

RAMILLIES HALL SCHOOL AND NURSERY



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

At Ramillies Hall School and Nursery, we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, in line with the duty placed on us by Sections 157 and 175 of the Education Act, 2002. We expect and require all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We strongly believe that all children have the right to feel safe and to be protected from physical, sexual or emotional abuse and neglect.

This Policy will be on the school website and staff intranet. If you would like a copy, please ask at the Office. It will be referred to in assemblies and on other occasions when bullying is discussed or talked about, such as in English, Community, Drama, ICT (eSafety lessons) and other lessons. In addition, the Anti-Bullying Statement will be displayed on School notice boards.

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Bullying is not acceptable at Ramillies, and we all need to work together to make sure that our School is free from bullying and bullies.

A message to pupils and parents:

- **To Pupils** - If you are being bullied, or you know that someone else is, please tell a member of staff straight away. This will not make things worse for you. If you do not tell, the bully can't be stopped, and may bully others too.
- **To Parents** - If you think your child is being bullied, or they tell you they are, you must let us know straight away. Please reassure your child that we will deal with the matter sensibly but firmly. Parents will be told of any serious incident concerning their child, either as victim or bully, and we look to parents for their support in dealing with bullying. Outside School, we look to parents to help prevent bullying by keeping track of their children's whereabouts, associates and use of communications technology.

2. INTRODUCTION

Pupils learn best in a safe and calm environment that is free from disruption and in which education is the primary focus. At Ramillies, we take bullying seriously, whether or not it involves physical violence, it can cause long-term psychological damage and even lead to suicide. We consider it important to make children understand that their actions may have consequences such as these, and we expect parents to be fully supportive of the School in this matter.

This Policy has been framed, and is to be implemented and reviewed, with due regard to Government guidance, in particular the DfE publication "Preventing and Tackling Bullying", October 2014; to the Human Rights Act 1998; the Independent School Standard Regulation 2010; the Children Act 1989; the Harassment Act 1997; the Malicious Communications Act 1988; the Communications Act 2003; the Public Order Act 1986; and to the Equality Act 2010.

3. AIMS OF THIS POLICY

- To ensure that at Ramillies, learning and leisure activities take place in a caring, protected and disciplined environment.
- To make it clear to all staff, pupils and parents that bullying is unacceptable.
- To create an atmosphere in which children who are being bullied, or those who are aware of the situation, will feel that:

- They can talk to an adult who will be a sensitive listener.
- They will be taken seriously.
- Appropriate action will be taken promptly.
- To ensure that staff support and advise both the child who is being bullied and the bully.

4. DEFINITION OF BULLYING

'Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case.'

Preventing and Tackling Bullying, Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies (October 2014).

Although bullying is not in itself a criminal offence, there are criminal laws which may apply, for example the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Public Order Act 1986, the Malicious Communications Act 1988 and the Communications Act 2003.

Bullying can have serious short- and long-term effects on the victim, including psychological harm, self-harm or bullying of others. The fear instilled by the bully can affect the victim for a very long time. Serious physical bullying may cause short-term or even long-term physical injury or scars.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional - ignoring, excluding, tormenting, spreading rumours, sending unkind or threatening notes or texts
- Verbal - name-calling, teasing
- Physical - hitting, kicking, hiding or taking belongings, deliberately damaging other people's work or possessions.
- Cyber-bullying – using social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and emails. Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

5. PROCEDURES (TAKING ACTION AGAINST BULLYING)

5.1. Signs of Bullying

Possible signs of bullying include:

- Seeking out the company of older children.
- Pretending to be ill.
- Being withdrawn, or wanting to be alone.
- Being unwilling to come to school.
- Behaving differently from usual.

5.2. Preventing Bullying - our strategy

There are four distinct strands to our anti-bullying strategy:

- Raising awareness in pupils, staff and parents about what bullying is, the effects of bullying, that bullying is not tolerated in our school and what our procedures are should anyone suspect any cases of bullying
- Promoting positive values of respect for staff and pupils
- Having a clear procedure to follow in any cases of bullying
- Monitoring any cases of bullying or behavioural incidents that may indicate an emerging pattern that could be defined as bullying.

Awareness:

We aim to raise awareness through a number of methods, including but not limited to:

- Posters around school
- Assemblies and Community assemblies
- Community lessons
- Visiting speakers
- One-to-one off-loading sessions
- TA support for pupils with ASC
- Discussing bullying in Circle Time in the Juniors
- Using social stories and comic strips to help pupils with Autistic Spectrum Conditions to understand how social situations and their responses may be perceived by others

Promoting Positive Behaviours

It is the ethos of our school that we promote the values of respect for staff, pupils, parents and visitors to our school. This strand of our strategy runs alongside the awareness strand and uses many of the same methods.

