

Ribblesdale School - Anti-Bullying Policy

The Ribblesdale Way

Respect
Inspire
Be proud
Be kind
Invest in your learning
Excel

Anti-bullying Leads

Mrs Z Dewhurst (Senior Leadership Team)

Mrs C Nestor (School Governor)

(Mrs Nestor can be contacted via the Clerk to the Governors, Mrs Smith at school)

The School Ethos and Policy Aim

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed, purposeful and secure atmosphere. Prevention is preferred to intervention and the school is committed to maintaining an ethos of mutual respect, in which positive relationships are encouraged and individuals feel valued. The 'Ribblesdale Way' underpins this ethos and serves as a reminder for the whole Ribblesdale community of our shared values. Bullying is completely unacceptable at our school and if bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to report it and feel confident that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Objectives of this Policy

- All governors, teaching and support staff, pupils and parents have a clear understanding of what bullying is
- All governors, teaching and support staff know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises
- To assure pupils and parents/ carers that they will be supported when bullying is found to be happening
- To make it very clear that bullying will not be tolerated
- To reassure parents/ carers that if after investigation, allegations are not found to bullying their child will be fully supported through any difficult or upsetting times

Defining Bullying

Bullying is an intentional act, by an individual or group, which is repeated over time, and causes physical or emotional pain or distress.

Bullying often involves an imbalance of power e.g. popularity, physical strength, age, group size etc. which can leave the victim of bullying feeling powerless and isolated.

Bullying can be perpetrated in different ways:

- Emotional
- Physical
- Cyber

Some groups are more vulnerable than others and may become a target for bullies. Bullying can be motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted, has caring responsibilities, special educational needs or a disability. It may be motivated by actual differences between children, or by perceived differences.

It is not bullying when:

- Pupils have a disagreement or 'fall out'. There is no intention to hurt or harm i.e. behaviour is thoughtless or accidental
- There is a one off fight / argument between pupils of equal stature or strength,
- Isolated incidents of Inappropriate teasing/ thoughtlessness or lack of consideration
- When pupils decide not to be friends anymore or change friendship groups

Despite not being acts of 'bullying', the issues listed above can be very unpleasant and distressing for pupils and they will be thoroughly investigated and addressed using the behaviour for learning policy. They do not constitute bullying as they are not repeated over time and are usually between pupils of the same age group, so there isn't an imbalance of power.

As a school we feel strongly that it is our responsibility to help pupils to develop resilience and the skills needed for conflict resolution. Conflict and disagreements with others are a difficult but inevitable part of life and we need to fully support and equip our pupils with the skills to be able to deal with such situations as they move through life. Pupils will always be fully supported and guided through any difficult periods in school but it is crucial that issues aren't incorrectly termed as bullying. This is because when bullying does occur it should be readily recognisable and treated seriously as such.

If it is determined that there has not been a bullying incident, but a pupil's behaviour has nevertheless been inappropriate, the school's behaviour for learning policy will be followed.

Preventing Bullying

The school is committed to raising awareness of bullying issues by providing the pupils with learning opportunities throughout the curriculum, but particularly within citizenship and PSHE. Assemblies, posters, competitions and special events will also contribute to preventing bullying and promoting the positive values that underpin daily interactions between members of the school community. Character Matters, including continued work on 'A Mind to be Kind', is also a key component. The involvement of pupils in these initiatives is paramount – the anti-bullying strategy should be something done with pupils not for pupils. The pupils themselves will be actively encouraged to play a major role preventing bullying e.g. school council and peer mentoring. There is also a genuine commitment to CPD for staff in order to raise awareness and equip staff with the skills and knowledge to deal with bullying sensitively and effectively. The school has invested in increased staff supervision at breaks and lunchtimes. All staff on duty must wear high visibility waistcoats. CCTV facilities have been extended to assist with monitoring communal areas.

Unacceptable Language

Some pupils engage in what they would term 'banter' and do not understand the emotional upset this causes. Staff will intervene when inappropriate language is used and ensure appropriate sanctions are put in place (as well as working with the perpetrator to help them understand the impact that their words can have on others).

How can pupils report bullying?

Ribblesdale encourages all pupils to report bullying whether directly involved or as a witness to a bullying incident.

Bullying can be reported by;

1. Telling a member of staff to whom the pupil feels comfortable enough to make a disclosure.
2. Telling a parent, who should contact the relevant Pastoral Coordinator as a matter of urgency, so that the matter can be investigated.
3. Using 'One touch' reporting via the Green Heart link on the pupil's desktop

Allegations of bullying are taken seriously and are investigated as appropriate.

How can parents/ carers support their child?

Where parents/ carers wish to raise the issue of bullying, initial concerns should be directed to the relevant Pastoral Coordinator. A record of the discussion will be kept for future reference and concerns will be dealt with quickly to demonstrate the school's commitment to tackling bullying. It is important the school maintains a dialogue with the parent/ carer until the issue has been satisfactorily resolved.

