



# **Royal Free Hospital Children's School**

## **Anti-bullying Policy**

### **June 2024**

#### **CONTENTS**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

**Statement of intent**

**Objectives**

#### **DEFINITION**

**Why is it important to respond to bullying?**

#### **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS**

#### **PREVENTION**

**Ethos**

**Whole school approach**

**Roles and responsibilities**

- **Governing Body**
- **Headteacher**
- **School staff**
- **Parents/carers**
- **Pupils**

**Curriculum**

#### **INTERVENTION**

**Procedures to follow when bullying is reported**

**Restorative practice**

#### **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

#### **RESOURCES**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Statement of Intent**

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly, respectful and safe environment for all pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying and prejudice-based language of any kind, involving pupils, adults towards pupils, staff or parents are unacceptable and will not be tolerated at our school. There are clear strategies for dealing with those who bully. If bullying does occur, all pupils should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Bullying can cause distress and harm; an unresolved single frightening incident may cast a shadow over a child's life.

Preventing and tackling bullying is part of our work to support pupils' social and emotional development and to be recognised as a healthy school.

### **Objectives**

To ensure that all governors, teaching and non-teaching staff

- Have an understanding of what constitutes bullying
- Know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported

To ensure that all pupils and parents/carers

- Know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises
- Are assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported
- Know that bullying is not tolerated
- Encourage pupils to feel secure enough to communicate their worries or distress to adults
- Help those who bully to understand that what they have done is wrong. (Bullies do not necessarily conform to a stereotype.)
- Teach victims ways of avoiding and dealing with bullies. (Victims are often those who are vulnerable because they are perceived as easy to agitate and, in a state of extreme anxiety, can be treated as figures of fun. Members of minority groups can also be exposed to bullying based on prejudice related to race, sex, class and disability.)

## **DEFINITION**

Bullying is a deliberate act done to cause distress solely to give a feeling of power, status or other gratification to the bully. Bullying can take many forms and can be short term or continue over years. It can take the form of direct physical or verbal bullying or indirect attack of a more subtle nature. It can occur between children, and between adults and pupils. It generally falls into one or a combination of the following categories

Bullying can be:

- Direct physical bullying (pushing, hitting, punching, kicking or any form of violence).
- Direct verbal bullying (using language in a derogatory or offensive manner, such as name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing, yelling abuse at another, insulting someone, using verbal threats, offensive mimicry of accent and/or pretending not to understand what is said or using discriminatory language)
- Indirect bullying, also known as social bullying or relational bullying (spreading rumours, social exclusion, ostracism and/or rejection by peer group, disclosing another's secrets to a third party, graffiti, interference with personal property, extortion etc.)

- Cyberbullying – bullying using electronic media, such as email and texts, chat rooms, blogs and social networking sites, sharing derogatory videos and photos via mobile phones (see 'e' safety policy)
- Sexual Harassment or Violence and/or Coercion

People can be bullied because they are different or are perceived to be different and it is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups or because of characteristics or features about which the person under attack can do nothing.

Bullying can relate to

- Race, religion, culture or belief (or no belief)
- Special educational needs and disabilities
- Mental Health
- Young carers
- Looked after children
- Background
- Gender
- Appearance and size
- Ability and attainment
- Sexist or sexual bullying (bullying based on a person's sexuality)
- Homophobic bullying (a dislike or fear of someone who is or is perceived to be lesbian, gay or bisexual)
- Transphobic bullying (a dislike or fear of someone who is or is perceived to have changed their gender from male to female or female to male or someone who is difficult to categorise as female or male)

Other forms may exist not included in this list.

In addition to children bullying each other, bullying in schools can take place between adults and pupils and between adults. (see Staff Code of Conduct policy)

### **Why is it important to respond to bullying?**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. We have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

We are aware that young people who attend RFHCS may have mental health needs, special educational needs such as autism or have had adverse experiences with their families, communities or previous schools, including bullying. It is therefore paramount that incidents of bullying are responded to sensitively and in a timely manner.

We understand that all behaviour is communication and are curious about the needs that may contribute to behaviours we observe. Bullying behaviours are often a result of young people's own difficulties. This understanding informs how we intervene so that young people who are bullying can learn different ways of relating to peers.

### **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS**

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

- Is frightened of walking to/from school and/or does not want to go on public transport
- Is unwilling to talk about their day
- Changes their usual routine
- Wants to remain with adults and/or begins to isolate themselves and/or truant
- Has erratic attendance
- Becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Begins to deteriorate in school work
- Has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children
- Is frightened to say what is wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous or jumpy when a cyber message is received

Parents/carers should also be aware of the following signs.

If their child

- Begs to be driven to school
- Is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning and has spurious illnesses
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- Is bullying siblings
- Stops eating
- Waking at night

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and be investigated.

If your child is being bullied

- Take time to listen to your child and stay calm
- Calmly talk with your child
- Explain to them that bullying is unacceptable and that no one should have to put up with it. Promise to do all you can to stop it.
- Write down what your child has said. If it involves cyberbullying, keep any evidence of emails and texts
- Encourage your child to talk to their teacher or someone at the school
- Never intervene with other children or children's parents, but let the school know.