Staff play a big role in promoting positive behaviours. All Staff are expected to:

- Set an example in the way that they interact with, and speak about, pupils, colleagues, parents and visitors. Pupils will pick up on tone of voice, sarcastic comments, etc. and staff must be mindful of this and at all times speak and act in a professional manner.
- Work alongside pupils with social difficulties, such as ADHD and ASC pupils. All staff are trained to use social stories, comic strips and one-to-one sessions to help those pupils to better understand how they should interact with others and how their words and actions may be perceived by others. We also run Social Studies lessons for some pupils as required, as well as employing TAs, SALT and ASC specialists to work with individuals and small groups where this is identified as a need within the pupil's Statement of Special Needs or EHCP.
- Promote the values of respect for staff and other pupils, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others.
- Be aware of pupils who may be vulnerable to bullying due to issues with gender or sexual orientation, physical appearance or differences, religion, culture, SEND, family background, etc. Unstructured times, such as break times, before and after-school may present greater opportunities for a bully to act – staff should be vigilant to any suspicious behaviour, particularly at these times. Staff should be vigilant at all times, particularly when lessons are not taking place, and identifying issues which might provoke conflict between individuals or groups of pupils.
- Reinforce an anti-bullying approach in other areas of the curriculum, e.g. History, English
- Enforce the school rules about pupils not having access to their mobile phones during the school day and making only appropriate use of ICT equipment, including their own mobile devices, such as laptops and tablets/iPads.
- Be aware of the use of social media, on-line gaming, chat rooms and other opportunities for cyber bullying, including being aware of the potential for mobile devices (phones, tablets/iPads, handheld games consoles, etc.) to be used for cyber

bullying, including, but not limited to, messaging (text and multi-media), photo or video sharing, file sharing, social media, etc.

Reference should also be made to our Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy which sets out how we reward good behaviour and the sanctions that may be used when a pupil's behaviour falls below expectations.

Dealing with Incidents of Bullying

If an incident of bullying is witnessed, reported or suspected, the member of staff must:

- Listen carefully and be supportive, if children or parents report that bullying is taking place.
- Act without delay if they suspect that bullying is taking place, or if a child or parent approaches them about bullying.
- Recognise that a child accused or suspected of bullying may need support and advice, just as much as the victim, and be prepared to give this.
- Use an Incident Report Form to report the issue to the Principal (or their nominated staff member in their absence).
- Where a child is in immediate danger of being harmed staff must take immediate action to either remove the child from harm, or the harm from the child. Reference should be made to the Physical Contact and Restraint Policy, the Safeguarding Policy and the Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy.

Bullying Outside School

This may involve Ramillies pupils, those from other schools, or a combination of both, and it may take place on the way to and from school, or while pupils are at home or out with their friends. Although the School cannot prevent such bullying, where it is reported to School staff it will be investigated and action taken. The School will:

- Encourage pupils to report what is happening
- Ensure that pupils are advised on strategies they can adopt to avoid or handle bullying outside School.
- Inform parents and if appropriate, involve outside agencies such as the police, the transport authorities or staff of other schools.

Staff on school trips, residential or day, should be aware that their responsibilities under this policy apply as if they were in school. They should also consider that opportunities for bullying may be greater during a trip with potentially more unstructured time when pupils are not being actively directed by staff, e.g. during travel, or in the case of overnight stays, in dormitories. Similarly, there is an increased risk of mobile devices being used to cyber bully others whilst on trips.

Pupils are expected to maintain the same high standards of behaviour out of school as in it, especially when in school uniform or representing the school. Reference should be made to the Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy.

Actions Taken by the Principal

The Principal will then investigate the report, claim or suspicion, whilst recognising that a child accused or suspected of bullying may need support and advice, just as much as the victim, and being prepared to give this.

Action against bullying will be taken in accordance with the School's disciplinary procedure. Persistent or severe bullying may lead to suspension or exclusion.

The issue should be discussed with the parents of all the pupils involved. Parents will be advised promptly if their child is either a victim or a perpetrator of persistent or severe bullying. Parents will always be informed in the event of any of the following interventions:

- It is recognised that if bullying behaviour is such that it may constitute a criminal offence, it may be necessary to involve the police.
- If there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, under Safeguarding Children legislation the School staff have a duty to report their concerns to their local authority children's social care department.
- The School may consider that in a particular case it would be appropriate and helpful to draw on external services to support a child who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to the bullying.

Recording and Monitoring

The incident and all consequential actions or decisions must be logged.

Written details of incidents of bullying will be recorded in individual pupils' files, and a copy will be kept in a central file so that patterns of bullying can be identified.

The Principals will be responsible for maintaining and monitoring the Central Behaviour Logs. Should any patterns of behaviour be identified, e.g. repeated instances of the same pupil being aggressive to a series of individuals, the Principals will investigate and take appropriate action as above. Reference should be made to the Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy with regard to recording and monitoring of behaviour and incidents in school.

Training

Staff will receive training in best practice at least once every three years, to raise awareness and help them to take action to reduce the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely.

6. POLICY REVIEW

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored on a day-to-day basis by the Principals. It will be reviewed annually, with the Senior and Middle Management Teams.

In addition, we will regularly evaluate and update our policy on acceptable use of computers to take account of developments in technology.

Written By	Colin Richards and Neil Mather
Updated	March 2016
To be Reviewed	March 2017