

Anti-bullying Policy

Independent Day / Boarding School for Boys and Girls

Royal Hospital School

January 2010

1 Policy statement

1.1 **Scope:** This policy applies to all pupils and staff at the School irrespective of their age and whether or not a pupil is in the care of the School when/if bullying behaviour occurs.

1.2 **Publication:** This policy is provided to all parents and pupils in the Pupil Handbook, to all staff in the Staff Handbook and is also available on request in the School office. In addition, the policy is published on the School's website.

1.3 **Policy aims:** Through the operation of this policy we aim:

- to maintain and drive a positive and supportive culture among all pupils and staff throughout the School; and
- to deter bullying behaviour, detect it when it occurs, and deal with it by counselling and/or disciplinary sanctions and, if necessary, by expulsion.

1.4 Bullying behaviour is always unacceptable and will not be tolerated at the School because:

- it is harmful to the person who is bullied, and to those who engage in bullying behaviour, and those who support them, and can in some cases lead to lasting psychological damage and even suicide;
- it interferes with a pupil's right to enjoy his/her learning and leisure time free from intimidation; and
- it is contrary to all our aims and values, our internal culture and the reputation of the School.

2 Bullying behaviour

2.1 **Meaning:** Bullying is behaviour which hurts or causes distress by taking unfair advantage of another person in some way, making him or her feel uncomfortable or threatened. **If you think that you or someone else is being bullied, talk to a teacher.** Bullying may be:

- physical - hitting, kicking pushing people around, spitting; or taking, damaging or hiding possessions;
- verbal - name-calling, taunting, teasing, insulting or demanding money;
- exclusionary behaviour - intimidating, isolating or excluding a person from a group;
- general unkindness - spreading rumours or writing unkind notes, phone texts or e-mails; or
- cyberbullying - using the internet, mobile 'phones, social networking sites (such as Facebook and Bebo) etc to deliberately upset someone else (see section 2.2 below).

Bullying may also be:

- sexual - talking to or touching someone in a sexually inappropriate way;
- sexist - related to a person's gender;
- racist, or regarding someone's religion or culture;
- related to a person's sexual orientation (homophobic);
- related to a person's home circumstances; or
- related to a person's disability, health or appearance.

2.2 **Cyberbullying:** The School has a separate policy which deals with "cyberbullying" (see "Acceptable Use Policy") Cyberbullying is the use of information and communications technology (**ICT**), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone

else. (See *Cyberbullying: safe to learn: embedding anti-bullying work in schools* (DCSF 00658-2007, guidance issued by the Department for Children, Schools and Families.)

- 2.3 **Intention:** Not all bullying is deliberate or intended to hurt. Some individuals may see their hurtful conduct as "teasing" or "a game" or "for the good of" the other person. These forms of bullying are equally unacceptable but may not be malicious and can often be corrected quickly with advice and without disciplinary sanctions. A bully who does not respond appropriately to advice or sanctions would ultimately have to leave the School.
- 2.4 **Responsibility:** It is everyone's responsibility to ensure, whatever the circumstances, that no-one becomes a victim of bullying. A person may be vulnerable to bullying because of his/her age, physical appearance, nationality, colour, gender, sexual orientation, religion, culture or disability, or because s/he is new in the School, appears to be uncertain or has no friends. S/he may also become a target because of an irrational decision by a bully.
- 2.5 **Legal aspects:** A person who harasses, threatens or makes a physical or sexual assault on another, or who steals or causes damage to the property of another, commits a criminal offence and also a civil wrong known as a "tort" for which there can be legal consequences outside the School. Bullying behaviour may also be regarded as threatening behaviour or harassment which can be either a criminal offence or a civil wrong.

3 Anti-bullying culture

- 3.1 **Ethos:** Our expectation of all members of the School community is that:
- everyone will uphold the School Rules which are printed in the [Pupil Handbook];
 - a pupil or a member of staff who witnesses or hears of an incident of bullying will report it;
 - a complaint of bullying will always be taken seriously; and
 - no one will tolerate unkind actions or remarks or stand by when someone else is being bullied.
- 3.2 **Equal opportunities:** In School and in every year group:
- discriminatory words and behaviour are treated as unacceptable;
 - positive attitudes are fostered towards people who are disabled and towards ethnic, cultural and linguistic groups within and outside the School; and
 - positive attitudes are fostered towards both sexes through the curriculum and tutorials.
- 3.3 **Staff:** Through their training and experience, members of staff are expected to promote an anti-bullying culture by:
- celebrating achievement;
 - anticipating problems and providing support;
 - disciplining sensibly and fairly;
 - making opportunities to listen to pupils; and
 - acting as advocates of pupils.
- 3.4 **Pupils:** Through our pastoral care systems, pupils are informed and taught that bullying will not be tolerated in the School. They are encouraged:
- to celebrate the effort and achievements of others;
 - to hold and promote positive attitudes;

- to feel able to share problems with staff;
- to turn to someone they trust, if they have a problem;
- not to feel guilty about airing complaints; and
- to treat meals as pleasant social occasions.

