs and symptoms of bullying include the following:

- 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
- They may spend a lot of time alone or find themselves left out of activities; it may get to the point where they are reluctant to take part in the first place
- They may not want to go on the school bus
- They may become aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- They may start bullying other children or siblings
- They may be afraid to use the internet or a mobile phone
- Other pupils are observed to be sniggering or nudging one another when the pupil enters the room or answers a question

These signs and symptoms could indicate other problems and must be thoroughly investigated, but bullying should be considered 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 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 pastoral/social issues are discussed. 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.

We also have boys trained as peer mediators to help other boys resolve conflicts.

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 protecting pupils in this regard. In –school, use of ICT is monitored and the systems 'Smoothwall' & 'Impero' monitor the ICT network and alerts staff to the 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 **PSHE** lessons, the school teaches children the importance of the responsible use of technologies and educates the boys regarding the potential harm misuse of these technologies can cause. Regular 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 thoroughly investigated.

Children are taught how to stay safe, be resilient and how to gain support when required through PSHE 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 are 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. The boys 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 box, epraise 'report an incident' 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 on epraise (Years 3-8) or My Concern (Reception – Year 2). Where bullying is evident, the incidents are transferred to the safeguarding system (My Concern) so patterns can be established.

Any alleged incident must be swiftly investigated involving the alleged victim, the accused and any eyewitnesses among staff and pupils.

Remember: any repeated behaviour that intentionally makes another child feel uncomfortable, unhappy or threatened should be considered bullying.

Procedure Stages:

1. Upon report of alleged bullying, all involved parties are interviewed
2. All facts and interview notes are recorded on My Concern
3. The incident is recorded on the central bullying record
4. If the incident does not meet the threshold of bullying, all boys involved will take part in restorative conversations with pastoral staff to understand why bullying was alleged.
5. If bullying has occurred, we take a restorative approach, the boy who has demonstrating bullying behaviour undergoes suitable reflection time/ sanction/improvement plan/offered pastoral support to address the behaviour and prevent repetition.
6. The victim is offered suitable pastoral support and reassurance
7. A Bullying Action Plan is created and communicated to all staff
8. Both sets of parents are informed that bullying has been alleged and the investigative actions taken. We will not discuss any sanctions given to a boy other than with his parents.
9. The situation is carefully monitored by staff, and any reoccurrence is taken very seriously

See the 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 Pastoral/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 My Concern and on the '**Bullying Record – Alleged and Actual**', and actions will also be recorded on My Concern.

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 Pastoral or Head of 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 Pastoral or the Head of Lower School about the next steps.

- **Has a written action plan been agreed upon 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 boy exhibiting bullying behaviour to 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 My Concern.

Parents of the boy exhibiting bullying behaviour 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 the 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 Pastoral, 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 **be placed on 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 My Concern, and also a clear chronology/actions and recommendations recorded in My Concern at the same time.

In addition:

- 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.
- Patterns may then be identified. To support this, the school holds regular Year Group Meetings to track repeated scenarios.
- 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 child-on-child abuse and would be treated with utmost seriousness.
- 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:

- 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 of actions taken pertaining to their child. We will not discuss actions taken regarding a child with parents other than their own.
- If deemed necessary, eg in the case of cyber-bullying or child on child abuse, the appropriate professional agency may need to be informed.
- The school will continue to follow the School's Behaviour, Conduct and Discipline policy, as necessary if the bullying continues.
- 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.

PSHE, Parental Support and other bullying issues

The school has a PSHE 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 as 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 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 during INSET days so that the principles of the school policy are understood, legal responsibilities are known and action is defined to resolve and prevent problems. Ongoing discussions and practice are also facilitated by 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.

When deciding on interventions and sanctions, reasonable adjustments are made for children with SEN or mental health issues.

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.

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 can 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 ostracising behaviour, which is bullying.

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 become bullying when there is a repeated intention to hurt another person. If the child or children being teased are unhappy about it and make that clear, but it does not stop, then this would be seen as intentional. Teasing becomes bullying when children repeatedly :

- 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.

