READING BLUE COAT

Anti-Bullying Policy

Aims and Objectives

The aim of Reading Blue Coat School's Anti-bullying policy is to prevent bullying of any sort and to ensure that everyone in the school community can operate in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. We recognise that bullying can have a seriously adverse effect on the social and emotional well-being of individuals and on the educational achievements of individuals. This policy also covers the bullying of teaching and non-teaching staff by pupils or other staff.

All members of the community, including Governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is and be familiar with the School's Anti-bullying Policy.

Bullying is an anti-social behaviour which affects everyone; it is unacceptable and it will not be tolerated. Everyone in the School community has a responsibility to report any incident of bullying that comes to their attention and these reports will always be taken seriously. This also applies to cyberbullying involving pupils at the School. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will our pupils be able to benefit fully from the opportunities available at the School.

What is Bullying?

Overview - Bullying (including cyberbullying) and Peer on Peer Abuse

The seriousness of bullying cannot be emphasised enough. Bullying is among the top concerns that parents have about their children's safety and well-being at and on the way to and from school. Bullying is also a top concern of children and young people themselves. Bullying makes the lives of its victims a misery: it undermines their confidence and self-esteem; and destroys their sense of security. Bullying impacts on its victims' attendance and attainment at school, marginalises those groups who may be particular targets for bullies and can have a life-long negative impact on some young people's lives.

All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. Bullying and suspicions of abuse: What if abuse is merely suspected? The DSL should always be informed, even if peer on peer abuse is merely suspected. Staff need to do this as there may well be a need to refer such abuse to an external safeguarding agency. In the event of disclosures about bullying (pupil on pupil abuse), all children involved, whether perpetrator or victim, will be treated 'at risk.' This includes cases where bullying may be passed off as banter. Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just a laugh', 'boys being boys' or 'part of growing up.' Abuse surrounding gender must be recognised by Staff as being totally unacceptable. It also includes cases where there has been a disclosure or allegation involving sexting. In all cases the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator will be provided with support. School staff will deal with bullying in different ways, depending on how serious the bullying is. They might deal with it in school, e.g. by disciplining bullies, or they might report it to the police or social services. Any

discipline must take account of special educational needs or disabilities that the pupils involved may have. Anyone can report bullying to the police but it is usually a good idea to go through the School channels first. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to, bullying (including cyberbullying), gender based violence/sexual assaults and sexting. Staff should be clear as to the school policy and procedures with regards to bullying and the anti-bullying code of conduct.

Characteristics

Bullying is threatening, humiliating or frightening someone, or causing them hurt or distress. It can be intentional or unintentional.

It may consist of a single incident or may continue over a long period of time.

Its seriousness is determined more by the distress suffered by the victim than by the intention of the bully.

There is an imbalance of power which makes it hard for those being bullied to defend themselves.

To stand by when others are being bullied is tantamount to bullying.

Bullying can take many forms:

- It may be repeated over time and intentionally hurts another pupil or group physically or emotionally and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted or is a carer.
- It may occur directly or increasingly through cyber-technology (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email).
- It can be physical (such as hitting, punching)
- It can be making threats (such as extorting money)
- It includes actions, gestures or comments that are racist, religious or cultural, homophobic, sexist, sexual or which focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape).
- It can be psychological (such as social exclusion or spreading rumours)
- It includes moving or damaging the property of another person
- It can be in writing (such as offensive messages, emails, social networking sites, websites, notes or graffiti)
- It can be by taking picture / video clips via a mobile phone
- It includes making someone do something that they do not want to without proper authority
- It can be very serious both physical and emotional bullying may cause psychological damage and all staff at the School must be aware of this.
- It may well be that a bullying incident is treated a as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

All members of the School community are expected to behave in a respectful way towards one another, regardless of differences of age, race, status, beliefs or gender.

It is acknowledged that bullies may have complex reasons for their behaviour and may well need help. It should also be recognised that the consequences of being allowed to 'get away

with it' can be detrimental to them as well as to their victim. All pupils deserve the opportunity to be helped to understand what acceptable behaviour is.

What to look for

Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school.

All members of the school community must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it, in accordance with School policy. Sometimes people, either through lethargy, peer group pressure, or tacit support for what is going on, fail to take action. The School aims through its pastoral programme to educate pupils to respect others and not to tolerate any form of bullying.

