

READ SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

This policy has been produced having regard to DfE Guidance *Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies (2017)*.

1. What is Bullying?

Bullying is the hurting, humiliating, threatening or frightening of another person. This may be physical (including sexual) or verbal abuse (including emails, SMS text messages and social networking sites) of the person, or abuse of his or her property. It may be repeated over time and intentionally hurt another pupil or group of pupils physically or emotionally and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted or is a carer. It can cause physical and/or psychological damage.

Bullying can take different forms, including:

- **Physical** – unnecessary and harmful physical contact, eg pushing, hitting or punching, kicking
- **Emotional** – deliberate acts of unkindness, for example excluding or ignoring
- **Sexual** – through comments made, images (sent or received with coercion) or unwanted physical contact of a sexual nature
- **Verbal** – insults, name calling, rumour spreading, teasing
- **Cyber** – misuse of technology and/or the internet

Cyber-bullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others. Cyber-bullying can involve Social Networking sites (like Snapchat, Facebook and Instagram), e-mails and mobile phones (used for SMS messaging and as cameras).

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive or prejudice-based language can also have a significant impact on the well-being of pupils. If this is left unchallenged or dismissed, it could discourage pupils from reporting further incidents and so early intervention is vital. Staff set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and isn't acceptable, aiming to stop negative behaviours escalating.

It is important to remember that not all disagreements, conflicts or inequality in relationships constitute bullying, but when seen, the question of whether bullying has taken place or not will always be considered.

Pupils who are being bullied may exhibit some of the following behaviours:

- unwilling to come to school
- becomes withdrawn and/or anxious
- underperforms in academic studies
- has items missing or damaged regularly
- 'loses' money
- becomes aggressive or disruptive
- runs away
- hides during play times

This list is non-exhaustive and could also relate to other issues a pupil may be facing. Any concerns regarding behaviour or changes of character should be brought to the attention of the appropriate Head of Key Stage, Deputy Head or any member of the Pastoral Leadership Team (PLT).

2. The Law

Bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, however some types of harassing or threatening behaviour, or other communication could be a criminal offence, under the:

Protection from Harassment Act 1997
Malicious Communications Act 1988
Communications Act 2003
Public Order Act 1986.

If the Deputy Head feels that an offence may have been committed advice will be sought from police, following discussions with the Head. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, any person who sends an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender, is guilty of an offence if their purpose in sending it was to cause distress or anxiety to the recipient.

Increasingly in schools, we are occasionally coming across pupils behaving in an unlawful way, where we are often advised if the breach of behaviour is serious enough, is an offence (e.g. vaping, theft or sexting as examples) then we can seek police advice or help. This is unusual though, as most situations can be resolved within school according to our behavioural policy, in conjunction with this one. This is more likely to happen when there is a serious breach, often outside of school, but school is notified. Dependent upon the circumstances we will notify the police ourselves, or allow parents themselves to do so.

3. Action the School takes to Prevent Bullying

It is made clear to all pupils, parents and staff that bullying will not be tolerated at Read. We ensure that all staff are aware of bullying issues that may occur and that policy is followed appropriately. The school outlines to existing and new parents its policy on bullying; parents receive further advice as appropriate, for instance on cyber safety.

4. Pupils

All pupils are encouraged to be actively involved in preventing bullying, including when they see bullying taking place. Pupils are encouraged to discuss bullying and the prevention of bullying through various means such as:

- **Meetings with the School Council**

Pupils are encouraged to bring any concerns relating to bullying to the School Council for discussion. Through the 'Our Aims' project, pupils discussed the importance of feeling safe at school and how we achieve this here at Read. We will be taking this discussion further in the coming months to develop a poster for pupils with 'what to do if....' as the over-arching theme.

- **Discussions in Form Tutor time**

This can be prompted by the filling in of tutor sheets, where pupils have the opportunity to think about what they have learnt through various assemblies or events in school. It can also be done as part of dealing with an incident that may have occurred within the group, taking sensitivities into account to ensure that all pupils feel safe to talk.

- **Through presentations in assembly** – we have talked to pupils about human values, including topics such as differences between groups of people, how to stay safe online, talking about mental health.
- **As part of the structured PSHE programme** – in PSHE (known as Learning for Life, LFL) lessons, pupils discuss the following questions:
- What is a bully?

- What are the different kinds of bullying?
- Why do people bully?
- What do I do if I think I'm being bullied?
- How can we help to prevent bullying at school?
- This topic is explored through stories and literature, projects, role-play and drama, discussing differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language.

• As part of their programme of training, both School and House Prefects discuss bullying. They are instructed in what to do should they become aware of bullying. It is also part of the induction training of new teachers.

