



### Aims

The school aims to develop and maintain a climate of trust and openness. It seeks to make the unacceptable nature of bullying and its consequences clear to all involved, whether they are pupils, parents or staff. All members of the school community should respect each other and their individuality. This policy applies inside school, on school visits and residential trips, and when travelling to and from school.

### Warwickshire's *Rachel's Anti-Bullying Guide* (2013)

The school adopts *Rachel's Anti-Bullying Guide* (*Rachel's Guide*) as the basis for its Anti-Bullying Policy. Several sections of this are quoted below - those which we expect to be most relevant to the school. However, any perceived disparity between *Rachel's Guide* and the Policy due to our quoting only the relevant parts is not intended to depart from *Rachel's Guide* and if in doubt *Rachel's Guide* is to be applied.

### Definitions

*Rachel's Guide* begins the section on definitions of bullying thus:

"Young people frequently describe bullying as a subjective experience - it is about how someone feels, not about what is actually done to them. However, it can be hard to put effective anti-bullying procedures in place if we rely completely on subjective opinions. Therefore, in Warwickshire, we have combined the subjective definition with the more objective definitions that are widely used."

It goes on to give Warwickshire's definition, formulated following work with children and young people in Warwickshire:

*"When a person's or group of people's behaviour, over a period of time, leaves someone feeling one or more of the following:*

- *physically and/or mentally hurt or worried*
- *unsafe and/or frightened*
- *unable to do well and achieve*
- *'badly different', alone, unimportant and/or unvalued*
- *unable to see a happy and exciting future for yourself*

*it could be bullying. When a person (or group of people) has been made aware of the effects of their behaviour on another person, and they continue to behave in the same manner, this is bullying.*

If someone feels like this, or if they think someone they know feels like this, it should be investigated. This should happen straight away as it can take a long time to build up courage to tell. However, lots of things can leave us feeling bad: sometimes it depends on the situation we

are in, and it is not always bullying – so we think the following definition, adapted from one written by the Anti-bullying Alliance, is also useful:

*Bullying is any behaviour by an individual or group that:*

- *is meant to hurt – the person or people doing the bullying know what they are doing and mean to do it*
- *happens more than once – there will be a pattern of behaviour, not just a ‘one-off’ incident*
- *involves an imbalance of power – the person being bullied will usually find it very hard to defend themselves.*

*It can be:*

- *physical, eg kicking, hitting, taking and damaging belongings*
- *verbal, eg name calling, taunting, threats, offensive remarks*
- *relational, eg spreading nasty stories, gossiping, excluding from social groups*
- *cyber, eg texts, emails, picture/video clip bullying, Instant Messaging (IM)*

Where individuals or groups target different people, this should be seen as a pattern of bullying behaviour and treated as such...”

“...We believe that no one deserves to be bullied, regardless of their ethnicity, faith, gender, age, ability, sexuality, social background or lifestyle choices. We also believe that children and young people who are involved in bullying others also need support.”

We also endorse the section in *Rachel’s Guide* on prejudice-driven bullying:

“People can have prejudices about all sorts of things; for example size, family background, social class and lifestyle choices including fashion and musical taste. However, the three main types of prejudice-driven bullying are :

- racist bullying – bullying someone because of their ethnic background, nationality, religion or skin colour
- sexist and homophobic bullying – bullying someone because of their gender or sexual orientation
- disablist bullying – bullying someone because they are disabled and/or have special educational needs.

Anyone can be targeted due to prejudice – it is about perception, not fact. Prejudice-driven bullying can destroy a young person’s sense of individual and cultural identity.”

## **Falling out or bullying?**

As *Rachel’s Guide* says, “Sometimes it can be hard to distinguish between bullying and the normal ‘ups and downs’ of peer relationships.” Conflict or difficulties can arise as a result of many things: personal differences between individual students or groups of students; as a result of problems from outside school becoming interwoven with school life; or from the breakdown of relationships between individuals or groups of friends. When considering the behaviour of young people, it is sometimes helpful to consider their actions as being on a continuum – with lower level “normal” peer conflict at one end of the spectrum and more extreme and persistent behaviours at the other.

