



Anti-Bullying Policy

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Author:	G Moody & D Blackler	Next review date:	January 2025
Owner:	A Cush		
Approved by:	A Cush		

1. Introduction

1.1 Statement

There is a statutory duty (Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006) to draw up procedures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying among students and to bring these procedures to the attention of staff, parents and students. These duties are extended to include preventing/responding to bullying that happens outside of school, where it is reasonable to do so. Schools also have a duty to 'safeguard and promote the welfare of students' (Education Act 2002) and to ensure that children and young people are safe from bullying and discrimination (Children Act 2004). This policy also addresses bullying of staff by students, parents or colleagues (DfE, Preventing and Tackling Bullying, 2017).

1.2 Objective

The purpose of the Anti-Bullying Policy is to ensure that students are able to learn in a safe, calm, supportive and caring environment without fear of being bullied. The policy gives clear guidance to students, staff, governors and parents on the school's view of bullying and our commitment to supporting victims of bullying, sanctioning perpetrators and reducing incidents of bullying in the school. This policy applies to all members of the school community including students, parents, visitors and staff.

This policy sets out a range of proactive strategies, reactive strategies and intervention systems which are in place to:

- Prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour.
- React to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way.
- Safeguard the student who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support for them.
- Apply appropriate consequences to the student/s causing the bullying and ensure they learn from the experience, in some cases through multi-agency support.

1.3 Relationship to other policies

The Anti-Bullying Policy relates to other policies, including:

- Behaviour for Learning Policy and Supplementary Guidance
- The Child Protection Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy

2. Policy

2.1 Defining and understanding bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally (DfE, Preventing and Tackling Bullying, 2017) There are many variations on the precise definition of bullying, but the various literatures agree on its key features.

The five essential components of bullying:

1. **Intention to harm:** bullying is deliberate, with the intention to cause harm. For example, friends teasing each other in a 'good-natured' way is not bullying, but a person teasing another with the intention to deliberately upset them is bullying.
2. **Harmful outcome:** one or more persons are hurt physically or emotionally.
3. **Direct or indirect acts:** bullying can involve direct aggression, such as hitting someone, as well as indirect acts, such as spreading rumours.
4. **Repetitive and persistent:** bullying involves repeated acts of aggression. An isolated aggressive act, like a fight, is not bullying.
5. **Unequal power:** bullying involves the abuse of power by one or several persons who are (perceived as) more powerful, often due to their age, physical strength, or psychological resilience.

Child on child abuse can include but is not limited to bullying behaviour as well as behaviours such as sexual harassment, cyber-flashing, and sexual violence. Any allegation is always taken seriously. We also understand that the student who is the perpetrator of the abuse may also be at risk of harm. We will make every effort to ensure that the perpetrator as well as the victim are both supported

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

2.2 Methods and types of bullying

Although bullying sometimes occurs between two individuals in isolation, it quite often takes place in the presence of others.

Bullying may be defined as being either one or more of these:

- Physical – including kicking, hitting, pushing, taking and damaging belongings.
- Emotional – including excluding or isolating others, gossiping, spreading hurtful or untruthful rumours, tormenting.
- Racist – including racial taunts, graffiti, gestures identified by the fact that victims are singled out because of colour, the way they talk, ethnic grouping or religious or cultural practices.
- Sexual – including unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments. Identified by the fact that victims are singled out because of their gender or sexuality including transgender.
- Homophobic - identified by the fact that victims are singled out because of their sexuality including transgender.
- Verbal – including name calling, sarcasm, tormenting and spreading hurtful or untruthful rumours.

- Cyberbullying – misuse of the internet and electronic devices to be hurtful to others.
- Disablist bullying - Identified by the fact that victims are singled out because of their physical condition.
- Faith-based - identified by the fact that victims are singled out because of their religious or cultural beliefs.

2.3 Cyberbullying

This differs in several significant ways from other kinds of bullying: the invasion of home and personal space; the difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages; the size of the audience; perceived anonymity and the profile of the person doing the bullying.

New technologies have meant that students are likely at some point to be a target of cyberbullying. This technology includes mobile phones, instant messenger, chatrooms and message boards, email, webcams and social network sites. This can result in:

- Threats and intimidation.
- Harassment or “cyber-stalking”.
- Vilification/defamation.
- Exclusion or peer rejection.
- Unauthorised publication of private images or information manipulation.

