



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

INTRODUCTION:

RBAI is a community of learners which aims to provide a safe, secure and caring environment based on an ethos of mutual respect and consideration, where the needs of each individual are recognised and a sense of belonging is encouraged. All members of this community have the right to be treated with respect. All members of this community have a responsibility to contribute to the protection and maintenance of this safe, secure and caring environment.

Through the curriculum, especially the LLW programmes, assemblies and participation in annual anti-Bullying Week, the School will educate the pupils about the boundaries of appropriate behaviour.

The Anti-Bullying Policy is kept under review. It has been drawn up in consultation with the Pupil Councils, parents and the pastoral staff.

The Board of Governors acknowledges the proactive role of school management, teachers, pupils and parents in confronting bullying. The Board of Governors accepts the need to develop a whole school approach to handling bullying and the need to make the entire school community, and those agencies who work in schools, more cognisant of bullying behaviour and its impact.

ANTI-BULLYING STATEMENT:

Any form of bullying is unacceptable in the school. It will not be tolerated. It is entirely at variance with the values and principles that we adhere to at RBAI. If an incident of bullying is reported, it will be dealt with promptly and appropriately. Pupils who have been bullied need support and help. The pupil who has displayed bullying behaviour needs to understand that his behaviour is hurtful and support put in place for him. The main aim of any intervention is to **RESPOND** to the bullying that is taking place, **RESOLVE** the concern and **RESTORE** the well-being of all those involved.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING:

The **Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016** states that *'bullying' includes but is not limited to the repeated use of any verbal, written or electronic communication, any other act (including omission) or any combination of those, by a pupil or group of pupils against another pupil or groups of pupils, with the intention of causing physical or emotional harm to that pupil or group of pupils.*

The following are unacceptable behaviours **BUT** only constitute bullying behaviours when they meet the definition of bullying given above.

- **Physical** (includes threatening gestures which carry intimidatory messages, jostling, physical intimidation, interfering another pupil's personal property by stealing, hiding or damaging it, punching/kicking, any other physical contact which may include use of weapons)

- **Verbal/written** (includes name-calling, jokes, threats, taunting, belittling or ridiculing another pupil, writing on books or personal property, spreading rumours about a pupil or his family)
- **Indirect/emotional** includes isolation such as being deliberately unfriendly, excluding individual from peer group, refusal to work with/talk to/play with/help others/ writing offensive notes or graffiti)
- **Extortion** demanding money, personal property or homework
- **Disablist** (related to perceived or actual disability)
- **Cyber** (this has been defined as ‘*an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or an individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly over time, against an individual*’ and includes:
 - sending or posting harmful or cruel text messages;
 - insulting/embarrassing material, images, audio or video clips via digital communication devices);
 - silent or abusive messages;
 - email bullying;
 - chatroom or group chat bullying;
 - inappropriate instant messaging;
 - inappropriate use of websites or apps including blogs and social networking apps and online polling sites;
- **Gender and sexual orientation** (including perceived or actual)
- **Racist** (related to skin colour, ethnicity, culture and religion)
- **Sectarian** (related to religious belief and/or political opinion)

Every member of the School community has a responsibility to prevent bullying and to report instances or suspicions of bullying. Staff, pupils and parents have a shared responsibility for proactively countering bullying.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF

Our staff will:

- Foster in our pupils, self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others
- Demonstrate the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of pupils
- Discuss bullying with all pupils through assemblies as well as the LLW programmes so that every pupil learns about the damage that bullying causes (both to the bullied pupil and the pupil who has displayed bullying behaviour) and the importance of telling a teacher when bullying happens
- Be alert to signs of distress or other indications of bullying (See Appendix 1)

- Listen to claims of bullying, take them seriously and act to protect
- Report suspected cases of bullying to the Tutor, Housemaster or Vice Principal
- Follow up any complaint of bullying by a parent and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken
- Deal with observed incidences of bullying promptly and effectively in accordance with agreed procedures

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF PUPILS:

We expect our pupils to:

- Behave in a respectful manner towards each other and all members of the school community;
- Refrain from becoming involved in bullying;
- Intervene to support any pupil who is being bullied; this includes offering to speak to someone on their behalf if the victim is reluctant to seek help.
- Report any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and to help prevent any further instances.
- Not suffer in silence but to speak out. (This can be done by speaking to their tutor, any member of staff, putting a note in the 'Pupil concerns' box outside the First Aid room, or by pressing the anti-bullying report icon on their c2k homepage; the latter will send an alert to the Pastoral Vice Principal.)

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS:

We ask our parents to support their children and the school by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children which might be possible evidence of bullying and reporting the same to the pupil's Tutor
- Advising their children to report bullying to the Tutor and reporting such incidents to the school if their child is reluctant to do so
- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any form of bullying
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved;
- Co-operating with the school in investigating allegations of bullying

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS:

The Board of Governors supports the proactive role of school management, teachers, pupils and parents in confronting bullying by:

1. Ensuring that policies designed to prevent bullying involving an RBAI pupil are pursued by the school;
2. Determines the measures to be taken at the school (whether by the Board of Governors, the school staff or other persons) with a view to preventing bullying involving a pupil registered at RBAI:
 - a. On the premises of the school during the school day;
 - b. While travelling to or from the school during the school term;
 - c. While the pupil is in the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of the school;
 - d. While the pupil is receiving educational provision arranged on behalf of the school and provided elsewhere than on the premises of the school;
3. Review those measures:
 - a. At intervals of no more than 4 years; and
 - b. At such times as the Department of Education may direct;
4. Before determining or revising those measures, consult (in such manner as appears to be appropriate) the principal, pupils and parents;
5. In determining or reviewing such measures, have due regard to any guidance given by the Department of Education;
6. Prepare a policy which includes a written statement of such measures and secure that:
 - a. A copy of the policy is given or otherwise made available to the parents of all pupils registered at the school and to staff of the school;
 - b. Copies of the policy are available for inspection at the school at all times, and free of charge;
7. Secure that such measures are taken;
8. Consider such measures (to such extent that it thinks reasonable) to be taken at the school (either by the Board of Governors, the staff of the school or other persons) with a view to preventing bullying involving a pupil at the school which:
 - a. Involves the use of electronic communication;
 - b. Takes place in circumstances other than those listed in the definition of bullying (page 1);
 - c. Is likely to have a detrimental effect on that person's education at the school;
9. Ensure that a record is kept of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying involving a registered pupil at the school that occur:
 - a. On the premises of the school during the school day;
 - b. While travelling to or from the school during the school term;
 - c. While the pupil is in the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of the school;
 - d. While the pupil is receiving educational provision arranged on behalf of the school and provided elsewhere than on the premises of the school;
10. The record must state:
 - a. what, from all of the circumstances, appears to be the motivation¹ of the incident;

- b. State the methods of bullying (as defined on page 1)
 - c. Include information about how the incident was addressed;
11. Comply with any amendments to the categories of motivation;

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING:

In each instance, the priority should be that the pupil who has been the target of bullying feels supported and that the individual responsible for the bullying is made aware that his behaviour is unacceptable and that the bullying must stop.

It is understood that the precise action taken will vary from incident to incident. However, the following guidelines should be adhered to as much as possible:

Prevention is our primary aim.

1. All incidents of bullying or alleged bullying must be recorded and investigated and the details placed in a pupil's file. This will include written accounts from pupils.
 - a. The record must state what, from all of the circumstances, appears to be the motivation² of the incident;
 - b. State the methods of bullying
 - c. Include information about how the incident was addressed;
2. Incidents of bullying must be reported to the Vice Principal (Pastoral & Pupil Achievement) and Principal. In such circumstances the Board of Governors will also be informed.
3. Parents of pupils involved, both the child who has been bullied and the child who has displayed bullying behaviour, must be informed as soon as possible
4. Disciplinary action will depend on the seriousness of any incident.
5. Referral to external agencies will be made if the matter warrants such action.

²Motivation may, for example, relate to differences of religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, gender, sexual orientation; differences between persons with a disability and persons without; differences between persons based on gender reassignment; differences between persons based on pregnancy;

PASTORAL SUPPORT FOR THE CHILD WHO HAS BEEN BULLIED:

1. Meet with the pupil as soon as possible and reassure him that the matter has been taken seriously and will be dealt with. Assure him that he has done the right thing by reporting the bullying and praise him for seeking help. Make clear that he is not being blamed for the situation.
2. Complete a written record of what has happened: where / what / when did incident(s) occur?
3. Meet with the individual witnesses to try to get a clearer picture.
4. Attempt to restore his self-confidence. Agree a course of action in the event of any re-occurrence of bullying.
5. Find a reliable friend or circle of friends who will support the pupil and report any further incidents. Encourage younger pupils to speak to the pupil mentors.
6. Put in place coping strategies.
7. Explain action to be taken, e.g. dealing with the pupil who has displayed bullying behaviour.
8. Arrange for a review in an agreed short period to review the situation.
9. Offer counselling through the School Counsellor
10. If necessary refer to an external agency- e.g. Psychologist, Education Welfare Officer, GP, CAMHS

WORKING WITH THE CHILD WHO IS DISPLAYING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR:

1. Meet with the child who is displaying bullying behaviour as soon as possible.
2. Complete a written record of what has happened: where / what / when did incident(s) occur?
3. Stress that it is the behaviour and not the pupil that is unacceptable.
4. Seek responsibility for any harm/hurt/damage to be accepted by the child who is displaying bullying behaviour.
5. Suggest acceptable forms of behaviour and highlight any good behaviour that the pupil has already demonstrated.
6. Arrange to discuss the incident(s) with parents.
7. Set agreed behaviour targets with the pupil and make him aware that the targets will be monitored.
8. Put in place strategies to encourage more positive behaviour.

9. Make use of the curriculum to highlight acceptable behaviour.
10. Possible referral to external agencies- Educational Psychology, EA Behaviour Support team, Social Services.

APPENDIX 1

The following signs may suggest that a pupil has been bullied and that the situation warrants investigation:

- Unwillingness to attend school/truancy
- Anxiety about travelling to and from school
- Underachievement or sudden deterioration in level of achievement
- Loss of concentration/enthusiasm/interest in School/changed behaviour
- Complaints about illness and seeking to leave school early
- Unexplained changes in mood on returning to School after weekends/holidays
- Physical signs of anxiety – stammering/nightmares/sleep difficulty/loss of Appetite/nausea/withdrawal
- Physical bruising/torn clothes
- Loss of self esteem/confidence/mood swings
- Missing/damaged possessions
- Reluctance to say what is wrong

APPENDIX 2 -Support services:

Pupils and parents may contact the following organisations for information and help.

1. NI Anti-Bullying Forum (www.endbullying.org.uk/)
2. Anti-Bullying network (www.antibullying.net)
3. Anti-Bullying Alliance (www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)
4. Childline (www.childline.org.uk)
5. Kidscape (www.kidscape.org.uk)
6. Family Lives Advice & Support Services (www.familylives.org.uk)
7. Parenting NI (www.parentingni.org)

APPENDIX 3 – Linked policies:

- 4a. Anti-bullying Policy – supplementary guidance for staff
- 4b. Positive Behaviour & Discipline Policy
- 4c. Pupil ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- 4d. e-Safety Policy
- 5b. Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- 5f. RSE Policy
- 5h. School rules (Code of Conduct)

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