*Rachel’s Guide* provides the following checklists which may help when deciding where on the spectrum any particular action falls. As the *Guide* says, “Please note these are only designed to help, they do not provide a definite answer”.

**'Normal' Peer Conflict**

...is likely to involve ....

Equal power  
Friends  
No pattern of negative actions  
No premeditation to upset or harm  
Sincere remorse afterwards  
Interested in repairing the relationship  
Alternate roles, not one-sided  
Stay together after the incident

**Bullying**

...is likely to involve....

Power imbalance  
No real friendship  
Targets are alone without peer support  
Pattern of repeated negative actions  
Actions are purposeful  
Gain control, power and items  
Person who bullies shifts the blame  
No sincere remorse  
Not interested in repairing relationship  
One-sided  
Young people separate after the incident"

**Positive action taken to minimise incidence of bullying in school**

The school actively promotes a shared vision about bullying to ensure that the whole community knows how to respond fairly and consistently when bullying occurs. We try to minimise the incidence of bullying in school through:

- clear emphasis on the value of strong pastoral leadership and tutor engagement
- tutor groupings which are organised vertically to promote positive role modelling and mentoring
- use of the curriculum, in particular PSHE and Citizenship, but also in other areas such as English, Drama, Geography, History, PE and RE
- SMSC and team building – within tutor period, across year groups, on school trips and wherever opportunities arise
- rewards for good citizenship
- extra-curricular activities including sport and music
- raising awareness using themed assemblies, displays and teacher training.

**Procedures in the event of bullying being reported**

Bullying is too important to ignore. Bullying can be reported to any member of staff or to a senior student - face to face, by written note or email, or with the support of a friend. Reports of bullying will always be accepted. It is very important that allegations of bullying are communicated to those who need to be made aware – eg Ch@ Mentor, member of the Student Leadership Team, tutor, Head of House/6<sup>th</sup> Form (or indeed any member of staff such as the SENCO or counsellor) and parents. This applies even where an incident has been dealt with effectively.

The person reporting the bullying should be encouraged to talk the incident through and then to write a report of the incident including their feelings at the time. Any onlookers should also be encouraged to write a report. The report should include date/s and time/s.

If the incident has been reported to a senior student, she must pass on the information to the tutor or Head of House promptly. A member of staff other than the Head of House may deal with the incident themselves or they may feel that is more appropriate to pass on the information directly to the Head of House. In any event, the Head of House should be informed (eg by email or via SIMS Behaviour Manager) to assess the overall picture.

At the discretion of the staff member concerned, the alleged bully will be approached and asked to describe the incident/s and also write a report in the same way as the victim has already done. The Head of House (or other member of staff) will decide on the most appropriate course of action, including whether or not the incident should be treated as bullying. This may include contacting parents.

Records will be kept at each stage, including the use of Behaviour Manager and after a short period of time, not exceeding two weeks, the matter will be followed up to assess the success of the action taken. At any point the victim can report back to the member of staff if matters have not improved or have worsened.

If the incident is being treated as bullying, and the issue is not resolved by the above actions, the SLT link and/or Assistant Headteacher (Progress and Well-being) will be informed and a decision taken upon the best course of action. This would normally involve interviewing the bully and the victim separately (with the option of bringing the parties together provided the victim agrees). Parents will be kept fully informed and may wish to come into school to help resolve the matter. A contract of behaviour may be required with a timescale for monitoring and a set review date. An IEP (Individual Education Plan) or PSP (Pastoral Support Programme) may be produced by the SENCO as part of this process. The Headteacher will be briefed fully by the Assistant Headteacher at each stage of the process and may wish to meet with or write to parents directly.

For very serious or persistent bullying, outside agencies may be involved. This could include one or more of the following: police, educational psychologist, social workers, and other educational workers. In this situation, a case conference would be arranged with the outside agency, parents and students. Parents may be asked to contribute to the cost of involving an outside agency.

## **Online Bullying and Social Networking Awareness**

As stated previously, bullying can take place by electronic means, using texts, emails, web pages and pictures. Whilst *Rachel's Guide* refers specifically to Instant Messaging, the school interprets this to cover all forms of social media. The school regards this as a serious issue as it can be extremely hurtful for the victim, not least because they can be accessed in the safety of their own home. There is a suite of ICT policies in place including an *Acceptable Use Policy (Students)* and an *E-Safety Policy* which contain very clear guidelines for responsible use of all electronic devices and the internet.

