

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

Policy owner	RSSKL - Principal
Policy lead	DSL
Audience	All staff
Legislation and regulation	
Formally endorsed by	Board of Trustees
Endorsement date	November 2017
Next review	November 2019

RSSKL Anti bullying policy

Policy Reference and Suggested Key Resource for Staff

This policy is prepared using the DfE Oct 2014 publication “preventing and Tackling bullying, advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies” also the 2014 DfE factsheet “School support for children and young people who are bullied “

Aims

RSSKL actively promotes equality and operates a zero tolerance approach to all forms of bullying and prejudice-related incidents. Those acting on behalf of our school must actively listen to children and act appropriately on information received in order to provide a safe, secure and positive environment in which children and adults can learn and develop, and where all pupils can make full use of the range of options available to them. We are committed to, and actively promote an ethos which respects all individuals and any behaviour that undermines this is unacceptable. All bullying is unacceptable, regardless of how it is delivered and what excuses are given to justify it.

Victims of bullying must be treated in a supportive manner, and allegations must be listened to in an atmosphere of positive concern.

This policy aims to prevent bullying and to address the negative effect that bullying may have on both pupils and staff within the school through –

- Raising awareness of bullying
- Promoting conditions in which bullying is less likely to happen in the future
- Ensuring a whole school approach to bullying
- Reducing, and if possible, eradicating all instances of all types of bullying

What is bullying?

There are a number of definitions of bullying and all these definitions would include the following characteristics:

- It tends to be repetitive
- It involves an imbalance of power
- It may be verbal, physical or psychological
- Could involve manipulation or engineering a child’s discomfort or isolation

It is important to remember that children with special educational needs are more vulnerable to bullying incidents as they may not recognise they are being bullied or that their own behaviour may be seen by others as bullying.

Bullying can take many different forms, for example –

- Cyber bullying e.g. chat-rooms/blogs/message board posts, emails, gaming consoles, instant messaging (MSN, Yahoo, AOL), mobile phones including photos (Snapchat, text and media messages), social network sites (Facebook, Bebo, video hosting sites like YouTube, webcam)
- Damage to property e.g. graffiti, personal property breakage
- Inciting others to bullying behaviour e.g. encouraging other pupils (often those with special educational needs) to bully others so that they receive the consequences rather than the instigator
- Literature e.g. distribution/possession of offensive posters/leaflets/materials

- Psychological e.g. damage to reputation (sexual, denial of identity, gender, ethnicity), extortion of belongings, identity theft/impersonation, isolation/refusal to work/play with other pupil, revealing personal information, threats
- Verbal e.g. 'joke' making, banter, mimicry/ridicule, name calling, spreading rumours, swearing, verbal abuse, gossiping
- Victimisation after a previous complaint e.g. bullying due to either victims or bystanders speaking out as a result of a past bullying incident

Reasons for bullying

Bullying can happen for a large number of reasons, some of the most common are listed below, but the list is not exhaustive:

- Homophobic (any incident perceived by the alleged victim or any other person to be targeted for being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. People do not have to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender to suffer homophobic bullying.)
- Racist (any incident perceived as racist by the alleged victim or any other person. Incidents related to religion, culture or those involving pupils who identify as Gypsy/Roma traveller come under this heading too.)
- Related to disability, special educational need or health (behaviour perceived to be insulting to people with a range of medical, mobility, sensory, mental health or learning impairments. Incidents related to other health or SENs come under this heading too.)
- Related to home circumstances (e.g. young carers or children in care)
- Sexist (incidents perceived to be demeaning to a gender in general.)
- Sexual (incidents including intrusive language, damage to sexual reputation, inappropriate touching and other behaviour perceived to involve unwanted sexual attention.)
- Transphobic (incidents are those perceived to be insulting to someone's gender identity or to transgendered people.)

