



Anti-Bullying Policy

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THIS POLICY SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES ON BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT, POSITIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION, SAFEGUARDING, SAFE HOLDING AND HEALTH AND SAFETY.

Regency High School

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Rationale

It is the aim of the school to ensure that all our pupils are safe, and are supported in such a way that they *feel* safe, at all times. We believe that bullying should never be ignored, and that it is the duty of all staff to ensure that all forms of bullying are dealt with effectively and that pupils know that bullying is neither appropriate nor acceptable.

There are many occasions when pupils 'fall out' with each other but claim they have been bullied. It is important to make the distinction between disagreements and ongoing significant bullying.

Bullying can be defined as the intimidation of another pupil, or pupils, that is carried out by a more powerful person or group. It can take the form of physical or verbal abuse, and results in the victim experiencing discomfort and distress.

"Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated overtime, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally".

Safe to Learn guidance, 2007, Department for Children, Schools and Families.

It is of crucial importance to consider what the desired outcome should be when dealing with an incidence of bullying. Essentially, the key outcome should always be to ensure that any pupil that is the victim of bullying should feel safe within school, and feel supported. It is good practice to make sure that the issue is seen to have been resolved by both parties being brought together to discuss the matter. The outcome of this should be to ensure that there will not be a continuation of an unacceptable situation.

Initially, if a meeting after the incident between both parties is sufficient to resolve the issue, it may not be necessary to initiate sanctions against the alleged bully. However, there will be circumstances where sanctions will have to be imposed in order to reinforce the school's aim to support the victim, and to ensure that the unacceptable behaviour does not reoccur. The nature and use of sanctions is outlined later within the policy.

In order for the bully to learn how to stop his or her anti-social behaviour they, too, must be supported.

Addressing issues of bullying is the responsibility of all the responsible adults at school. Everyone should be vigilant in the support of the pupils in our care, ensuring that those who are subject to incidents of bullying are supported appropriately, and that those who initiate the bullying are subject to sanctions, if necessary, but also supported in such a way that they have the opportunity to change their behaviour.

All staff should seek to model appropriate behaviour for the pupils in their care – avoiding hostility, making inappropriate comments, etc. and always maintaining a positive attitude towards the pupils.

Opportunities to promote positive attitudes within all of our pupils towards all of their peers should be provided through PSHE and Citizenship lessons, tutor time and circle time

activities, and other curriculum areas. Some opportunities will occur naturally; others will have to be carefully planned.

Bullying should be dealt with in a manner that is consistent, fair but firm.

2. Understanding Bullying

There are some key points to bear in mind when dealing with issues of alleged bullying.

- It is important to listen to pupils, regardless of how insignificant a matter may appear. Initially do not make judgements or discuss the situation in depth.
- If staff members do not listen to the concerns expressed by the pupils, then the message that we give out is that they will have to suffer in silence – this is not an option.
- Bullies invariably rely on the fact that some pupils will often be too scared to talk, or that they will not be listened to.
- Listening to any and all concerns, will rob bullies of some of their power.
- Some pupils often have great difficulty in expressing their concerns.
- Pupils should be actively encouraged to speak to a known and trusted adult if at all possible.
- There is almost always more than one side to every situation.
- Ascertaining the truth behind any situation may not always be possible. In the eyes of the pupils involved they are likely to see *their* perception as the truth.
- Some bullies may have been bullied themselves, and may have felt unsupported when they needed it the most. However, it is important to remember that this is not always the case. Many bullies do not display any empathy towards their victim and use bullying as a way of gaining power over them.
- Play fighting is not fun. It invariably involves some element of distress, which can be interpreted as bullying. Regency acts from a 'no play fighting' stance. Staff will intervene and redirect any forms of 'play fighting'.

Bullying can include one or more of the following:

- Being hit, kicked, pinched, spat at or threatened.
- Called names.
- Make a fool out of someone.
- Teasing or sending nasty notes.
- Spreading rumours and malicious gossip about someone.
- Deliberately destroying another person's property.
- Repeatedly excluding someone by not talking to them or excluding them from games.
- Online, malicious texting, Twitter, Facebook, Emails, etc.
- Sexual Harassment; such as hurtful remarks about physical appearance or sexual orientation.
- Discrimination of any form.
- Making other person(s) feel unsafe through intimidation of any kind including verbal and physical abuse.

3. Dealing with Incidents of Bullying

- Members of staff should intervene immediately if they see, or have reported to them, an incident of suspected bullying.
- The staff member who witnesses the incident – or has the matter reported to them – should always attempt to resolve the matter. For a number of reasons, however, it might be more appropriate for them to refer the matter to another member of the teaching staff.
- In reporting an incident, the first point of contact should be the pupil's class teacher; thereafter, a member of the wellbeing and/or management team.
- Irrespective of which member of staff deals with the matter, the following stages should be followed.

A careful investigation should be made to establish as accurately as possible the nature of the events that have taken place:

- This will involve speaking with the alleged bully, the alleged victim, and any adults who have witnessed the event;
- Pupils that witnessed the event should also be consulted, but care must be exercised here since the influence of a bully, or a group, can be far-reaching;
- This process should provide the member of staff leading the investigation with sufficient facts to enable them to determine what has taken place.

Once the facts of the situation are known, the following action can be taken:

- If the incident is sufficiently serious, the Deputy or Headteacher should be informed;
- In cases of a serious nature, the early stages of intervention may be bypassed in favour of a more decisive outcome;
- The Deputy or Headteacher will decide at which point the parents/carers of both the victim and the bully are informed of the incident. It is good practice to inform the parents/carers of the victim at the earliest opportunity. This should happen not with the intention of alarming them, but to inform them and to reassure them that the matter is being dealt with.

There are four stages that will inform what action will be taken. These are outlined below.

4. Stage One: The “No Blame” Approach

The member of staff dealing with the situation (which is not necessarily the member of staff that saw and reported the incident) should use this approach. It is an approach recommended by the Educational Psychology Service and may need to be adapted to meet the needs and abilities of the pupils.

Step One - Interview with the victim

When the teacher finds out that bullying has happened s/he starts by talking to the victim about their feelings. They do not question them about the incidents but will need to know who was involved.

Step Two – Convene a meeting with the people involved

The teacher arranges to meet with the group of pupils who have been involved. This can include some bystanders or colluders who joined in but did not initiate any bullying.

Step Three – Explain the problem

S/he tells them about the way the victim is feeling and might use for example, a poem, piece of writing or a drawing to emphasise their distress. At no time do they discuss the details of the incidents or allocate blame to the group. (This may have the effect of putting the perpetrators on the defensive).

Step Four – Share responsibility

The teacher does not attribute blame but states that s/he knows who is responsible and can do something about it.

Step Five – Ask the group for their ideas

Each member of the group is encouraged to suggest a way in which the victim could be helped to feel happier. The teacher gives some positive response but s/he does not go on to extract a promise of improved behaviour.

Step Six – Leave it up to them

The teacher ends the meeting by passing over the responsibility to the group to solve the problem. S/he agrees to meet with them again to see how things are going.

Step Seven – Meet them again

About a week later the teacher discusses with each pupil, including the victim, how things have been going. This allows the teacher to monitor the bullying and keeps the young people involved in the process.

It is important to consider what we are trying to achieve when dealing with an incident of bullying (i.e. ensuring the victim feels secure and supported; encouraging the bully to empathise with their victim; changing the behaviour of the bully). Eliciting a meaningful apology from the bully may or may not be possible. Ultimately, it is most likely that the victim does not necessarily want the bully punished but just wants the bullying to stop.

If this is achieved, and the member of staff, the bully and the victim are comfortable with the outcome, there will be no need to impose any sanctions on the bully.

5. Stage Two: Imposing School-Based Sanctions

If Stage One, alone, is not sufficient to resolve the issue an additional response is needed to resolve the matter effectively. This will involve the imposition of a sanction, or sanctions, on the bully, based on the school's internal procedures for managing behaviour.

Sanctions should be imposed that match the severity of the incident, and can be drawn from the following:

- Loss of breacktime or lunchtime (i.e. detention)
- Loss of a specific reward.
- Time spent in Wellbeing; Internal exclusions.

6. Stage Three: Involvement of External Agencies

If the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved at Stage Two, Stage Three will be initiated. This will be at the discretion of the Wellbeing Management Manager, the Deputy Head or the Headteacher, after the matter has been discussed with the appropriate members of staff.

Occasionally, an incident will have to be dealt with immediately at Stage Three if it is of sufficient severity.

One, or more, of the following strategies may be used, involving the participation of people or agencies beyond the school:

- A phone call to parents or carers to discuss the matter directly;
- Parents/carers to be invited into school to discuss the matter more fully;
- The involvement, if appropriate, of the pupil's Social Worker;
- The involvement of an Educational Psychologist;
- The use of other professionals, as appropriate (i.e. a Clinical Psychologist or Education Welfare Officer)
- The involvement of the Police.

At all times and in all situations the aim is to resolve the issue as effectively as possible, ensuring that the victim feels, and is, safe, and that the bully is left in no doubt that the particular behaviour is not acceptable.

7. Stage Four: Exclusion

In some instances, this can be initiated as the first option, but must only be done with the approval and involvement of the Headteacher or the acting Headteacher.

Fixed Term Exclusion requires that certain specified procedures be followed, and that appropriate documentation is completed (*refer to DfE Exclusion from maintained schools, Academies and pupil referral units in England*). The use of this sanction is prescribed by carefully laid down procedures and specific time-scales, and should be used in exceptional cases only.

Where there are ongoing concerns characterised by regular and sustained incidents of inappropriate behaviour and non-compliance, other options may be considered (e.g. the implementation of a Pastoral Support Plan and part-time attendance, working towards the resolution of the problem and a return to a full timetable for the pupil).

The response to any bullying situation must always be gauged against the severity of the incident, and measured steps taken to match the nature and extent of the problem.

Above all, the safety and emotional wellbeing of all of the pupils in school is of paramount importance, and this should be our guiding principle.