### *Online bullying in school*

The school views any online bullying involving verbal abuse via text, social networking sites, emails etc which takes place in school as a violation of the *Anti-Bullying Policy*. Any such violation would be viewed with the same degree of seriousness as if it were in person. Pupils should feel comfortable in approaching any member of staff with online bullying issues that impact upon their school life and are aware of who they can report incidents to.

### *Online bullying in the home*

This is often a sensitive and difficult issue for schools to deal with. In reality, online bullying usually occurs in the home and parents are best placed to monitor correct use of the internet, support the victim and take the necessary steps to address the issue. When tensions spill over into the school environment, pastoral staff will be able to mediate between girls, inform parents if appropriate and respond proportionately according to the circumstances. The school notes that:

- sometimes girls can be naïve about the types of details they share via emails, text, facebook or other social media eg personal details or photographs
- tensions can occur when friendships are changing or breaking down. These can have significant impacts upon school life, with implications for academic progress and wider friendship networks.

#### *Online safety – advice communicated to girls*

- Don't share your password.
- Be wary of the content of your profile. Social networking is a great way to share photos and other media but keep in mind that whatever content is on your profile can be printed and shared via the internet – including photos, personal information and friendship lists. Never share anything electronically or put anything online that you wouldn't want your grandmother/ Headteacher/ neighbour to see.
- Inappropriate images or abusive comments/messages should be reported directly to the social networking sites and your parents.

#### *Online safety - advice communicated to parents/carers*

- Keep family computers in open, social spaces.
- Monitor the amount of time your daughter spends on the internet – including on any personal digital devices.
- Be aware of changes in your daughter's behaviour, habits or diet.
- Discuss regularly and openly with your daughter.
- The school newsletters inform parents of developments and useful information in the media and signposts any cyber-safety events in the locality.

#### *Online code of conduct*

- Don't type anything that you wouldn't say to a person face to face, or, as noted above, that you wouldn't want your grandmother/ Headteacher/ neighbour to see.
- Be aware that written text, viewed in isolation, can be misinterpreted or misunderstood.
- If you do receive abuse, don't retaliate.
- Report any abuse immediately to the social networking site, your parents and a member of staff if appropriate.

The online bullying section of the *Anti-Bullying Policy* was designed in consultation with the Student Council under the supervision of the Student Leadership Team.

## **Bullying outside school**

As a school we expect all pupils to behave off-site as they would do in school (including all school excursions, residential trips and work experience placements) – whether travelling to and from school or at any other time. They are ambassadors for the school and should be mindful of upholding our excellent reputation within the local community and beyond. This is particularly important when they are wearing school uniform.

The Education and Inspectors Act (2006) gave schools new powers to “regulate” the behaviour of children outside school “to such an extent as is reasonable”. Schools have a choice to use these powers, not a duty. The government suggests a range of factors to be taken into account when determining what, if any, action is to be taken in regard to behaviour of pupils outside school. These include the severity of the misbehaviour, the extent to which the reputation of the school has been affected, whether there are repercussions for the orderly running of the school, and/or whether they might pose a threat to another pupil or member of staff.

Teachers are not obliged to intervene outside school; their duty of care only applies on the premises or when pupils are under direct supervision (eg school trips and visits). Where schools become aware of inappropriate behaviour off-site they can only impose sanctions when the pupil or pupils are on the school site, or under the lawful control or charge of a member of staff. Any complaints from the public

regarding pupil behaviour will only be acted on after proper investigation. The school keeps a copy of the full guidance for reference as required.

### **Complaints concerning the handling of a bullying incident**

In the event of parental complaint the tutor should be contacted in the first instance, and the procedures outlined in the school *Complaints Policy* can be activated. If the parent is still not satisfied, the Head and ultimately the Chair of Governors should be contacted.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

This policy should be monitored regularly by those using it.

*Policy reviewed July 2017*  
*To be reviewed July 2018*