Management of notable unkindness or bullying

| No./Ref | Stage/level | Description/ key criteria | Concern referred by*: | Concern referred to: | Policy/ procedure to follow | Recording required | Staff member(s) to be notified |
|---------|-------------|---|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| 1a | Low-level | Some indications of poor relationship/ unkindness | Any member of staff or boy | Form tutor of 'victim' | Anti-bullying policy | Epraise demerit and intervention by reporting staff. Updated by relevant form tutor or other teacher involved | Form tutor of alleged perpetrator |
| 1b | Low-level | Continuing indications of poor relationship after warnings/interventions | Any member of staff or boy | Form tutor of 'victim' | Anti-bullying policy | MC Note and outcome by victim's form tutor | Form tutor of alleged perpetrator Year Head |
| 2 | Significant | Any repeated behaviour which makes the boy feel uncomfortable or threatened | Any member of staff or boy | Form tutor of 'victim' and Year Head | Anti-bullying policy Behaviour Policy | MC Bullying Action Plan – Year Head | Form tutor of alleged perpetrator Year Head of victim Head of Lower/Middle School/Deputy Head as appropriate |
| 3 | Serious | Ongoing bullying or an act of cruelty | Any member of staff or boy | Deputy Head or Head of Lower School | Anti-bullying policy Behaviour Policy | MC Bullying Action Plan – Year Head | Year Heads of alleged perpetrator and victim Head of Lower/Middle School/Deputy Head as appropriate Headmaster |

* Evidence expectations: triangulation of issues

(a)Alleged/ Witnessed by staff

If staff present the allegation, this is considered to be 'top level' in terms of evidence and actions taken as above.

(b) Alleged Witnessed by other adults, including parents

(c) Alleged/ Witnessed by other boys

If parents or the boy victim/ other boys present the allegation this is to be considered along with any other evidence, and additional witnesses are helpful in terms of providing additional information.

What is a Prejudice-Related Incident?

The Macpherson Report 1999 made 70 recommendations; 67 of these had produced specific changes in practice or in law within two years of the report's publication. **One of these recommendations was the following definition of a racist incident: 'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.'**

This has since been adopted by the police when identifying hate incidents and has been recommended for use in education settings by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF, 2006). It has been extended to cover all incidents related to the protected characteristics set out in The Equality Act 2010.

Any incident which is perceived to be prejudice-related must be investigated, but the most common prejudice-related incidents take the form of:

- prejudicial language
- ridicule and jokes
- verbal abuse
- physical assault
- graffiti or damage to property
- discriminatory behaviour e.g. refusing to work with a pupil because of their religion
- incitement to behave in a prejudicial manner e.g. wearing racist badges, recruiting to racist organisations, bringing in homophobic literature.
- cyber bullying
- sexualised comments

Prejudice-Related Incident Procedure

A prejudice-related incident is any incident which is perceived to be prejudice-related by the victim or the other person.

Incidents amongst pupils

As soon as any member of staff becomes aware of a prejudice-related incident amongst pupils, which may relate to any of the following protected characteristics: sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief and sex, they must follow the following procedure:

The incident should be logged by the member of staff who first becomes aware of it on My Concern.

Incidents should be ranked on the following scale:

1. No offence was intended or taken.
2. Hurt or offence was caused but not intended.
3. Hurt or distress was caused, but the offending behaviour is unlikely to be repeated.
4. Hurt or distress was caused, and the pupil(s) responsible had previously been warned that their behaviour was unacceptable.

5. Substantial hurt or distress was caused, and/or the behaviour was based on substantial hostility and prejudice, and/or the behaviour may be repeated.

Level 1 incidents will be investigated/dealt with by the reporting teacher and followed up by the relevant form teacher or Head of Year.

Level 2 incidents will be investigated by the relevant class teacher, form teacher, Head of Department or Head of Year.

Level 3 incidents will be investigated by the relevant Head of Department or Head of Year in discussion with the Head of Lower School, Middle School or Deputy Head Pastoral.

The Head of Lower School, Middle School or Deputy Head Pastoral will investigate incidents at Level 4 or above.

If the incident is at Level 4, it needs to be investigated immediately, the child should be taken to the Head of Lower School, Middle School or Deputy Head Pastoral straight away.

It will be decided as to whether restorative process or another form of education or sanction is best for the perpetrator. The response will be communicated to parents and carers of both perpetrator and target.

The My Concern record will be updated by the Head of Lower School, Middle School or Deputy Head Pastoral.

All incidents are to be reported to parents/carers.

Pupils should be made aware of this procedure through form time and year assemblies and encouraged to report all incidents, being reassured that they will be taken seriously. Worry boxes are available in classrooms for pupils who do not want to speak directly to a member of staff, and pupils may use epraise 'report and incident'.

Termly meetings are held by the safeguarding team to discuss incidents and children that may require behaviour contracts or other interventions.

Incidents perpetrated by staff members

All incidents should be reported to a member of the leadership team immediately. The incident will be logged and investigated in line with the school's disciplinary policy.

Incidents of bullying, discrimination, victimisation or harassment of colleagues, pupils or parents constitute gross misconduct and will be treated in line with the school's disciplinary procedure.

[We will revisit the procedure termly to ensure that all elements are working positively and amend practices as necessary. If any part of this procedure needs further clarification, please see a member of the leadership team.]