It is important to recognise that cyberbullying can constitute a criminal offence in the UK, if it is considered to be a form of harassment. The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a medium for “virtual” bullying, which can occur in or outside school. The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 have given schools stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones (see Mobile Phone Policy). The school may wish to hand the phone or contents found over to the police if deemed appropriate. The use of mobile phones is prohibited on school site. We encourage parents and carers to monitor their child’s activity on mobile phones and to report any concerns to the school immediately.

2.4 Sexting and the sharing of inappropriate pictures

Sexting is the sharing of very personal images to another person and is a growing means of communication and relationship building by young people. When young people take and share images of themselves this could also be an indicator of other underlying vulnerabilities that may place them at risk. At the very least is the fact they have made themselves vulnerable to potential future sharing of these images which often leads to issues in school and potentially by adults who may acquire these images on-line. As such, we take the sharing of images without consent very seriously as cyberbullying behaviours often follow. The emotional damage that young people who find themselves in this situation suffer is a cause for concern for parents and the school and as such we will investigate any such matter brought to our attention.

The sharing of images is illegal and we will always work in partnership with our Community Police Team; however, safeguarding is at the heart of any intervention. This approach is informed by Section 1 (1) of the Children’s Act 1989 and reinforced by Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 which places a duty on key persons to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Where we are aware that personal images are on a student's device and have been, or have been alleged to have been shared, designated school staff will use their powers to delete these images for the purpose of safeguarding the victim and liaise with local police if deemed necessary. We have developed a broader range of sanctions that specifically deal with cyberbullying and the sharing of inappropriate images and this includes an Acceptable User Policy for internet, mobile phone use is prohibited in school.

2.5 Proactive strategies

The culture and ethos of our school supports students and staff in dealing with bullying. Students know the difference between right and wrong and are encouraged to show respect to all members of the school community. Calm and purposeful learning environments are created through the SEN6 and LEARN which leads to disruption free classrooms, thus reducing the opportunity for banter or comments in the classroom.

All students, staff, visitors and governors are encouraged to be a Ridgeway 'HERO'. This allows us to promote our anti-bullying policy across the school with the use of consistent language through the curriculum.

H – Hear it (if you hear unkind comments or poor language)

E – Expect more (never accept unkindness or rudeness)

R – Report it (reporting allows the behaviour to be stopped and changed)

O – Offer support (be kind)

In order to promote the behaviours we expect to see we promote our expect more campaign through;

- The mentoring and assembly programme,
- PSHE curriculum and immersion days to allow students to engage with and understand the issues associated with bullying. Students give feedback on the effectiveness of the delivery.
- Schemes of learning across a range of subjects (for example cyberbullying prevention work is completed in computing lessons)
- Developing an organisational culture of confident ICT users that supports innovation, e-safety and digital literacy skills, and will help to combat misuse and high-risk activities
- Anti-bullying weeks (ABW) events in November of each year.
- Use of events to prompt further understanding of bullying, such as theatre groups, exhibitions, student voice events and current news stories.
- School environment reviews to ensure that areas where students feel unsafe are monitored.
- Daily supervision across the school (dining hall, corridors and playground) provided by teams of staff who monitor student behaviour and interaction and identify themselves as available for support through high vis jackets.
- The use of opportunities in school to discuss the differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, race, gender, disability or sexuality (prejudice- based bullying).
- HERO campaign that is launching throughout the year to promote Hear it, Expect More, Report It and Offer Support.

2.6 Reporting and recording incidents of bullying

2.6.1 Confidential reporting systems for students

We are aware that many students worry about telling an adult about bullying as they fear that the issue will get worse. They can report bullying to us confidentially. However, if we feel that the student is at risk then we cannot keep the information confidential.

Our aim is to ensure that students have confidence that their concerns will be treated promptly and seriously and that action will be taken that will not aim to make their situation worse.

Students are able to use the following methods to report bullying to us:

- Bullying ambassadors who are trained to support others.
- Year 11 prefects are available for all year groups.
- Through the use of the “Whisper Report” tab on the website, this is anonymous and can be used by students and parents, reports are sent to identified staff in school. Students must add their name to the report.
- Email systems- students can email any staff but may wish to email mentors, Heads of Year, the designated school Safeguard Lead and the Student Support Teams .
- Face to face with any member of staff.
- Ipads available in the school.