- Contact school as soon as possible to let them know your concerns. The school will take any incident of bullying extremely seriously and will deal with it quickly to find out why it has happened and to prevent it happening again
- Staff may not know about the bullying and will need to know what has happened and will discuss with parents and carers action to be taken
- Staff will update parents and carers about what they are doing to resolve the issue and when it has been resolved
- If you are not satisfied with the response you get and any action taken, you should contact the Headteacher with your concerns.
- If you remain dissatisfied, you should follow the school's complaints procedure, as detailed in the school prospectus. There is a leaflet on Camden Council's website giving advice about how to complain about a school service: <http://www.camden.gov.uk/schoolcomplaintsleaflet>
- Call or go on the website of one of the organisations dedicated to supporting parents and carers. They will give you independent advice and support.

## **PREVENTION**

### **Ethos**

Bullying can occur at any school. We believe that;

- When bullying occurs not only is the child who is being bullied a victim, but also the child who is doing the bullying. We believe that children who bully do so for a reason and that unless we attempt to understand the reason in each case, we are unlikely to successfully solve the problem
- Establishing and maintaining an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to, is vital for the prevention of bullying. This means ensuring that children know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.

### **Whole school approach**

We are committed to providing children with the relevant social skills and understanding which will lessen the opportunities in which bullying may occur. However, where bullying does occur, we are dedicated to providing a positive outcome for all parties involved. This whole school approach is apparent in our PSHE schemes of work and in the implementation of our Behaviour Policy.

To prevent bullying, the school

- Has a clear set of expectations ("Co-operation/Consideration/Contribution")
- Values each child as an individual
- Encourages pupils to have respect for others
- Makes clear to pupils what kind of behaviour is expected
- Talks about bullying behaviour
- Plans activities during National Anti-bullying Week
- Acknowledges good behaviour
- Takes all reports of bullying behaviour seriously
- Encourages pupils to talk and listen to each other and supports the teaching and learning of resilience
- Ensures that staff model good behaviour and communication skills, with pupils and adults in the school
- Listens to parents/carers

*Staff positively promote no-bullying through:*

- Being punctual for lessons and supervisory duties and highly observant of any out of character responses by pupils
- Modelling good behaviour and communication skills both with pupils and other adults in the school
- Promoting considerate behaviours towards others
- Praising co-operative and non-confrontational behaviour
- Challenging children when they use prejudice-based language, using restorative practice
- Responding to and following up all incidents of bullying or 'potential' bullying consistently. Providing a daily morning call where issues can be raised promptly.
- Offering the victim immediate support and dealing with the bully using the strategies indicated
- Ensuring that all repeated or serious incidents of bullying, and any injuries, are reported to the Headteacher
- Raising pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem through PSHE and Collective Time discussions and activities
- Promoting relationships and opportunities for pupils to share concerns with adults

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

*The role of the Governing Body*

- The Governing Body supports the Headteacher in all attempts to eliminate bullying. They will not condone any bullying and incidents of bullying that do occur will be taken very seriously, and dealt with appropriately
- The Governing Body monitors incidents of bullying that do occur, and reviews the effectiveness of this policy regularly
- The governors require the Headteacher to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying, and to report to the governors on request about the effectiveness of school anti-bullying strategies
- A parent who is dissatisfied with the way the school has dealt with a bullying incident can follow the School's Complaints Procedure. The Governing Body responds within ten days to any request from a parent to investigate incidents of bullying. In all cases, the Governing Body notifies the head teacher, and asks him/her to conduct an investigation into the case, and to report back to a representative of the Governing Body.

*The role of the Headteacher*

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to

- Implement the school anti-bullying strategies, and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of school policy, and know how to identify and deal with incidents of bullying.
- Report to the Governing Body about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy on request
- Ensure that all pupils know that bullying is wrong. If an incident occurs, the Headteacher (or another appropriate member of staff) may use a Collective Time as the forum in which to discuss why bullying behaviour is unacceptable and the consequences of such
- Ensure that all staff, have received sufficient training to be equipped to identify and deal with all incidents of bullying
- Set the school climate of mutual support and praise for success, so making bullying less likely. When pupils feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour

*The role of school staff*

- All staff take all forms of bullying seriously, and seek to prevent it from taking place
- If teachers witness an act of bullying, they will refer it to the Headteacher or another relevant member of staff (e.g. Programme Link, Form Tutor, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mental Health Lead).
- Teachers and support staff do all they can to support the child who is being bullied. If a pupil is being bullied over a period of time, then, after consultation with the Headteacher, the parents of all pupils concerned will be informed
- Any adult who witnesses an act of bullying must record it on SIMS.
- When any bullying has taken place between pupils in a lesson, the teacher will deal with the issue immediately. This may involve counselling and support for the victim, and a consequence for the offender. Restorative practice is used to teach the young person who is bullying (see below).
- If a pupil is repeatedly involved in bullying, the Headteacher (or another relevant staff member) will invite the child's parents into the school to discuss the situation.
- Where these initial discussions have proven ineffective, the Headteacher may contact external support agencies, such as CAMHS and/or social services
- All members of staff attend training to enable them identify bullying and to follow school policy and procedures with regard to behaviour management

#### *The role of parents/carers*

- Parents who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact the school immediately. If they are not satisfied with the response, they should follow the school's complaints procedure, as detailed on the school website. Parents have a responsibility to support the school's Anti-bullying Policy, actively encouraging their child to be a positive member of the school. Parents are asked to sign the Home-School agreement when their child starts at the school.

