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Policy number E1

Reading School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Responsibilities

Policy Owner: Name,
Title
Governors Committee EXPC

Audit Control

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Version Control

Version	Author	Summary of Changes	Reviewed By	Date
1.0	Jonathan Hitchinson	Policy created	Jonathan Hitchinson	29/09/2021
1.1	Alun Lloyd	Policy amended – hazing and ritual addition (in line with Boarding NMS)	EXPC Committee	21/11/2022
1.2	Dave McGall	Bromcom added for log and social media aspects updated. Reviewed with HOH		11/11/2024

Responsibilities

Job title	Responsible for;
	Policy Owner
	Policy Overview
	Committee Responsible

Policies Linked

Policy name	File location

Forms Linked

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Staff that need to sign

Staff Group	Form location



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Statement of Intent

The aim of the Anti-Bullying policy is to ensure that students, staff and volunteers learn and work in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable. We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all so that students can learn, staff can work and our boarders live, in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. If bullying does occur all students should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Why do we need an Anti-Bullying policy? Persistent bullying can severely inhibit a child's ability to learn effectively and staff's ability to feel happy and safe at work. The negative effects of bullying can have an impact on a person for their entire life. Reading School wishes to promote a secure and happy environment free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behaviour. Therefore, this policy promotes practices within the school to reinforce our vision, and to remove or discourage practices that negate them.

Definitions

What is bullying?

Bullying occurs when an individual or a group uses strength or power to hurt, either physically or emotionally, by intimidating or demeaning others.

Bullying can be emotional, physical, racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, verbal or cyber. It is usually persistent and is often covert, and is a conscious attempt to hurt, threaten, intimidate or frighten someone. Those who are being bullied, may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults.

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 special educational needs, race, sexual orientation, neurodiversity, gender and other protected characteristics can potentially lead to their being targeted for bullying.

Anti-Bullying Statement

At Reading School, we believe that each person should reach their 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 anti-bullying policies upholds the Reading School values of Excellence, Integrity, Community and Leadership. Any form of bullying is fundamentally against the values of Reading School and will be dealt with accordingly.



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This statement is reinforced through the school's pastoral system and management of Student 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 student'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. It is the school's aim that students and staff 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.

To achieve this the school will;

- Ensure the policy forms an integral part of the school's pastoral policy and promotion of student and staff welfare.
- Inform parents/students 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.
- 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, which are the tutor, Head of House and Assistant Head for the relevant Key Stage.
- Regularly review this policy involving students and staff.

Guidelines and Procedure for Dealing with Bullying

Types of Bullying

The evidence is that most bullying is (or starts as) 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 by one or more people.



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;

- excluding a person from a group or activity. Tutors of new students in a form must be especially aware of this, as well as teachers of those with Special Educational Needs (SEN).
- interfering with work or belongings of, often out of lesson time or between lessons
- deliberately involving or implication in the wrong doing of others.
- humiliating or ridiculing.

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.

Protected characteristics

We recognise that specific groups of people are particularly vulnerable to bullying. These includes people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) as well as young carers, Black and minority groups, those who are, or thought to be, gay, bisexual or gender questioning. The prevention of bullying considers the specific patterns of discrimination these groups face.

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 or by a remark that could be construed as racist, derogatory or offensive, or by some action that indicates that one person is being “picked on”, this must be addressed firmly and clearly so that students 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”.



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- unwilling to go to school or walk to school.
- general anxiety and obvious signs of nervousness
- a pattern of absences from school.

In addition, it may be noticed that a person is repeatedly receiving “jibes” during the “danger” times, waiting outside a classroom 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 people will have different levels of sensitivity.

Procedure for Dealing with Bullying

Information about bullying comes from parents, sometimes the victims, sometimes senior students 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:

- 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 people saying the same does not necessarily mean they are telling the truth).
 - assure the person that bullying will not be tolerated and inform them 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 Assistant Headteacher, who will:
 - ask the person to provide a written account if appropriate.
 - assure the person that any action taken will be with their full agreement.
 - interview any other people involved in the allegation and ask them to provide a written account if appropriate.
 - agree any steps to be taken in relation to:
 - informing parents
 - sanctions and discipline
 - appropriate support mentoring



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- inform all involved of the next steps and inform the Headmaster if appropriate.
- the designated members of staff will complete the bullying log in SIMS (and student'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.