2.6.2 Parents/Carers wishing to report bullying

Parent/Carers are encouraged to talk to any member of staff if they have concerns regarding their child. Parents can ask for a meeting in school with the child’s mentor or a member of the Pastoral team.

All reported incidents will be fully investigated within a reasonable period of time. It is important to understand that good practice in investigating incidents recognises that time needs to be set aside to ensure that students involved do not have time to collaborate their stories. Any investigation needs to be done in a manner that ensures the target of the bullying feels safe about the process and the outcomes that may result from it.

Ultimately we wish to ensure that parents/carers are confident that staff will act promptly, take the concern seriously and not take action that aims to make the situation worse.

2.6.3 Record keeping

Incidents will be recorded onto Arbor when a consequence is issued. The pastoral team also track details of the perpetrator(s), victim(s), the types of bullying, the sanctions applied for the behaviour, and the support that has been put in place for the students involved.

Keeping records of bullying incidents will enable us to:

- Manage individual cases effectively for the perpetrator and /or victim.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies.
- Celebrate the anti-bullying work of the school.

- Demonstrate defensible decision-making in the event of complaints being made for the perpetrator and /or victim.
- Engage and inform multi-agency teams as necessary.
- Monitor patterns and trends so these can be acted upon quickly.
- Provide monitoring reports to Senior Leadership Team, students, staff and governors.

2.7 School sanctions

2.7.1 Use of sanctions and learning programmes

We have a responsibility to ensure that sanctions are applied fairly, proportionately, consistently and reasonably, taking into account any SEN or disabilities that students may have, and taking into consideration the needs of vulnerable students under the Equality Act 2010. Bullying by children with disabilities or SEN is no more acceptable than bullying by other students and it should be made clear that their actions are wrong and appropriate sanctions imposed. However, for a sanction to be reasonable and lawful, we must take account of the nature of the student's disability or SEN, and the extent to which the student understands and is in control of what they are doing, reasonable adjustment may be considered at this point.

Consequences have three main purposes:

- To impress on the perpetrator that the behaviour displayed is unacceptable.
- To deter repeating that behaviour.
- To signal to other students that the behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from doing it.

The consequences for bullying should reflect the seriousness of the incident. We wish to ensure that our sanctions address bullying behaviours in a way that does not lead to escalation but resolution, and which gives the best chance that bullying behaviour will not be repeated. The school uses a staged approach to deal with bullying, however, decisions on the sanction to be applied will always reflect the seriousness of the incident. We have a range of sanctions and strategies that we may apply having investigated an incident which may include:

- Demerits
- An after school detention
- Time in the refocus rooms
- An internal suspension
- An external suspension
- A permanent exclusion

Where a student repeats bullying behaviour, either with the same individual or with others, sanctions may be escalated. Further information on the consequence system can be found in the Behaviour for Learning Policy. We will, where necessary, notify the police. Where we have significant concerns about a student's behaviour choices, we will seek to work in partnership with external support agencies, with parental consent to educate rather than criminalise students and ensure that a student's holistic needs are fully considered.

2.7.2 Bullying outside of the school premises

Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, states that a school's disciplinary

powers can be used to address pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff, but only if it would be reasonable for the school to regulate pupils' behaviour in those circumstances. This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre. Where such bullying is reported to staff, it will be investigated and acted on where possible.

2.7.3 Sanctions for cyberbullying may also include:

Sanctions for cyberbullying will follow the same sanctions as identified above, however may also result in;

- Confiscation of the mobile phone or device if it is used in such a way as to cause a disturbance in school or contravene the Behaviour for Learning and Anti-Bullying Policies (Education and Inspections Act 2006). This may include the deletion of images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones. The school will use its power to search students' belongings if it has cause to believe that cyberbullying has taken place. Mobile phone use is not permitted in school, however, the disruption and emotional impact that cyberbullying has on students in school following cyberbullying out of school will be dealt with in partnership with parents and carers, and where necessary, the police.
- Parents will always be notified of any need to delete images, although their permission to do so is not required. The school may need to safely store the device or mobile phone if the police request that the phone is required for evidence.
- If a student fails to respond to a request from a member of staff to reveal a message, parents will be called to seek permission. However please note that permission is not required to search a mobile phone.
- Withdrawal of the use of the school's email and ICT facilities for a specified period of time.
- Internet abuse, email abuse or network abuse will lead to limited access for a period of time, withdrawal of email privileges or total network withdrawal depending on the severity.

