

# **VALENTINES HIGH SCHOOL**

## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

**May 2019**



Last reviewed May 2019 for approval at the main Governing Body Meeting July 2019  
To be reviewed next by May 2020.

## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

### **1 AIMS**

The aims of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy are as follows:

- to prevent bullying from developing at Valentines
- to react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way
- to safeguard the pupil who has experienced bullying and to provide support for the pupil
- to apply disciplinary sanctions to the pupil causing the bullying and ensure that they learn from the experience
- to identify bullies and seek to stop their bullying activities
- to demonstrate to pupils that bullying is an unacceptable activity at Valentines.

### **2 GENERAL**

Bullying is deliberate hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. Bullying is an offence against individuals and against the school community and any incidents of bullying in Valentines High School will be dealt with immediately.

#### **Bullying can take many forms, but the main types are:**

- physical - hitting, kicking, taking belongings, deliberately frightening another pupil with the intention of hurting him/her
- verbal - name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks, threatening to assault another pupil
- indirect - spreading nasty stories about someone, turning other pupils against a particular pupil, spreading hurtful lies or rumours about another pupil. Isolating a particular pupil from his/her peers
- making racist and prejudiced comments about others appearance, accent or background
- demanding or taking money from another pupil
- borrowing or changing money without returning its full value
- electronic bullying - sending abusive/threatening emails, text messages and offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet

#### **Bullying by race, gender, sexual orientation or disability**

In **racist bullying**, a child is targeted for representing a group, and the attacking individual sends a message to that group. Racist bullying is therefore likely to hurt not only the victim, but also other pupils from the same group, and their families.

Incidents can include:

- racist jokes and offensive mimicry
- wearing of provocative badges or insignia
- bringing racist leaflets, comics or magazines
- inciting others to behave in a racist way
- racist graffiti or other written insults – even against food, music, dress or customs
- where racist bullying occurs, Heads of House should fill in a race incident form

**Sexual bullying** impacts on both genders. Boys are also victims- of girls and other boys. Sexual bullying can also be related to sexual orientation. Pupils do not necessarily have to be lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or transgender to experience such bullying. Just being different can be enough. Sexual bullying is characterised by:

- abusive name calling
- looks and comments about appearance, attractiveness, emerging puberty
- inappropriate and uninvited touching
- sexual innuendoes and propositions, (often referred to as “banter”)

- pornographic material, graffiti with sexual content
- coercion or threats to engage in 'sexting' or the sending of nude photographs.
- in its most extreme form, sexual assault or rape

### **Special Educational Needs Pupils**

Pupils with Special Educational Needs or disabilities may not be able to articulate experiences as well as other children. They are often at greater risk of being bullied, both directly and indirectly, usually about their specific difficulties or disabilities.

### **Risks of bullying to the victims**

Victims may be reluctant to attend school and are often absent. They may be more anxious and insecure than others, having fewer friends and often feeling unhappy and lonely. This unhappiness can spoil a victim's experience of school. It can lead to the victim truanting from school or changing schools. Victims can suffer from low self-esteem and negative self-image, looking upon themselves as failures-feeling stupid, ashamed and unattractive.

Victims may present a variety of symptoms to health professionals, including fits, faints, vomiting, limb pains, hyperventilation, visual symptoms, headaches, stomach aches, bed wetting, sleeping difficulties and sadness.

Being bullied may lead to depression or in most serious cases, attempted suicide. It may lead to anxiety, depression, loneliness and lack of trust in adult life.

### **3 IDENTIFYING BULLIES AND BULLYING ACTIVITIES**

Pupils should report bullies and bullying activities to their Head of House, Form Tutor, Teaching Staff or to Support staff. As getting a victim to report a particular bullying offence is likely to be the biggest problem encountered, all staff should be vigilant regarding possible bullying and should take the initiative if bullying is suspected.

Experience has shown that pupils are likely to FEAR that reporting bullying is likely to result both in the bully finding out and thus in an increased frequency and severity of the bullying, and that staff action on the bullying will be incomplete and ineffective.

Staff must respect these fears, address them honestly and ensure that they are not realised. Approaches can be made on individual, group or year levels. All members of staff have a role to play in preventing and combating bullying. They should:

- make themselves fully aware of the Anti-bullying policy
- deal firmly with any incidents of bullying that occur in the classroom
- liaise with the relevant Head of House
- keep careful record of the incident and the action that is taken and provide a copy of this for the relevant Head of House

### **Heads of HOUSE are responsible for:**

- investigating and monitoring incidents of bullying
- liaising with staff and with the parents
- keeping detailed and accurate records of incidents and meetings
- promoting the anti-bullying policy during assemblies and collective worship

### **Five key points:**

- never ignore suspected bullying
- don't make premature assumptions

- listen carefully to all accounts – several pupils saying the same does not necessarily mean they are telling the truth
- adopt a problem-solving approach which moves pupils on from justifying themselves
- follow up repeatedly, checking that bullying has not resumed

Some claims of bullying may turn out to be false or exaggerated. All claims of bullying should be treated seriously and not dismissed without further enquiries being made.

### **3.1 Individual approaches**

On an individual level, suspected victims of bullying should be approached discreetly and in an inconspicuous 1:1 situation where suspicions will not be aroused in other pupils. Once in a private situation, the pupil should be told that staff suspect s/he is being bullied and that information is needed before action can be taken; that the information can be given then or later, in verbal or written form, in school time or before/after school, face-to-face or by note, telephone or letter; that, whatever the pupil decides to do, s/he should tell a parent/guardian about the bullying.

