



POLICY NUMBER: E1

READING SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

DEFINITIONS

“Bullying is aggressive or insulting behaviour by an individual or a group, often repeated over a period of time, that intentionally hurts or harms someone.”

“We must be aware that pupils’ race and sexual orientation can lead to their being targeted for bullying.”

“Pupils with special needs and gifted or talented pupils can also be particularly vulnerable to bullying.”

ANTI-BULLYING STATEMENT

At Reading School we believe that each boy should reach his full potential in all aspects of school life in a positive, safe environment where they are able to develop free from threat of fear. **Thus no form of bullying will be tolerated.**

This statement is reinforced through the school’s pastoral system and behaviour policy. It is important that **all** members of the community have respect for themselves and others and that everyone aims to treat others with sensitivity, compassion and consideration.

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

- There is a statutory requirement on all establishments to provide an environment conducive to learning where no boy’s education is disrupted by bullying.
- In line with this duty of care, it is the policy of the school to deal with any allegation of bullying (physical, verbal, emotional, sexist or racial). It is the school’s aim that boys should feel safe and happy at all times and in all areas of the school.
- Good practice in the prevention of bullying requires vigilance and co-operation from **all** members of the community.

- This policy aligns with the “Every Child Matters” outcomes, particularly “stay safe” which has one of its five tiers “safe from bullying and discrimination”.

TO ACHIEVE THIS THE SCHOOL WILL

- ensure the policy forms an integral part of the school’s pastoral policy and promotion of pupil welfare.
- inform parents/pupils of the policy and encourage them to see the school as a safe place to make disclosures of bullying.
- make staff aware of the procedures and that they have a basic awareness of the signs of bullying.
- provide opportunities through the curriculum to explore issues related to bullying including the skills they need to protect themselves - PSHE.
- maintain effective procedures for record keeping so that incidents can be monitored.
- clarify designated members of staff to whom incidents of bullying should be reported - Head of Key Stage, Head of House/Tutor.
- regularly review this policy involving pupils and staff.

GUIDELINES and PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING

TYPES OF BULLYING

The evidence is that most bullying is (or starts as) very innocent in nature and escalates. Cases reported in national newspapers show that it can drive young people to extreme action either to draw attention to the bullying or to escape it.

WE MUST NOT UNDERESTIMATE ITS EFFECT ON THE PERSON BEING BULLIED.

Bullying takes various forms:

- **PHYSICAL ABUSE** - blatant abuse including pushing, tripping, hitting or intimidation of a boy by another or others.
- **VERBAL ABUSE** - this can be as simple as name calling on what seems an innocent scale or the use of terminology which has sinister overtones either implicit or explicit, of a physical, sexual or racial nature - gestures, taunts.
- **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**- this can involve
 - i) excluding a boy from a group or activity. Tutors of new boys in a form must be especially aware of this.
 - ii) interfering with work or belongings of a boy, often out of lesson time or between lessons.
 - iii) deliberately involving or implicating a boy in the wrong-doing of others.
 - iv) humiliating or ridiculing a boy.
- **USE OF TECHNOLOGY**- the use of the internet and mobiles phones, particularly for texting to intimidate or harass often takes place outside school and is difficult to identify.
- **HOMOPHOBIC ABUSE**-this can take place involving any of the previous forms of bullying and we need to be particularly aware of this in an all boys school.

All Staff have a responsibility to identify bullying and, and where suspected, investigate it and draw it to the attention of the tutor. Where bullying is evident in class either by some personal abusive remark by one boy to another or by a remark that could be construed as racist, or by some action that indicates that one boy is being “picked on”, this must be addressed firmly and clearly so that boys know that such action is totally unacceptable.

RECOGNISING THE SIGNS OF BULLYING

All of us need to be aware of the signs that may indicate that someone is being bullied.

- frequent visits to matron or office.
- especially quick or slow entry/exit of classroom.
- break and lunch time “out of circulation”.
- unwilling to go to school or walk to school.

- general anxiety and obvious signs of nervousness
- a pattern of absences from school.