2.8 Monitoring and review

2.8.1 Consultation

The following groups were consulted during the development of this policy:

- Leadership Team.
- Pastoral Leadership Team.
- Governors.

2.8.2 Review

The school will review this policy in a 2 yearly cycle and assess its implementation and effectiveness. This monitoring will take place through:

- Student questionnaires and surveys

- Parent surveys
- Student focus groups
- Analysis of recorded bullying incidents
- Governors oversight for the internal audit arrangements, providing the appropriate level of support and challenge to ensure that the agreed practice and procedure has been implemented

2.9 Bullying of staff

It is equally important that we protect our staff from bullying from parents, carers, colleagues or students. Everyone has rights and responsibilities in relation to cyberbullying and where comments and posts made on social network sites about staff members are known about, which are of a derogatory nature, decisive action will be taken by the Principal and the Community Police Team may be informed. All staff at The Ridgeway School are in a position of trust, and there are expectations that they will act in a professional manner at all times. Advice to staff on protecting their online reputation forms part of the schools on-going CPD programme.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

We consider that everyone within our school community has a part to play in ensuring that our school is a “telling and talking” school. In order to tackle the issue of bullying we recognise that we need a range of strategies to deal with it. A whole school approach to educate students and staff to ensure that it is not tolerated, and that it is dealt with sensitively and consistently. We have therefore introduced ‘Be a Ridgeway Hero’, this asks all members of the community to report and offer support following unkind comments or bullying.

3.1 Students

All of our students have an important role in ensuring that our policy is effective by reporting bullying incidents to members of staff. Students should support the Anti-Bullying Policy by not being bystanders when they see and hear incidents of bullying within the school environment.

All students must consider the wishes and feelings of other members of the school community in regard to their own behaviour with specific awareness of how bullying behaviour may adversely affect the emotional well-being of others.

All students will have an active part to play to ensuring that our school is a safe place to learn. This will involve them in actively learning about all types of bullying, considering the impact of this behaviour on their peers and vulnerable members of their school community, and through participation in surveys and student voice opportunities where their views will be sought on the policy and its implementation.

3.2 Staff

Staff have a crucial part to play in ensuring that students feel safe to learn. Staff will play an active role by addressing any incidents of bullying that are reported to them, or that they hear, following the agreed process for investigating incidents as laid out in the ‘reporting’ section. Incidents will be recorded and plans for supporting students and monitoring their behaviour implemented, working in partnership with parents and carers at all times. Staff will be involved through the school’s national anti-bullying week, in delivering lessons that seek to educate and inform students, develop

greater awareness and ensure students are equipped with the skills to deal with bullying if they are a target of it or see it within school.

All staff have a responsibility to ensure that this policy and the procedures within it are fully implemented.

Staff training and induction provide opportunities to reflect on the issues surrounding bullying and have an understanding of how the school policy is reflected in its practice. Bullying of all forms will be regularly discussed during assemblies throughout each school year.

All staff have a responsibility to be alert for the signs and symptoms that a student may be being bullied; this may be either in their classroom environment or in the wider school. Staff receive training on signs of bullying and tackling “bullying or banter” and they are expected to be alert to language use between students, to respond swiftly and decisively to ensure that our classrooms are places of emotional safety and to follow-up any issues individually with students who have been a target of such incidents.

3.3 Parents/Carers

Parents/carers have a responsibility to report any incident of bullying behaviour to a member of the school staff and allow the person investigating the incident the time to ensure it is a full and accurate investigation that ensures student safety remains uncompromised.

The role of parents/carers in supporting their child to develop the range of social and emotional skills which minimise the chances of their child bullying cannot be underestimated and will significantly support the school in seeking to reducing incidents of bullying or preventing incidents of bullying. The school also encourages parents/ carers to monitor their child’s use of mobile phones and to report anything that they deem to be harmful.