- Level 1 with the agreement of the victim, parents will be informed and all students 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 within Bromcom. 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 student. Peer mentors often understand better than adults the pressures and fears involved.
- it is essential that the parents and schoolwork closely in supporting the victims of bullying.
- offer supporting leaflets and information
- Referring to external agencies as appropriate



Dealing with Bullies

Bullies need help to confront their behaviour. In most low level incidents, people 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 students and staff. 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 students are bullying off premises.
- inform students about how to deal with bullying outside the school either individually or collectively, e.g. assembly, tutor period.
- Support staff who fall victim to bullying with appropriate support for reporting of the bullying.

Boarding

It is recognised that boarders may suffer more strongly from bullying, if the victim and bully are both in boarding together. In these circumstances, the bullying may feel “inescapable”.

Boarding has a rigorous anti-bullying approach, built around constant staff supervision and support, positive relationships between staff and students, as well as between students, who can be both support and also advocates to ensure staff are made aware of incidents of bullying.

Boarding staff will follow the school’s anti-bullying policy and anti-bullying procedures for dealing with bullying, whilst also making additional allowances and adjustments to recognise the specifics of the boarding environment, such as:

- Making suitable adjustments to dorm rooms on a termly basis
- Providing mentors both within boarding and in the day school
- Additional support from matrons
- Weekly staff supervision meetings to ensure that monitoring and support of boarders is a priority, and all staff are aware of any issues
- Additional pastoral care in the evenings, including regular conversations from senior boarding staff
- Bullying logs



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Review of boarding incidents by senior leaders and governors to adjust practice will take place where necessary.

In recognition of the potential within boarding environments for hazing/ initiation/ rituals, there is a zero-tolerance approach to any such activities. Any incidents of these activities would be dealt with following the bullying and behaviour policies.

Anti-Bullying Procedures

Bullying in any form is unacceptable. It will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly.

Staff Responsibilities

- To model the core values of excellence, integrity, leadership and community through everyday behaviours
- To implement procedures to confront bullying in any form
- To listen to all parties involved in incidents
- To investigate incidents promptly and as fully as possible
- To take appropriate action or to refer to Tutor/ Head of House/ Senior Leader as appropriate
- To share with parents of the victim and bully, incidents of persistent and/or serious bullying.
- To promote the use of strategies which challenge bullying behaviour.
- To promote management style which facilitates communication and consultation within Reading School and relevant outside agencies when appropriate
- To promote the use of interventions which are least intrusive and most effective.

Anti-Bullying Strategies

- Promotion of anti-bullying in Chapel and Assemblies
- Duty Rota for staff so they patrol key areas of the school at break and lunchtimes
- Student questionnaires to research student views on how safe they feel in the Day School and in Boarding
- Anti-Bullying training for Pastoral Leaders
- PSHCE lessons on anti-bullying
- Strong teacher-student relationships so students feel comfortable in reporting and issues
- Information talks from the School Police Liaison Officer (Thames Valley Police Service)
- Child Exploitation Online Protection training for staff
- Information for students and parents about E-Safety

Anti-Bullying Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

- A great deal of bullying is Cyber-bullying. Regularly monitor your child's use of online communication forums and other social media sites. Access to these is out of the school's control when your child is not in school.
- **TALK** to your child on a regular basis, so any problem is easier to share.



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- **LISTEN** to what they say.
- **ENCOURAGE** your child to feel good about themselves, realizing that we are all different and equally important
- If you believe your child is being bullied, or is a bully, talk to adults at school and explore the options. **DO NOT STAY SILENT.**
- If your child is a victim assure them that it is not their fault and that you are going to do something to help
- Be realistic in your expectations, sometimes on-going problems can take time to resolve.
- **TRY** to be co-operative with Reading School. It is important that a good working relationship between parents and the school is developed.
- **ALWAYS** remember that children cannot necessarily solve bullying on their own. They **NEED** the support of parents/carers and our school.
- Remember it is not your child's fault.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard.

Reading School recognises that AI has many uses to help pupils learn, but may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real. We will treat any use of AI to bully pupils in line with our anti-bullying and student behaviour policies.

Unresolved or disputed issues

Please refer to the complaints policies in the case of unresolved or disputed issues

[Child Friendly Complaints Policy](#)

[Complaints policy and procedure](#)