Signs and symptoms of bullying

Signs of bullying can be extremely variable and will very much depend on the individual. It is important, however, that parents/carers and school staff are aware of the signs and symptoms associated with bullying so that they can identify possible problems. The more common signs include –

- Physical signs e.g. physical injuries, damaged clothing with no convincing explanation and general ill-health due to stress
- Emotional signs e.g. mood swings, apparent changes in personality, constant anxiety/nervousness, depression or tearfulness for no apparent reason, lack of confidence, negative self-image, hostility and defensiveness
- Behavioural signs e.g. withdrawn, frequent, unexplained absences, poor concentration, eating disorders, alcohol/substance misuse, evidence of self-harming and disruptive/challenging/bullying behaviour
- General e.g. frequently 'loses' money/possessions, appears tired and lethargic, avoids entering/leaving school with others

It is important to recognise that children can be especially vulnerable to bullying when they are –

- New to the class
- Are different in appearance, speech, SEN ability or background from other people
- Suffering from low self-esteem

Proactive prevention of bullying

Developing values such as empathy, consideration, unselfishness, and self-confidence will be vital in preventing bullying behaviour. If the preventative policy depends upon policing the environment, forbidding behaviour and punishing perpetrators then no lasting changes can be expected. Our aim is to use strategies to impact upon the lasting behaviour of children and promote positive behaviour, therefore eliminating bullying before it becomes an issue.

RSSKL will proactively –

- Raise awareness through assemblies and lessons
- Have a clear policy which all members of the school are aware of, and clear procedures to follow
- Put time aside with class teacher or sponsor for children to discuss sensitive issues in a safe environment
- Implement a peer mentoring system where older children support younger children
- Positive role models reflected through staff behaviour
- Ethos of the school

Responding to bullying

Bullying allegations can come from a number of different sources including from the child, child's friends, parent/carer or a member of staff. All allegations will be listened to, taken seriously and follow up. Allegations can be made face to face or indirectly (e.g. via a friend, a note or via a parent).

1. Talk with the victim – a member of staff finds out that bullying has happened so he/she talks to the victim about his/her feelings and what happened. A pastoral care concern form will be completed by the member of staff and a discussion will take place with pastoral care about the most suitable member of staff to deal with the allegation.
2. Member of staff meets with the child or children involved, this may include by-standers, to determine what has happened and the 'other side of the story' if there is one.
3. At this meeting, or a subsequent one, the member of staff explains the problem, the way the victim is feeling without allocating blame to the group or discussing the details of the incident/s.
4. The member of staff does not attribute blame, but states that they know that members in the group are responsible and can do something about it.
5. They then ask the group for ideas, preferably with each member of the group suggesting a way in which the victim could be helped to feel happier. The member of staff could give some positive responses or targets but will not go on to extract a promise of improved behaviour.
6. The member of staff ends the meeting by passing responsibility to the group to solve the problem. They arrange to meet with them again to see how things are going within 2 weeks.
7. Follow up meetings are arranged with the victim and other children to discuss how things are going.

If the situation is not resolved after the above process, and the behaviour continues, then the following stages are considered:

Stage 2 – contact parents/carers and convene a meeting

Stage 3 – put the child on report with targets

Stage 4 – involve external agencies, leading to the possibility of external exclusion

Children who have been or are the victim of bullying, along with children accused of bullying will be referred to the pastoral care group for additional support as needed.

Recording and evaluating

All bullying and hate incidents must be recorded by staff, using the school concerns form, and details logged with the anti bullying officer or child protection officers (Regina Walsh and Tina Hobday).

Prejudice-related incidents are those involving for example racist graffiti or sexist language, which needs to be addressed, but may not constitute bullying because it is not repeated, not intentional or not directed at an individual. Some recorded in the same manner as bullying incidents. Incidents such as these may be prejudice-related or a bullying incident, or both. Prejudice-related incidents should be recorded in the same manner as bullying incidents.

The first contact for parents with concerns relating to bullying is their class teacher or class sponsor, however the antibullying officer and school management team are also available for contact regarding these issues if needed.

The anti bullying officer is responsible for monitoring incidents of bullying in RSSKL and report termly to upper and lower school meetings and school management team.