In addition staff may notice that a boy is repeatedly receiving “jibes” during the “danger” times, waiting outside a classroom, in the tutor room at lunch time or before chapel or assembly. We need to remember that they may be seen as no more than jokes or high spirits by the perpetrators and those who see it, may be seen as bullying to the victim, because boys will have different levels of sensitivity.

PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING

Information about bullying comes from parents, sometimes the victims, sometimes senior boys or staff. All of us need to be vigilant on this matter. If it is reported to you, or you witness an incident adopt the following procedure:

1. Staff to whom the allegations of bullying is made should:

- never ignore allegations but do not make premature assumptions.
- listen carefully to all accounts (because several boys saying the same does not necessarily mean they are telling the truth).
- assure the boy that bullying will not be tolerated and inform him of the next steps.
- never give absolute guarantees of confidentiality other than only giving the information to the minimum number of people to ensure that proper action is taken.
- refer the matter to the appropriate people-tutor, Head of House, Head of Key Stage with a written record of the allegation.
- complete bullying report form and give it to the Head of Key Stage.

Further investigation and interviews will be made by two designated members of staff - tutor, Head of House or Head of Key Stage, who will:

- ask the pupil to provide a written account if appropriate.
- assure the pupil that any action taken will be with his full agreement.
- interview any other pupil(s) involved in the allegation and ask them to provide a written account if appropriate.
- agree any steps to be taken in relation to:
 - i. informing parents
 - ii. sanctions and discipline
 - iii. appropriate support mentoring
- inform all pupils involved of the next steps and inform the Headmaster if appropriate.

- the designated members of staff will complete the bullying log in SIMS (and boy's file updated if appropriate).
- In boarding time, the escalation procedure will differ and the Boarding Housemaster will become involved.

REMEMBER RECORD AND INFORM!

SANCTIONS AND SUPPORT

SANCTIONS

After full investigation, the following course of action will be taken and sanctions applied where necessary.

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| Level 1 | with the agreement of the victim, his parents will be informed and all boys involved will be spoken to by the tutor/Head of House or Head of Key Stage as appropriate. The incident will be recorded in the Bullying Log. Most bullying ceases after a stern but sensitive word from a member of staff. |
| Level 2 | The parents will be informed (if not already) of both victims and perpetrator(s) and interviewed at school by the Head of Key Stage and Head of House/Tutor. Appropriate measures will be taken - possible internal or fixed term exclusion. |
| Level 3 | The perpetrator(s) and parents will be interviewed by the Headmaster, Head of Key Stage and School Police Liaison Officer and be placed on a School Contract and/or fixed term exclusion. |

All Bullying incidents must be documented and referred to the Head of House or Head of Key Stage.

SUPPORT

Support for the victims of bullying needs to be sensitive and appropriate as they often feel scared, vulnerable and quite alone. The following methods of support should be considered and implemented.

- identify a member of staff with whom the victim can talk openly.
- create a "circle of friends" thus breaking down the feeling of isolation.
- link the victim with a trained peer mentor usually a senior boy. Peer mentors often understand better than adults the pressures and fears involved.
- it is essential that the parents and school work closely in supporting the victims of bullying.
- offer supporting leaflets e.g. "What can I do if I am being bullied." available from the Head of Key Stage.

DEALING WITH BULLIES

Bullies need help to confront their behaviour. In most low level incidents the pupils are not aware that their actions constitute bullying and an explanation from an appropriate member of staff is sufficient to solve the problem.

In more serious cases the focus must be to try and get the bully to identify with the victims and understand the stress caused, as a basis for a genuine apology. The Head of Key Stage and Head of House/Tutor will work together to achieve this.

IF BULLYING TAKES PLACE OFF-SITE

Although the school is not directly responsible for bullying which takes place off-site, appropriate steps will be taken to safeguard our pupils. The school will:

- inform the School Police Liaison Officer about problems on local streets seeking police presence at trouble spots.
- inform local transport companies about bullying on buses or trains.
- contact the Headmaster of another school whose pupils are bullying off premises.
- inform boys about how to deal with bullying outside the school either individually or collectively, e.g. assembly, tutor period.

Approved by:	EXPC Committee
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