



Anti-Bullying Policy - Statement of School Policy and Guide to Parents

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Reed's School welcomes pupils as individuals and values their individuality. We emphasise positive relationships and the need for all in the school community to treat others with respect, courtesy and consideration. We want all members of the school community (pupils, staff, parents and Governors) to understand that bullying in any form, by anyone (adults or children) and anywhere, is always unacceptable. We aim to give all pupils a sense of security and self-worth. With such a child-centred focus it is important that pupils feel safe at Reed's School.
- 1.2. This policy has been reviewed with consideration to "Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies" (DfE, July 2017), "Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff (DfE, November 2014) and "The Use and effectiveness of Anti-Bullying Strategies in Schools" (a Research Report published by the DfE, undertaken by Goldsmiths, University of London, 2011). The policy also complies with the Education and Inspections Act (2006), the Equality Act 2010, the Independent School Standard Regulations (2014), and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, September 2020).
- 1.3. This policy should also be used in conjunction with the School's Countering Cyberbullying – Statement of School Policy and Guide to Parents.

2. Definition of Bullying

- 2.1. Bullying is the systematic use of words, actions or images intended to threaten, frighten, abuse, humiliate or hurt. Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over a period of time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group physically or emotionally. It involves distress to the victim at the time of the contact and also through fear of repetition, which may cause psychological damage.
- 2.2. Bullying on the basis of protected characteristics is taken particularly seriously, as indeed are all forms of bullying. Therefore, bullying linked to sex, race, colour, ethnic origin or nationality, socio-economic background, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, pregnancy, maternity and marital status are will be regarded as a serious offence.

2.3. Bullying may take the following forms:

2.3.1. Physical:

- Kicking, punching, slapping, pinching, jostling, forcibly imprisoning (e.g. in room), denying access, unwanted physical contact e.g. touching, invasion of personal space

2.3.2. Verbal:

- Insulting remarks (including racial or homophobic remarks), offensive name calling, demeaning references to victim's 'difference', sarcasm, spreading rumours, graffiti. In line with KCSIE, it is recognised that verbal bullying by peers can constitute abuse and thus such behaviour cannot be tolerated or passed off as "banter" or "part of growing up".

2.3.3. Emotional:

- Exclusion from social groups, refusing to talk to victim, inciting anxiety (e.g. by hiding property), gestures, threats (may be accompanied by demands)

2.3.4. Online Bullying:

- Online bullying is defined as when a person or groups of people aim to threaten, tease or embarrass someone else by using a mobile phone, the internet or other technologies. It is a method of bullying where the perpetrator uses technology as a means of conducting the bullying.
- Online bullies can make use of e-mail, mobile phone and text messaging, digital photography, instant messaging, personal websites, chat rooms, blogs and social networking sites.
- The effects of online bullying can be severe and long lasting. Most importantly, online bullying has the potential to reach a far wider audience than other forms of bullying. Please also refer to the 'Countering Cyberbullying Policy' and E-Safety Policy for more information.

3. Reasons for Challenging Bullying

- The safety and happiness of pupils, recognising the emotional and psychological damage, as well as physical harm, that bullying can cause.
- The desire to maximise educational achievement. Pupils experiencing negative feelings as a result of bullying are unlikely to be able to fulfil their educational opportunities.
- The role of the school to provide a model of behaviour
- Online bullying can be illegal

4. Our Commitment

- 4.1. Reed's School acknowledges that bullying may take place within the school and among its pupils. The school has a policy on bullying to which all should actively subscribe.
- 4.2. The teaching staff are committed:
 - To act as role models in the classroom by not adopting teaching strategies which themselves rely on psychological pressure and humiliation
 - To keep the issue of bullying high on the training and classroom agenda
 - To have a code of conduct for the classroom
 - To be alert to bullying behaviour and deal swiftly and unambiguously with incidents which occur, taking care to avoid embarrassing the victim
- 4.3. The non-teaching professionals in the School are as equally committed to the anti-bullying policy and see its implementation as important. There is a programme of staff training. Emphasis is placed on the issue in CPSHE programme for all age groups. External agencies may also be used to supplement the School in countering some types of bullying. The inadequacies of bullies are emphasised so victims see matters in the right perspective. Self-esteem and assertiveness are fostered in a practical way. It is important that the School and parents work together to achieve these aims.

5. Parents' Guide

- 5.1. It is a regrettable fact that victims of bullying often conceal their experiences. They are afraid of reprisals if they reveal what is happening to them. Consequently parents should be alert for circumstantial signs of what is going on. Victims may manifest some of the following signs. They may:
 - Be reluctant to go to school and be unable to explain this satisfactorily
 - Be absent from school or arrive late
 - Be reluctant to use the school bus
 - Claim illness in the morning or make frequent visits to the Medical Centre with symptoms such as stomach pains or headaches
 - Return from school with unexplained injuries such as cuts and bruises
 - Show diminished levels of self confidence
 - Make changes to established habits or behaviour, such as giving up music lessons, changing their accent or vocabulary
 - Choose the company of adults
 - Have difficulty sleeping or experience nightmares
 - Become withdrawn or unusually quiet or exhibit some other psychological change, even talk of running away or suicide
- 5.2. Clothes may be dirty, damaged or missing. Books, bags and other possessions may go missing. Teachers may report a decline in concentration and/or the quality of school work. The pupil may refuse to say what is wrong and even become aggressive.

5.3. We recommend that you:

- Encourage your children to talk to you about their school and social life
- Watch for any signs of distress and any repetition or combination of possible signs of bullying
- Listen to your children and take seriously any reports of bullying
- Feel free to discuss any concerns with members of staff - even minor problems can be distressing for a child
- Monitor access to the internet and electronic communication at home

5.4. If your child is the victim of bullying:

- Make sure of the facts
- Contact the School and speak to your child's Housemaster in the first instance
- Work with the school to develop strategies to support your child
- If you feel that the matter has not been addressed effectively you should contact the relevant member of staff on the School's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) or the Deputy Head (Pastoral).

5.5. If your child is responsible for bullying:

- Do not ignore it
- Make it clear that such behaviour is unacceptable
- Work with the school to develop strategies to change behaviour

5.6. Allegations of bullying are carefully investigated, with due regard for the sensitivity of the victim(s) and the establishment of the truth. Pupils consider we have been effective when the bullying stops and the victim or other informant is not implicated. In managing a case of bullying, we aim to bring about a situation from which both the bully and the victim benefit and social prospects for the future improve. However, repeated bullying will not be tolerated.

5.7. All investigations are carefully recorded and details kept by the Housemasters of the individuals concerned and by the Deputy Head (Pastoral). The Headmaster, and other relevant staff are also kept fully informed on bullying incidents and issues.

5.8. The School recognises that where there is reasonable cause to believe that a pupil is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm the issue will be regarded as a child protection concern. In these instances, the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will consider if the matter reaches the threshold to be reported to external agencies.

6. How the School will react to a case of Bullying

6.1. Our aim will be:

- To protect the victim and support their parents
- To bring about an end to the bullying activity
- To alter the bully's perception of what is acceptable

- 6.2. We will investigate allegations and collect evidence to reach a considered view on what has happened and how best to achieve our aim. This may involve:
- Mediation between the perpetrator(s) and victim(s)
 - Acknowledgement of the harm done by the perpetrator(s) and a written undertaking to cease hurtful behaviour using a 'Bullying Agreement'
 - Work with the victims to improve self-confidence and improve understanding of how their behaviour may have contributed to the bullying activity
- 6.3. In more serious cases or when pupils do not respond to warnings or preventative measures tougher action will be taken to protect the victim and bring about an end to the bullying activity. Sanctions, as outlined in the Behaviour Policy, might include:
- Withdrawal of participation in a particular sport/activity/trip
 - Headmaster's Detention
 - Suspension (fixed period exclusion)
 - Exclusion
 - Records of cases of bullying are kept by the Deputy Head

7. Initiatives Against Bullying

- 7.1. The School has introduced the following initiatives to combat bullying and to offer support to those involved in bullying:
- A confidential and anonymous App-based reporting system called Tootoot through which those who suffer bullying or witness it can communicate their concerns, anonymously. Messages can be posted in a 'Suggestions Box' located in the Library and Medical Centre.
 - A system of Peer Counselling called the Student Mentoring Team, staffed by trained senior pupils, exists, who will be available for consultation by pupils as a first point of contact for concerns about bullying. They may act as mediators or mentors and will be supervised by a member of staff.
 - Increased emphasis on the problems of bullying in the CPSHE programme.
 - The School's Equality Forum allowing the School to better understand the needs of all pupils.
 - Confidential surveys of the incidence of bullying to monitor its prevalence and the effectiveness of the measures taken to reduce it are conducted by the Pastoral Services Committee.
 - Regular anti-bullying workshops and assemblies/house meetings to highlight bullying issues and how to combat it.
 - Ensuring the degree of staff supervision of social areas of the School is adequate.
 - A commitment to educate and train staff in anti-bullying techniques and how to work with victims of bullying.
 - A commitment to educate and raise awareness of the dangers of cyber-bullying.

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