What can you do if you are being bullied?

- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied and that it is wrong.

- Stay with a group of friends who you feel safe with

- Inform your tutor or any other member of staff immediately who will take you seriously and support you in dealing with the person or group of people.

If you know someone who is being bullied?

- Tell an adult immediately. All reports of bullying will be dealt with sensitively

- Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully.

- Support the victim by offering your friendship

If a member of staff witnesses an incident of bullying or it is reported to them

- They will reassure and support those involved.

- They will advise them that they are required to pass details on to the relevant member of the pastoral team. (Tutor, Head of Year, Director of Section, Deputy Head Pastoral or Second Master).

- All incidents of bullying will be minuted at the weekly Section meetings attended by the relevant Heads of Year, Directors of Section, and the Deputy Head Pastoral.

- A record of every incident will kept on the School's bullying log. The Second Master and Headmaster will be informed of all complaints or incidences of bullying and how they were dealt with. This is done through the Section minutes for Lower School, Middle School and Sixth Form, or verbally directly to the Second Master. The Second Master will have the final say as to whether an incident is deemed to be bullying or not (or, this may be delegated to the Deputy Head Pastoral).

What will happen?

- The victim will be interviewed by the Tutor, Head of Year, Director of Section, or a member of the Senior Management Team, on their own, and asked to write an account of events. The process for dealing with bullying will be explained clearly to them.

- The School manages all personal data obtained during such investigations in line with statutory guidance about the use of personal data.

- The victim is given the opportunity to discuss his / her own reactions and behaviour towards the bully. The victim is given support and advice and counselling may be suggested if deemed appropriate.

- Once the member of staff is clear that a bullying offence has been committed, the bully and any others involved will be interviewed individually and asked to write an account of events. The process for dealing with bullying will be explained clearly to them.

- Details of the incident will be recorded on all the pupils' files and a record kept on the School's bullying log.

- The pastoral team will decide on an appropriate course of action which will be communicated to all parties concerned it will be made clear that any further incident (or discussion about the current incident) would be considered an act of bullying in its own right. It will be made clear why the behaviour was inappropriate and unacceptable. Support and counselling will be offered. A suitable punishment will also be given. (see the School's Sanctions Policy for details of punishments)

- If the Head of Year or Director of Section decides it is appropriate, the Deputy Head Pastoral will become involved and the parents of the perpetrator/s will be informed by letter or telephone.

- Punishments will be issued in accordance with the School's Sanctions Policy and will reflect the seriousness of the incident and convey a deterrent effect with suspension and potentially permanent exclusion being the ultimate sanctions in cases of severe and persistent bullying.

- This policy will be displayed on the School website so pupils, parents and staff can see it.

- Role modelling by staff and senior pupils will result in the creation of an environment of good behaviour and respect where success is celebrated.

Whilst it is the policy of the School to attempt to internally resolve such issues, there may be occasions when consideration will be given to making a report to the police or relevant Children's Services. This would be in consultation with the pupil, their parent(s)/guardian(s), unless, in the case of a safeguarding or child protection concerns, contacting a parent/guardian may place the pupil at greater risk.

The School will raise awareness of the staff through training and take action to reduce the risk of bullying at the times and places where it is most likely to occur. The key points from this policy will be prominently displayed on School notice boards and in every tutor base. Additional information about school or national initiatives will be communicated through whole-school or year group assemblies. Further discussion with pupils will take place during tutor time.

Anti-bullying will feature as a discussion point for Year Group councils and where appropriate feedback will be taken to School Council. It will also be revisited as necessary during PSHE sessions to all years and reinforced in other areas of the curriculum as the opportunities present themselves e.g. drama, physical education and Religious Studies.

The School will conduct an annual anti-bullying survey to facilitate an understanding of the level and type of bullying that pupils might have experienced, the context, and the groups involved. The aim of this survey will always be to inform our approach, enabling the School to combat bullying more effectively and improve overall pupil well-being.

Incidents of reported bullying will be followed up by Tutors and Heads of Year, to monitor that the problem has been resolved. The record of bullying offences will be reviewed by the Deputy Head Pastoral and Section Teams to watch for patterns and check that the policy is effective.