Any pupil who is being bullied or who knows of someone being bullied should be confident that the information will be treated confidentially and sympathetically. In particular all pupils should feel free to talk to members of staff and be able to contact their tutor, Housemaster or Housemistress, Head of Key Stage, or the Deputy Head on any sensitive issues.

Records of incidents of bullying are kept on the pupil's Engage file and follow the pupil between the parts of the school. The word bullying will be used when the school has decided that bullying has taken place.

In the Pre-Prep School and EYFS, bullying issues are discussed at an appropriate level for the pupils, following the *Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy*.

5. Staff

All staff are made aware of this policy and its contents. Identification of and response to bullying incidents is discussed as part of our Child Protection training.

We aim to ensure that:

- The principles of this policy are understood by staff.
- All staff are aware of their legal responsibility.
- Actions are taken to both prevent and resolve problems, using resources and support as appropriate.

The PLT meets every two weeks. Information is gathered from Form Tutors by the Assistant Head for discussion at these meetings. Concerns are followed up and dealt with in a timely manner by the appropriate member or members of the PLT, depending on the issue raised and staff experience in that particular area. Where appropriate, we will seek further support and guidance to help us understand the needs of our pupils, including:

- Those with SEN or disabilities
- Vulnerable pupils
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBTQ) pupils

Staff can report concerns through a variety of methods:

- Non-satis Form
- Incident Report Form
- Report to the appropriate PLT member
- Email to Form Tutor

6. How the School Deals with Bullying

Any alleged bullying should be reported as soon as possible directly to the appropriate Head of Key Stage, Deputy Head or to the Head. Under no circumstances will incidents that could be construed as bullying be ignored. All offences are carefully investigated and those involved interviewed by the appropriate Head of Key Stage, or the Deputy Head. A record is kept of the incident, usually on our MIS or C-POMS. All cases are dealt with on an individual basis.

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A bullying incident will be treated as a child protection issue where there is concern or possible concern that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. In this case, child protection procedures must be followed. Severe or repeated cases of bullying may result in suspension or expulsion. Victims receive support and bullies are counselled on appropriate behaviour. Records are monitored by tutors, appropriate Head of Key Stage and the Deputy Head so that patterns can be identified. Action is taken to address times or places where bullying is most likely, for instance outside the school day. External support will be sought for pupils if needed.

7. Cyber-bullying

This is the use of ICT, particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else. Particular features of Cyber-bullying are:

- IMPACT – the scale and scope can be greater than other forms of bullying
- LOCATION – there is a 24/7 and any place nature of Cyber-bullying
- ANONYMISING – the person being bullied will not always know who is attacking them
- MOTIVATION – some pupils may not be aware that what they are doing is bullying
- EVIDENCE – unlike other forms of bullying, the target will have evidence of its occurrence

In the event of Cyber-bullying, the victim must try to save the evidence (e.g. text or voice message or print off an email) and report the incident to their tutor, Housemaster/ Housemistress or Deputy Head. Of course pupils can report an incident directly to the Head if they so choose.

In extreme cases police may need to be contacted to investigate the nature and evidence of the bullying event, particularly when it is construed as an offence.

8. Bullying which occurs outside school premises

The school has the power to discipline pupils for misbehaviour outside the school premises.

Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 say that a school's disciplinary powers can be used to address pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff, but only if it would be reasonable for the school to regulate pupils' behaviour in those circumstances. This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre. Other authorities may also become involved, such as police, social services.

Where bullying outside school is reported to staff, it will be investigated and acted on. The Head will consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will be informed.

Sanctions can only be imposed and implemented on the school premises or when the pupil is under the lawful control of staff, for example on a school trip.

9. Sanctions:

- A pupil found to have bullied someone should expect to have the matter fully investigated. Support will be offered to all parties to help modify their behaviours and a record of the issues will be kept.
- If bullying persists then pupils can expect at least an official verbal warning to modify their behaviour from the appropriate Head of Key Stage or the Deputy Head. Sanctions such as loss of free time or school detention may be issued. Support such as counselling may be advised. Parents will be informed of concerns and a way forward discussed. A record of incidents kept.
- If a pupil fails to respond to a warning about bullying the Head will be informed and parents will be asked to attend a meeting. It is likely that the pupil will be suspended for a period of time or be permanently excluded from the school.
- Pupils who continue to bully after a period of temporary suspension may be permanently excluded if further offenses occur.

Disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently, and reasonably, taking special educational needs, disabilities or vulnerabilities of pupils into account. We consider the motivations behind bullying behaviour and whether the child engaging in bullying also needs support.

Mark Voisey
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