4 Anti-bullying systems

4.1 **Approach:** Our systems for detecting and dealing with bullying are designed to operate:

- vertically, through all year groups; and
- horizontally, within year groups and in the classroom and other activities.

Our anti-bullying systems are implemented and driven in the way described below.

4.2 **Vigilance:** Members of staff are vigilant at all times but particularly:

- before lessons;
- in the queue for the Dining Hall and in the Dining Hall itself;
- in Houses, particularly in bed-sitters and dormitories; and
- on school transport.

4.3 **Meetings:** Bullying is discussed from time to time in meetings between:

- members of the Senior Management Team;
- senior management and prefects;
- Housemasters/Housemistresses and year group prefects;
- tutors and pupils in their tutor group; and
- School staff, year group staff and matrons.

The result of these meetings is to feed back information about friendship patterns, particular incidents, any pupil who seems to be isolated, any growing "power base" and any known conflict between a member of staff and a pupil, or between pupils.

4.4 **Education:** Measures are taken throughout each year to educate pupils about bullying and this policy. These measures include:

- 4.4.1 the PSHE programme, which covers bullying (what is bullying, what should be done about bullying etc);
- 4.4.2 through the School's Anti-bullying Counsellors ("ABC") scheme (see below);
- 4.4.3 anti-bullying messages are given in assemblies;
- 4.4.4 the School acknowledges the annual anti-bullying week.

Education on bullying can also be provided through projects, drama, stories, literature, historical events etc.

4.5 **Anti-Bullying Counsellors:** The School has a network of Anti-Bullying Counsellors in each house and older boys and girls are trained on how to spot and deal with potential bullying situations around the School. The Anti-Bullying Counsellors wear badges that distinguish them, and therefore all pupils know who the Counsellors are. If there is a situation that the counsellors cannot deal with they will, of course, pass it on to a member of staff, but frequently matters are resolved at this level and potential difficulties are nipped in the bud.

- 4.6 **Staff training:** Appropriate training in all aspects of care is arranged to ensure that all staff have the necessary professional skills, especially awareness of the risk and indications of child abuse and bullying, and how to deal with cases that arise.
- 4.7 **Pupils' responsibilities:** We emphasise with senior pupils the role which is expected of them in setting a good example and being helpful to younger pupils and each other. Older pupils are encouraged to keep an eye on younger pupils and offer support via the School's house prefect system and ABC scheme, where it is needed, and in particular:
- all senior pupils have the opportunity for increased duties but senior pupils who do not wish to have extended pastoral responsibilities are not coerced;
 - the responsibilities of senior pupils are appropriately limited;
 - members of staff expect prefects and senior boarders to offer supervisory support;
 - school prefects receive training at the beginning of the academic year on how to control younger pupils sensitively, especially in giving punishments;
 - all pupils should ensure that there are no 'initiation ceremonies' intended to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation. Such occurrences must be reported.
- 4.8 **Record Keeping and monitoring:** Housemasters and Housemistresses maintain records of the welfare and development of individual pupils. In addition, every complaint or report of bullying must be entered in the Incident Book. Housemasters and Housemistresses keep Incident Books up-to-date. The Deputy Head and Headmaster monitor all Incident Books and Punishments Books at the end of each term in order to enable patterns to be identified, both in relation to individual pupils and across the school as a whole. There will be a full review of the policy every year, see paragraph 6 below.
- 4.9 **Why incidents might not be reported**
- 4.9.1 **Victim:** There are many reasons why a pupil who has suffered bullying may be reluctant to report it. S/he may become demoralised and may say, for example:
- it is telling tales. They won't believe me because the person I am complaining about is popular and I am not, and I will become even more unpopular;
 - the things they are saying and doing are too embarrassing to discuss with an adult;
 - it is all my fault anyway for being overweight/too studious etc;
 - there are too many of them; there is nothing the staff can do;
 - it will get back to my parents and they will think less of me;
 - I will just try and toughen up and grow a thicker skin; or
 - I will lie low and not audition for a part in the school play etc.
- 4.9.2 **Witnesses:** There are also reasons why a pupil who has witnessed or learned of bullying behaviour may not want to make a report. S/he may say:
- it is "grassing" and I will become unpopular;
 - it is not my concern anyway; or
 - I don't like the victim and I would find it embarrassing to be associated with him/her.
- 4.10 **Culture:** Any of these responses would be contrary to our culture at the School. When we drive and implement this policy we encourage every pupil to understand that:

- every complaint of bullying will be taken seriously;
- members of staff will deal with a complaint correctly and effectively in accordance with their experience and the training they have received;
- there is a solution to nearly every problem of bullying;
- a pupil who complains will receive support and advice and in many cases the problem can be dealt with on a no-names basis; and
- the primary aim will be for the bullying to cease, not the punishment of the bully unless this is necessary.

5 Procedures

5.1 **Guidelines:** The following procedures are a guideline except where expressed in the terms "should" or "must". The best guide is the experience and training of the staff.