### **3.2 Group Approaches**

General "bullying" issues can be discussed in form time or can be made the subject of PSHE lessons or Assemblies. This may result in information being given to staff. A Bullying Survey can also be considered (see below). The use of the SHARP online reporting system is to be encouraged for students from Year **7-13**, in year group assemblies. The victims of bullying themselves can choose to use this, or friends that are concerned of ongoing situations may choose to inform staff using this system as it provides anonymity.

### **3.3 House Approaches**

If it is suspected that bullying is a problem in a particular year group, a bullying survey can be carried out. Such a survey should only be carried out very infrequently, and at a time when the House is present (e.g. a House Assembly) and pupils do not suspect it. The presence of the bully/bullies in the area should be carefully considered. The survey should use standardised forms and should only be carried out in conditions of complete anonymity by a Head of House or member of the Leadership group.

## **4 INVOLVING PARENTS**

### **4.1 Parental Support**

We recognise that the parental support is a key to the success in anti-bullying initiatives. Therefore the school would:

- regularly consult and communicate with parents
- provide information about the nature and effect of bullying
- advise parents of possible consequences of their children bringing valuable items to school

### **4.2 Parents reporting bullying**

The first point of contact for parents is likely to be the school office. They would normally refer the parent to Head of House or a member of the leadership group. Good practice includes:

- recognising that the parent may be upset
- keeping an open mind-bullying can be difficult to detect, so lack of staff awareness does not mean no bullying occurs
- remaining calm and understanding
- making clear that the school does care and that something will be done
- explaining the school policy, making sure procedures are followed
- ask for details and record the information
- make a further appointment to explain actions and find out if it has stopped

- follow up to ensure that appropriate action has been taken and that school policy has been implemented
- maintain communication until the situation is resolved

## **5 ACTION TO COMBAT BULLYING PREVENTATIVE APPROACHES**

**The school will take the following steps to prevent and reduce bullying:**

### **5.1 Use Curriculum to:**

- explore issues of diversity and difference- discussing what school and the society can do to end discrimination
- explore sexism, and sexual bullying in order to recognise and challenge sexual content within verbal abuse
- explore pupils' understanding of their use of homophobic language-they may not understand the impact
- challenge homophobic language
- use single-sex groupings to explore sensitive issues
- avoid undue attention to differences between SEN pupils and others
- teach pupils how to manage relationships constructively and resolve conflict
- increase understanding for victims, and help build an anti-bullying ethos

### **5.2 Develop Positive Pupil attitudes:**

- encourage pupils not to suffer in silence
- encourage pupils to help the victim directly, tell the bully to stop, or fetch an adult
- provide assertiveness training/counselling for victims
- listen carefully to pupils and provide opportunities for them to express their views and opinions
- peer mentoring through the House system
- use peer mediation/restorative conversations to resolve conflict
- encourage pupils to report incidents of bullying on the SHARP system – this can be done anonymously.

### **5.3 Staff training**

- provide training to enable teaching and non-teaching staff to identify and deal with incidents of bullying
- provide training for lunchtime supervisors to enable them to identify and help pupils at risk

### **5.4 Improve the school environment and its use**

- identify high risk areas and ensure that these are patrolled regularly
- provide clear guidelines for managing pupil behaviour during breaks and lunchtimes
- provide effective supervision and investigate problems promptly
- provide efficient means of communication between supervisors and members of the leadership group
- provide areas for specific activities- a ball games area, seating areas
- seek to develop meaningful pupil activities for lunchtime

## **RESPONSE TO AN INCIDENT**

Where pupils do not respond to the above mentioned preventative steps to combat bullying, the school will take tougher action to deal with persistent and violent bullying. All racist incidents will be recorded on the Racial Incident Report Forms.

Sanctions have three main purposes, namely to:

1. Impress on the perpetrator that what he/she has done is unacceptable.

2. Deter him/her from repeating that behaviour.
3. Signal to other pupils that the behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from doing it.

**Sanctions might include:**

- removal from the group (in class)
- withdrawal of break and lunchtime privileges
- detention
- withholding participation in any school trip or sports events that are not essential part of the curriculum
- isolation
- sending a pupil for a short term stay at Redbridge Alternative Provision (RAP) for a period of up to 15 days
- fixed period exclusion

**The following procedure would be used in dealing with persistent bullying:**

**Stage 1:**     **A FORMAL WARNING** will be delivered to the bully by the Leadership Group/ member of the House teacher and recorded on the Bully register. A copy of this formal warning will be placed on the pupil's record and Parents informed. Any possible special educational needs of the bully assessed or reviewed and, if appropriate, provision made/individual work with New Rush Hall School Outreach Service worker offered. Bullies will be made aware of the consequences of their behaviour for their future lives.

At the end of the academic year, a pupil may come off the Bullying Register should no further incidents of bullying take place.

**Stage 2:**     **EXCLUSION** from school for a period of time. Parents, governors and school community informed. At the end of exclusion, pupil to attend interview with the Headteacher, accompanied by parent. Placed on report for 2 weeks, review at end. Review of any SEN, response/provision where appropriate.

**Stage 3:**     **LONGER PERIOD OF EXCLUSION** or **PERMANENT EXCLUSION** from school. Parents, governors and school community informed. If the pupil is re-admitted at the end of a period of exclusion, pupil to attend interview with the Headteacher, accompanied by parent. Placed on report for 6 weeks, review at end. Review of any SEN, response/provision where appropriate. **A bully on Stage 3 who re-offends will be permanently excluded.**

Any bullying offence involving a crime (eg demands for money) will be reported to the Police. Where serious violence is involved, the Headteacher will normally permanently exclude a pupil.

Any retaliation by a bully or person appointed by the bully against any other pupil whom the bully suspects of having furnished information which has led to his/her punishment, will result in an immediate exclusion from School of the bully pending consideration of permanent exclusion.

The School will always take action where there are sufficient grounds for believing any pupil is bullying any other pupil.