



Robertswood School Anti-bullying Policy

Introduction

At Robertswood School, we are aware that pupils may be bullied in any school or setting, and recognise that preventing, raising awareness and consistently responding to any cases of bullying should be a priority to ensure the safety and well-being of our pupils.

In line with the Equality Act 2010, it is essential that our school:

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

At Robertswood School, we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Under the Children Act 1989, a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a pupil is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, the school staff should report their concerns to their Local Authority's safeguarding team.

This policy is closely linked with our Behaviour Policy, our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, our School Code of Conduct and the School's Vision, Aims and Values.

Principles and Values

As a school we take bullying and its impact seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that known incidents of bullying will be responded to.

Bullying will not be tolerated. The school will seek ways to counter the effects of bullying that may occur within school or in the local community. The ethos of our school fosters high expectations of outstanding behaviour and we will consistently challenge any behaviour that falls below this.

Objectives of this Policy

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.

All of us have encountered bullying at some point in our lives, but we all deal with it differently. The aim of this policy is to work together to ensure that our school is a safe place for children and adults to be; whether the school community is directly or indirectly affected by bullying or not and should be read with the whistleblowing policy in mind.

Bullying Definition

At Robertswood School, we discuss what bullying is, as well as incidents we would not describe as bullying, with all pupils through assemblies and PSHE lessons. We agree that:

- Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally;
- Bullying usually happens when the relationship is imbalanced;
- It could be prejudice-based or discriminatory

In other words, bullying at Robertswood is considered to be, **“unacceptable behaviour which occurs ‘lots of times, on purpose’.”**

Bullying can be short term or continuous over long periods of time. Bullying can be:

Emotional	being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
Physical	pushing, kicking, biting, hitting, punching or any use of violence
Racial	racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
Sexual	unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
Homophobic	because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
Direct or indirect Verbal	name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
Cyber bullying	All areas of internet, such as email and internet chat on social media, Social media misuse, mobile threats by text messaging and calls Misuse of associated technology , i.e. camera and video facilities, I- pad, games consoles.

Bullying may be related to:

- Race
- Gender
- Religion
- Culture
- SEN or disability
- Appearance or health condition
- Home circumstances, including Young carers and poverty
- Sexual orientation, sexism, or sexual bullying, homophobia

Bullying can take place in the classroom, playground, toilets, on the journey to and from school, on residential trips and cyberspace. It can take place in group activities and between families in the local community.

Signs and Symptoms for Parents and Staff

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do make less effort with school work than previously
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or " go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home hungry (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- lack of eye contact
- becoming short tempered
- change in attitude to people at home.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other social, emotional and/or mental health problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Bullying has the potential to damage the mental health of a victim. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

Prevention

At Robertswood we use a variety of methods to support children in preventing and understanding the consequences of bullying through class assemblies, PSHE and Citizenship lessons, PSHE Curriculum, the school Vision and Assembly Themes and Anti-bullying week. Children are also consulted through in-school pupil questionnaires and the safety survey the results of these are promptly responded to by staff.

The ethos and working philosophy of Robertswood means that all staff actively encourage children to have respect for each other and for other people's property. Good and kind/polite behaviour is regularly acknowledged and rewarded.

Staff will regularly discuss friendship and bullying, this will inform children that we are serious about dealing with bullying and leads to open conversations and increased confidence in children to want to discuss bullying and report any incidents and concerns about other children's behaviour.

Staff will reinforce expectations of behaviour as a regular theme in line with our school's values.

Staff to follow the equality policy; supporting every child in our school. Staff must be careful not to highlight differences of children or an individual child, even if this is done in jest. This gives other children advocacy to use this difference to begin calling names or teasing.

Staff must be vigilant regarding groups of friends together. Friendship groups may bring about the imbalance of power and must be led towards welcoming others to join them and not excluding others from their group.

Staff must reinforce a general message that children do not have to be friends with everyone else, but they must be respectful of everyone else's feelings and be kind to each other.

Children are involved in the prevention of bullying as and when appropriate, these may include:

- writing a set of school or class rules
- writing a personal pledge or promise against bullying
- writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying
- reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly
- making up role-plays about what to do through scenarios of bullying
- having discussions about bullying and why it matters that children who use unacceptable behaviour towards others are dealt with quickly

If a child feels that they are being bullied then there are several procedures that they are encouraged to follow: (not hierarchical)

- Tell a friend
- Tell a teacher or adult whom you feel you can trust
- Tell a parent or adult at home whom you feel you can trust
- Discuss it as part of your PSHE time
- Ring Childline and follow the advice given

Listening to children

It is important that children are and feel that they are listened to when discussing or disclosing any potential incidents of bullying.

- Listen to the child
- Take them seriously
- Show empathy
- Let the child know it's not their fault
- Avoid stereotypes
- Reassure them they were right to tell you
- Follow our procedures for reporting concerns

Remember

- Bullying can have a huge negative impact on children – in the short and long term
- Be on the lookout for signs of bullying, and be aware of who might be more vulnerable
- Report any concerns you have
- Take prejudice-based bullying seriously and listen to children affected by it

Outcomes

All known/reported incidences of bullying will be investigated by the class teacher or by a senior member of staff.

Parents of the perpetrator may also be questioned about the incident or about any concerns that they may be having.

The child displaying unacceptable behaviour, may be asked to genuinely apologise (as appropriate to the child's age and level of understanding) Other consequences may take place. EG a parent being informed about their child's behaviour and a request that the parents support the school with any sanctions that it takes or measures that it puts in place (such as peer buddying).

In some cases, outside agencies may be requested to support the school or family in dealing with a child continually demonstrating unacceptable behaviour towards others. eg police, counsellor, behaviour support worker or social care.

In serious cases (this is defined as children displaying an on-going lack of response to sanctions, that is, no change in behaviour of the perpetrator and an unwillingness to alter their behaviour choices), support from behaviour outreach, counselling, reduced timetables, or even fixed or permanent exclusion will be considered.

During and after the incident(s) have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be recorded on the Ant system and monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

The Governors will be informed of any incidents recorded in the log along with incidents, sanctions and reconciliation. This forms part of the termly Headteacher's Report. The Safeguarding and Chair of Governors will be consulted at the time of any incidents.

Recording of Bullying Incidents

When an incident of bullying has taken place, staff will record and report each incident.

In the case of racist bullying, this must be reported to the Headteacher.

General incidences of bullying should be recorded in the Behaviour Log this would include incidents where staff have had to become involved and speak with children, and/or where parents have raised concerns regarding bullying. Confirmed cases of bullying must be recorded and followed up for a period of time afterwards.

All incidents of bullying will be discussed with all relevant staff and parents of the children involved, in order that everyone can be vigilant and that further incidents by the same child(ren) may be prevented from happening in the future.

Incidents of bullying will be discussed with the Governing Body (Safeguarding Gov)

Advice to Parents

As the parent of a child whom you suspect is being bullied-

1. Report bullying incidents to the class teacher, LSA or Headteacher.
2. The incidents will be recorded by staff and the Headteacher notified.
3. In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
4. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted.
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
6. An attempt will be made to help the child using unacceptable behaviour towards others, to change their behaviour.

Do Not:

1. Attempt to sort the problem out yourself by speaking to the child whom you think may be behaving inappropriately towards your child or by speaking to their parents.
2. Encourage your child to be 'a bully' back.

Both of these will only make the problem much harder to solve.