Cyber Bullying

Pupils will often have access to technologies that have both positive and negative potential. Consideration should be given to the acceptable use of technology within the school setting and beyond.

Education and prevention

- There will be a 'Safe Use of the Internet and Cyber-bullying' Code of Conduct in every tutor base that is clear, understood and respected by staff, students and the wider school community.

- The Designated Lead, Deputy Designated Leads, Second Master, Directors of Section and Heads of Year are all available for pupils to report cyberbullying issues. If there are child protection concerns these will be taken on by the Designated Lead and Deputy Designated Leads who may liaise with the Local Authorities and if required the Police.

- The Network Manager and Head of ICT are aware of the potential risks and assist the staff if there are issues that need to be investigated.

- Information will be communicated to pupils through Year Group and Whole School assemblies and also through visiting speakers, who may address pupils, staff and parents.

- The Digital Learning Council is a cross year group forum where pupils will be able to raise digital issues, including cyber-bullying through their representatives. The Council will also create and review a digital charter which promotes positive online behavior amongst the School community.

- All staff will undergo safeguarding and child protection training including appropriate use of electronic communication by pupils and also the fact that staff should never use their own personal electronic media sites for communication with pupils.

- All e-communications used on the School site or as part of school activities off-site are monitored.

- Clear policies are set about the use of mobile phones at School and at other times when pupils are under the School's authority. These state that mobile phones should be locked away in lockers at all times and may only be used at the times stipulated in common room areas.

- Internet blocking technologies are continually updated and harmful sites blocked.

- Security systems are in place to prevent images and information about pupils and staff being accessed improperly from outside school.

Author(s):	Dr Guy J Williams
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Review Frequency:	Annually
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References:	• Preventing and Tackling Bullying (October 2014) • Cyberbullying: Advice for head teachers and school staff (2014). Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
Governor:	Mrs Laura Hyde
Date of Governor Agreement:	

Appendix 1

Safe Use of the Internet and Anti-Cyberbullying Code of Conduct

Being sent an abusive or threatening text message, or seeing nasty comments about yourself on a website, can be really upsetting. This code aims to help you protect yourself and your friends from cyberbullying.

1. Always respect others

Remember that when you send a message to someone, you cannot see the impact that your words or images may have on the other person. What you think is a joke may really hurt someone else.

If you receive a rude or nasty message or picture about someone else, do not forward it. You could be assisting a bully and even be accused of cyberbullying yourself. You could also be breaking the law.

2. Think before you send

It is important to think before you send any images or text about yourself or someone else by email or mobile phone, or before you post information on a website. Remember that what you send can be made public very quickly and could stay online forever.

3. Don't let anyone know your passwords.

It is a good idea to change them on a regular basis. Choosing hard-to-guess passwords will help stop people hacking into your account. Remember to only give your mobile number or personal website address to trusted friends.

4. Block the Bully

Most websites and services allow you to block or report someone who is behaving badly on-line.

5. Don't retaliate or reply

Replying to bullying messages, particularly in anger, is just what the bully wants.

6. Save the evidence

Learn how to keep records of offending messages, pictures or online conversations. These will help you demonstrate to others what is happening and can be used by your school, internet service provider, mobile phone company, or even the police to investigate the cyberbullying.

7. Make sure you tell

There are people that can help.

- Tell an adult you trust who can help you to report it to the right place, or call a helpline like ChildLine on 0800 1111, NSPCC 0808 800 5000 in confidence.
- Tell the provider of the service you have been bullied on.
- Tell your tutor, Head of Year or the Network Manager

Finally, don't just stand there. If you see cyberbullying going on, support the victim and report the bullying. How would you feel if no one stood up for you?

Education and Prevention

- There will be a 'Safe Use of the Internet and Cyber-bullying' Code
- of Conduct in every tutor base
- Information will be communicated to pupils through Year Group
- and Whole School assemblies
- All staff will undergo Child Protection Training including
- appropriate use of electronic communication by pupils
- All e-communications used on the School site or as part of school
- activities off-site are monitored.
- Clear policies are set about the use of mobile phones at School and
- at other times when pupils are under the School's authority
- Internet blocking technologies are continually updated and
- harmful sites blocked.
- Security systems are in place to prevent images and information
- about pupils and staff being accessed improperly from outside
- school.