5.2 Reporting bullying complaints

5.2.1 **Pupils:** A pupil who is being bullied, or who is worried about another pupil being bullied, should complain without delay and can do so in several ways. S/he can:

- tell one of the Anti-Bullying Counsellors;
- tell his/her parents, or a Housemaster, Housemistress, or a member of staff or a responsible older pupil; alternatively;
- contact the School Counsellor or one of the Independent Listeners for advice;
- contact a School doctor or a nurse in the Sanatorium;
- contact Childline (0800 1111); or
- contact the designated Child Protection Officer of the Social Services Department for advice.

5.2.2 **Parents:** Parents who are concerned that their child is being bullied should inform their child's Housemaster/Housemistress without delay.

5.2.3 **Staff:** This policy focuses on the bullying of pupils although it is recognised that staff can be the victims of bullying. Staff members who are concerned about being bullied or harassed should refer to the School's Dignity at Work Policy which is set out in the Staff Handbook.

5.3 **Initial complaint:** A person in authority who learns of alleged bullying behaviour should:

- firstly, respond quickly and sensitively by offering advice, support and reassurance to the alleged victim, then
- report the allegation to the Housemaster/Housemistress of the victim and the alleged bully as soon as possible.

The Housemaster/Housemistress must:

- record the complaint in their Incident Book; and
- contact the other Housemasters/Housemistresses (if applicable) to agree on a strategy, and on who will take the lead.

5.4 **Assessment:** The victim's Housemaster/Housemistress will normally see the victim and (unless the case is very serious) any witnesses without delay and form an initial view of the allegation. The assessment will consider:

- the nature of the incident/s - physical? verbal? exclusionary? etc
- is it a "one-off" incident involving an individual or a group?
- is it part of a pattern of behaviour by an individual or a group?
- has physical injury been caused? Who should be informed - [Deputy Head]? Parents? The School's Designated Person for Child Protection? Social Services? The police?
- can the alleged bully be seen on a no-names basis?
- what is the likely outcome if the complaint proves to be correct?

At this stage, the possible outcomes for an incident which is not too serious include:

- there has been a misunderstanding which can be explained sympathetically to the alleged victim with advice to the alleged bully; or
- the complaint is justified in whole or in part, and further action will be needed (see Range of Action, below).

5.5 **Serious incident:** If a Housemaster/Housemistress believes that serious bullying behaviour:

- has occurred involving a pupil in his/her House; or
- has recurred after warnings have been given to the "bully" s/he must inform the Headmaster and the School's Designated Person (currently the Deputy Headmaster) The Designated Person will then:
 - interview the alleged victim, bully and any witnesses separately, in order to establish the facts of the case. S/he may decide to ask the Housemaster/Housemistress to be present; and
 - send a summary of his/her findings to the Headmaster and the relevant Housemasters/Housemistresses.

The Headmaster and/or the relevant Housemasters/Housemistresses will interview the alleged victim and bully separately:

- to confirm the facts of the case, if considered necessary; and
- to decide on the action to be taken in accordance with the Range of Action set out below

The Headmaster will notify the parents of the victim and bully giving them details of the case and the action being taken.

5.6 **Range of action:** When a complaint is upheld the range of responses will include one or more of the following:

- advice and support for the victim and, where appropriate, establishing a course of action to help the victim;
- advice and support to the bully in trying to change his/her behaviour. This may include clear instructions and a warning or final warning;
- a supervised meeting between the bully and the victim to discuss their differences and the ways in which they may be able to avoid future conflict;
- an appropriate disciplinary sanction against the bully, in accordance with the School's Behaviour Policy. In a very serious case or a case of persistent bullying, a pupil may, after a fair hearing, be required to leave the School permanently in accordance with the School's Exclusions, Removal and Review Policy;
- action to break up a "power base";

- moving either the bully or victim to another House after consultation with the pupil, his/her parents and the relevant staff;
- involving Social Services or the police;
- notifying the parents of one or both pupils about the case and the action which has been taken;
- such other action as may appear to the Headmaster to be appropriate;
- noting the outcome in the relevant House Incident Book.

5.7 **Monitoring:** The position should be monitored for as long as necessary thereafter. Action may include:

- sharing information with some or all colleagues and with pupils in the House so that they may be alert to the need to monitor certain pupils closely;
- ongoing counselling and support;
- Vigilance;
- mentioning the incident at meetings of staff;
- reviewing vulnerable individuals and areas of the School;
- liaison between Housemasters/Housemistresses, the outcome being recorded in the House Incident Books.

5.8 **Formal complaint:** If the victim or his/her parents are not satisfied with the action taken, they should be advised to make a formal complaint, according to the complaints procedure outlined in the Pupil Handbook.

6 Review

6.1 This Policy will be reviewed annually by the Headmaster, to assess its effectiveness and will be updated as necessary. In undertaking the review the Headmaster will take into account the results of the monitoring as set out at section 4.8 above, as well as any changes in legislation and/or statutory guidance and other relevant information gathered (such as through a bullying survey).

Authorised by	Resolution of The Board of Governors
Date	20 January 2010

Effective date of the policy	20 January 2010
Circulation	On the School's website Governors / teaching staff / all staff / parents / pupils on request
Status	Complies with requirements of schedule, paragraph 3(2)(a) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003 and Standard 2 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools

