



Rathdown School

Junior School Bullying Policy

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is a form of repeated aggression conducted by an individual or a group against another or others. Bullying takes many forms:

- **Physical:** Pushing, hitting, pinching and other forms of violence or threats.
- **Verbal:** Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours and persistent teasing.
- **Emotional:** Excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures, ridicule or any form of humiliation).
- **Racist:** Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- **Sexual:** Unwanted physical contact or abusive comments.

Aims of School Policy

- To show clearly that the ethos of the school will not tolerate bullying in any form.
- To provide guidelines for parents and teachers in dealing with cases of bullying.
- To foster an atmosphere within the school which strongly discourages any aspect of bullying behaviour.
- To foster the ideal that individual differences should be respected and that every child has the right to an education free from fear and intimidation.

Indications of Bullying Behaviour

- Anxiety/ unwillingness about coming to school.
- Deterioration in educational performance.
- Pattern of physical illnesses.
- Unexplained changes in mood/ behaviour.
- Visible signs of anxiety/ distress.
- Possessions missing.
- Increased requests for money.
- Unexplained bruising.
- Reluctance and/ or refusal to say what is troubling her.

Procedures for Noting and Reporting Incidents

1. All reports of bullying should be noted, investigated and dealt with by the class teacher so that pupils will gain confidence in telling. A special Incident Book will be kept in the office for this purpose only.
2. Serious cases should be referred immediately to the Principal.
3. Parents should be informed by the Principal, earlier rather than later.
4. Parents must be informed of the appropriate person to whom they can make their enquiries regarding bullying.
5. Pupils must understand that reporting is not "telling tales" and they will be made aware that any form of bullying will be dealt with immediately.
6. Individual teachers should record and take appropriate measures in accordance with the policy.
7. Non-teaching staff should be encouraged to report incidents – discretion is important.

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

1. Calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach.
2. Incidents best investigated outside the classroom situation.
3. The teacher first should speak to the pupils involved separately, and at a later stage together, if possible.
4. Answers should be sought to the questions of WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHO and WHY.
5. Members of a group should be met both individually and as a group.
6. Parents of the parties involved should be met.

Programme for Work with Pupils

- **Learning strategies** should allow for the enhancement of each pupil's self-worth. This is included in the S.P.H.E. syllabus.
- **Class Charters** should be on display in the classrooms. These should be discussed and drawn up with the pupils at the beginning of the year and referred to frequently throughout the year.
- **Playground Buddies** patrol the playground and look out for children left out of games and / or feeling unhappy. They report to the teacher on duty.
- **Be Kind Be Happy Week** takes place mid-year. It includes special assemblies, badges, posters, competitions, plays, talks etc.
- **"Worry-boxes"** are used when thought necessary, in classes for older children. Pupils have the opportunity of reporting any incident causing them upset or worry by writing about it on a note and putting it in the box
- **"Time when you can tell" posters** are displayed in all classrooms and corridors.
- **An anti-bullying committee** of parents and teachers meet on a regular basis each term
- **Staff Meetings** provide a frequent opportunity to report and discuss with other members of staff any incident of bullying which may have occurred. In this way all staff are alerted to the situation with the least amount of delay.

Every effort will be made to match the curriculum to the ability, aptitude and interests of each pupil in order to help reduce boredom, lack of interest or lack of progress.

Bullying Statement

It is accepted without question by every adult in Rathdown Junior School that each girl has the right to be safe and happy in school. She has the right to enjoy her learning and leisure time, free from intimidation, both inside the classroom and outside. It is not acceptable that a child should be bullied in anyway, and teachers, pupils and parents work very hard together to establish a climate in which children who are bullied, or see other children being bullied, will immediately tell an adult about it. Any child who talks to a teacher will be taken seriously and every effort will be made to ensure that the bullying, however minor it may appear to be, ceases.

Bullying can involve direct physical assault, intimidation, name-calling, ridiculing or isolation. It can be conducted by an individual or by a group, against others. We are committed in the Junior School to ensuring that such behaviour is not accepted and we continuously reinforce the importance of treating others well, rather than concentrating on merely reacting when bullying is reported.

All teachers of older classes help their pupils to draw up a classroom charter, which is signed by every pupil in the class. It is the duty of each child to report any incidents which contravene these rules. Parents too are encouraged strongly to report anything which is affecting their child in school, confident that their comments will receive prompt and sympathetic attention. In every instance where action is required, the parents of the child who has suffered will be informed of the outcome.

We want Rathdown Junior School to be free from BULLYING.

Last Updated November 2004