#### *The role of pupils*

- Pupils are encouraged to tell anybody they trust if they are being bullied, and if the bullying continues, they must continue to let someone know
- Pupils are invited to share their views about a range of school issues, including bullying through regular questionnaires

#### **Curriculum**

- The PSHE curriculum offers opportunities for teaching specific lessons about bullying. Pupils will also be offered the opportunity to discuss any experience they may have had of bullying in previous schools (if appropriate) in a sensitive and supportive environment
- Teachers use a range of methods within the curriculum, such as discussion, drama and role play, to help prevent bullying and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all
- Teachers will also engage in the delivery of e-safety messages (see e-safety policy) with respect to cyber-bullying

#### *Pupils learn:*

- What bullying is, how it feels, why people bully, what to do about it and how to prevent it
- About the differences between people and about the importance of being inclusive and celebrating difference and diversity
- About the impact of prejudice and discrimination
- Skills to manage feelings, develop empathy, resolve conflict fairly, to cope with friendship problems and make and maintain positive relationships

- How to keep safe and behave responsibly when using the internet and mobile phones
- Who to go to if they are worried about bullying

**INTERVENTION**

**Procedures to follow when bullying is reported**

Any school actions to reduce bullying are based on clear rules, appropriate consequences and systems to support victims and those who are bullying.

If a child is being bullied, or if a friend or adult suspects that they are being bullied

- The bullying incident(s) should be reported and passed on to a relevant member of staff (e.g. Programme Link, Form Tutor, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mental Health Lead, Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher). This should be recorded on SIMs the same day as the report.
- Information about the incident is shared with all staff at the next morning briefing
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated by the teacher informed, the young person’s tutor or a member of staff the young person trusts.
- In serious cases, parents/carers will be informed and may be asked to come in for a meeting to discuss the problem
- The bullied child will be supported to ensure that they recover from the incident. This will require patience and understanding and they may be signposted to additional mental health support within the school (see Mental Health and Wellbeing policy for further details)
- The bully/bullies will be supported in order to understand why they are bullying and to help them to change their behaviour, using restorative practice
- The situation will continue to be monitored through observation and discussion with the victim, to ensure no repetition
- If necessary and appropriate, external agencies may become involved e.g. CAMHS

**Restorative Practice**

Staff are trained in using restorative conversations to address incidents of bullying. Restorative practice is a process that resolves conflict by promoting telling the truth and taking responsibility. It asks both parties to reflect on the incident, acknowledge harm caused and plan a way forward.

Restorative conversations are structured as follows:

What happened?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What happened in the incident?</i></li> <li>• <i>Who was involved?</i></li> <li>• <i>What were you thinking or feeling at the time?</i></li> </ul>
What has the impact been?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Who has been affected by what’s happened?</i></li> <li>• <i>What has been affected by what’s happened?</i></li> </ul>
What needs to happen next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What needs to happen next to put things right?</i></li> <li>• <i>What would be a more helpful way to do things next time?</i></li> </ul>

Restorative conversations typically take place between harmed and harmer, facilitated by an adult. However, due to the nature of provision and needs at RFHCS, it may be more appropriate for the adult to have individual conversations with the harmed and harmer in advance of this.

This allows young people to:

- Share and understand what happened, consider other perspectives and resolve difficulties
- Provide opportunities for ruptures in relationships to be repaired
- Learn from consequences that are proportionate and related to the situation or behaviour, wherever possible
- Supported timeout where young people can reflect and plan how to move forwards

## **RESOURCES**

### **Help organisations**

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)	0207 354 8321
Children's Legal Centre	0845 345 4345
KIDSCAPE Parents Helpline (Mon-Fri, 10-4)	0845 120 5204
Parentline Plus	0808 800 2222
Youth Access	0208 772 9900
Childline	<a href="https://www.childline.org.uk/">https://www.childline.org.uk/</a> 0800 1111
Bullying Online	<a href="http://www.bullying.co.uk">www.bullying.co.uk</a>
Kidscape website	<a href="http://www.kidscape.org.uk">www.kidscape.org.uk</a>

### **See also**

Behaviour Policy  
PSHE Policy  
Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy  
Rewards and Sanctions Policy  
Home/School Agreement  
Staff Code of Conduct

**Date updated:** June 2024

**Date of next review:** June 2027

**Date approved by the Governing Body: 20/06/2024**