It can be very distressing for parents when their child is upset by something that has happened at school. It is important that school is always made aware of issues so that staff can support pupils and work together with families in helping them through any difficult situations that they encounter. Parents must recognise that in investigating incidents, staff will consider every side of the situation and take everything into consideration when determining whether a reported issue constitutes bullying. The appropriate support and or sanctions are then put in place (whether it is bullying or not). Staff will always work tirelessly to safeguard the wellbeing of any pupil who is experiencing difficulties in school.

Parents are asked to trust the experience and professional judgement of school staff in reaching an appropriate conclusion. In the unlikely event of a parent being unhappy with the school's response, the school's complaints procedure should be followed.

How can staff report bullying?

Where a member of staff witnesses behaviour which has any of the hallmarks of bullying, he/she should intervene immediately and talk to the pupil to establish what has happened. If the pupil claims that he/she is not being bullied, the details of what has been witnessed should still be passed to the Pastoral Coordinator, as a matter of urgency for their consideration, so that the situation can be monitored appropriately.

How can visitors report bullying?

If a visitor witnesses bullying he/she should discuss it with the member of staff they are visiting. The member of staff should then pass on the information to the relevant Pastoral Coordinator.

Managing Incidents

- Any disclosure by a pupil **must** be taken seriously and acted upon
- Staff members should listen carefully and avoid interrupting or asking leading questions. In the case of a pupil telling a staff member that he/she is telling them in confidence, it should be explained that you want to help and may have to pass on information to key members of staff in order to do this (see confidentiality policy)
- Where there is alleged bullying and a possible threat to the pupil the member of staff **must** first ensure the physical safety of the victim. This could necessitate the pupil being escorted by a member of staff, to the relevant Pastoral Coordinator or DSL
- On arrival at the Pastoral Coordinator's office the pupil should write down his/her account with dates, times, places and names if possible, using the standard pupil statement pro-forma, where possible
- The pupil should be asked what he/she would like to happen next in order that his/her wishes can be considered in the decision making process
- The investigation should then take place. Perpetrators and witnesses should be interviewed and statements taken
- In the case of serious incidents, advice should be sought from the relevant Year Leader / linked member of the Senior Leadership Team. However, where there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' the school's DSL (or backup DSL) should be informed as a matter of urgency and the child protection procedures followed
- If allegations are sufficiently supported by the evidence, contact should be made with the parents/ carers of all involved, including the victim. Parents should be advised how their actions might help the situation
- If it is established that bullying has occurred, a school sanction should **always** be imposed. The level of sanction should be proportionate to the act of bullying and should take into account any previous acts of bullying. This will help to demonstrate the school's commitment to tackling bullying. An explanation should be given to all pupils involved about what the school's actions will be, including any intervention strategies and allay any anxiety wherever possible
- The details should then be logged on SIMS, including school actions against perpetrators and victim support.

If it is determined that there has not been a bullying incident, but a pupil's behaviour has nevertheless been inappropriate, the school's behaviour for learning policy will be followed.

Follow up strategies in cases where bullying is identified

Provision for ongoing support for the victim **must** be made in all cases where bullying is identified. Pupils can be placed on the vulnerable pupils list, by the Pastoral Coordinator, to increase staff awareness and vigilance. The Form Tutor, after being notified by the relevant Pastoral Coordinator, will make follow up checks the next day, after one week and one month later. These enquiries should be made in private, using the 'green slip' system, usually following a registration session. If further disclosures are made these should be reported to the relevant Pastoral Coordinator immediately. On

completion of the follow up process, the 'green slip' should be returned to the Pastoral Coordinator who will sign the pupil off and remove them from vulnerable pupils list.

Sanctions, intervention and support for pupils who have been found to have bullied another pupil/pupils

In order to modify a pupils behaviour and to reduce the possibility of further incidents of bullying, Ribblesdale High School will employ a wide range of sanctions / interventions. These may include:

- Letters of apology / personal apologies
- Detention
- Isolation
- Senior Leadership Seclusion
- Peer / Adult mediation
- Break and lunchtime restrictions for perpetrators
- Restorative justice / processes
- Parental meetings
- Respite at Alternative Provision
- Anger management support
- Trauma Informed Intervention
- Counselling
- Range of sanction including high level sanctions
- Liaison with Police / Safer Travel leading to fixed penalty notices / bus exclusions

Support for victims of bullying

Support for the victim is paramount. The pupil's Form Tutor is a key point of contact but further support may be required from a Pastoral Coordinator, School Counsellor, Year Leader and SLT. The following options should be considered and applied appropriately, with the consent of the victim:

- Befriending
- Peer / Adult mediation
- Access to supervised 'safe havens' e.g. The Hub
- Self esteem building activities
- Adult counselling
- Enhanced adult vigilance
- Moving form / curriculum groups

Reviewed by Governors: September 2024

Next Review: May 2025

Appendix 1 – What happens when bullying is reported?

