



Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy applies to the whole school including the EYFS

Aim

It is important to make it clear to all pupils and staff that bullying is always unacceptable. The school should be an environment in which pupils can flourish without fear and be free to develop their play and learning in a relaxed atmosphere with clear parameters of acceptable behaviour (See Behaviour Policy). Every pupil has the right to feel safe and happy at school and to be protected if he or she is feeling vulnerable. The school takes seriously its responsibilities to protect children from all forms of bullying including cyber-bullying whether this occurs inside or outside school.

Everyone should be aware that bullying can cause psychological damage and even lead to suicide if it is allowed to continue.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is any kind of repeated behaviour by an individual or a group which intentionally makes another individual or group feel uncomfortable or threatened either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (either directly or for instance cyber-bullying via text messages or on social media) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups for example on the grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability or because a child is adopted or is a carer.

The main types of bullying are:

- Physical – hitting; restraining someone if they wish to move away; kicking; taking, damaging or hiding possessions; asking for money or possessions in order to buy friendship.
- Verbal – name calling; teasing; insulting; abusive remarks; writing unkind notes; mocking personal appearance or dress taste.
- Emotional – being unfriendly; ignoring or excluding someone; spreading rumours; looking at someone in an unpleasant way.
- Racial – racial taunts, graffiti, slogans or gestures.
- Religious – ridiculing people or making abusive comments because of their religion or faith.
- Cultural – discriminating against individuals on the basis of cultural differences.
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact, abusive comments relating to a person's sexuality.
- Homophobic – bullying motivated by a prejudice against lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or transgender (LGBT) people.
- Disability and SEN – excluding someone from activities because of their disability or Special Educational Need, making unkind comments or calling someone names related to their disability.

- Cyber– using any electronic media such as e-mail, text messages, social networking sites or voice mail to send messages intended to make the recipient feel threatened or uncomfortable.

Possible Signs of Bullying

Pupils who are being bullied often show changes in behaviour e.g. becoming more nervous than usual, seeking the company of adults, and complaining of feeling ill and finding that their possessions are going missing. Their work may begin to suffer through lack of concentration or through unwillingness to be seen to do well, and they may show reluctance to come to school.

Staff Attitude

Staff at Rookwood take all forms of bullying seriously and intervene to prevent incidents from taking place or developing. Teachers attempt to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. Aspects of anti-bullying are included in PSHE, assemblies and in curriculum lessons such as RS, English or Drama. Pupils must be encouraged to feel that they can tell any member of staff that they are being bullied, and that the member of staff will be prepared to listen to them, believe them and take quick but appropriate and sensitive action. Pupils should also be encouraged to tell staff if they feel that another pupil is being bullied. Where staff believe that there is a concern with bullying these concerns must be passed on to the Head of School and logged.

Procedure when Bullying has been alleged

In the first instance, the Form Teacher or Head of School (or House Parent if the alleged bullying has taken place in the boarding house), will be the person most likely to deal with the incident. It is appropriate to make it clear to the bully that his or her behaviour, which has caused distress to the victim, is unacceptable and must stop immediately and to tell the victim that any form of revenge is unacceptable.

In dealing with the incident staff must

- Take the problem seriously
- Investigate the incident
- Interview the victim and the bully separately
- Interview witnesses if possible
- In the case of cyber-bullying review the available evidence if appropriate but being aware always of possible safeguarding issues which may arise. In these cases staff should refer to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Decide on appropriate action

The action may include one or more of the following

- Providing support and advice for the victim
- Providing a controlled and structured opportunity for the bully and victim to meet
- Appropriately dealing with any cyber-bullying issues including, where appropriate the removal of material from social networking sites and internet.
- Informing the parents of both the victim and the bully
- Holding lessons, class discussions or assemblies about bullying
- Informing staff about the incident and action taken
- Involving external agencies such as Police or Hampshire Children's services

Where a clear, factual, written record must be kept of the incident, interviews and action taken. This should be made on the anti-bullying report form which is available to all staff. The appropriate Head of School and, if appropriate, the Headteacher should be informed. A log of the incident is to be kept with the Heads of School, in order to enable patterns to be identified and the full details are kept in the pupils' files.

If the bullying behaviour continues, the parents of both pupils will be informed and asked to come into school to discuss the matter with the Headteacher or Head of School and other staff. The school counsellor may be asked to talk to both pupils and offer counselling. If the situation is still not resolved, then sanctions such as suspension or exclusion may have to be invoked.

Child Protection / Safeguarding

A bullying incident will be treated as a Child Protection concern and referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

Parents

Parents who are concerned that their child might be being bullied or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying should contact the Form Tutor or Head of School immediately. Parents have a responsibility to support Rookwood's anti-bullying policy and encourage the child to be a positive member of the school.

Summary

It is the responsibility of everyone concerned with the school to ensure that bullying is not allowed at Rookwood. Pupils and parents must feel able to approach staff to report instances of suspected bullying in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously. Staff must be vigilant at all times, but especially at break times and lesson change when children are moving around the school. Staff should regularly use teaching methods that encourage co-operation between different groupings of pupils, so that pupils may extend their relationships beyond a small group of friends. The subject of bullying, why it happens, appropriate behaviour and ways of dealing with it are dealt with in Personal, Health and Social Education (PHSE), and through the assembly programme which explores the issues through stories and discussion of relevant historical and current affairs.

The general issues of bullying and any specific concerns are raised at regular staff meetings and professional development days. Rookwood staff are fully informed of the school's policy and periodic training is undertaken to increase staff awareness.