

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Reviewed June 2009

Under the School Standards and Framework Act 1988 head teachers have a legal duty to draw up procedures to prevent bullying among pupils and to bring these procedures to the attention of staff, parents and students.

We aim to ensure that our students learn in a supportive and secure environment without the fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour which affects everyone, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Many students join Rochester Independent College after having difficult experiences of bullying elsewhere and it is therefore particularly important that we are alert to this issue. It is important that we are told of any bullying incidents so that we can deal with them swiftly. Unreported bullying allows bullies to continue their antisocial behaviour.

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. The types of bullying as defined by Kidscape are as follows:

Emotional – unfriendliness, excluding, tormenting (hiding belongings, threatening gestures)

Physical – pushing, hitting, kicking, punching, any use of violence

Racist – racial taunts, racial graffiti, gestures

Sexual – sexually abusive comments, unwanted physical contact

Homophobic – focussing on the issue of sexuality or sexual orientation

Verbal – sarcasm, name-calling, spreading rumours, teasing

Cyber – all areas of the internet (email and internet chat room misuse), mobile phone threats via text messages and calls, misuse of camera/video on mobile phone

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour. Everyone should be aware of the signs and symptoms as given by Kidscape and report if a child:

- Is scared of walking to or from school
- Doesn't want to go to school on the bus
- Begs to be driven to school
- Makes a change to their usual routine
- Does not want to go to school (school phobic)
- Starts to play truant
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacks self-confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Has nightmares or cries themselves to sleep
- Feels ill or sick in the morning
- Starts to underperform at school
- Comes home with torn clothes or belongings
- Has damaged belongings or things go missing

- Starts stealing money or asks for money (to pay the bully)
- 'loses' dinner money
- Has unexplained cuts and bruises
- Comes home starving because dinner money has been taken
- Becomes aggressive or unreasonable
- Bullies others in turn
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what is wrong
- Offers unlikely excuses for the above
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is agitated when a text message is received

The above signs and symptoms may or may not be because of bullying but bullying should be a consideration.

All staff, whether teaching or ancillary, must be aware of the signs of bullying and act promptly against it in accordance with this policy. Staff will be made aware of the Anti-bullying Policy via the Staff handbook. Parents and students should also know the college policy on bullying and what to do if bullying takes place.

- 1 Any person who has reasonable cause to suspect a student of being racially harassed or bullied in any form, must report the incident to one of the designated Child Protection Officers (CPOs) immediately. The CPOs are Anellia Mladenova and Lesley King. If they are absent then one of the principals is to investigate. The aim is to bring the bullying to an end quickly.
- 2 All acts of bullying will be investigated by the designated Child Protection Officers initially and an overall decision made by the Principals in accordance with the College's Child Protection Policy.
- 3 Those students concerned will be interviewed by one of the Principals; the incident will be recorded and placed in the students' files. It may be necessary to take into consideration previous bullying incidents.
- 4 Personal Tutors will be kept informed and if it persists the Personal Tutor will advise the appropriate subject teachers.
- 5 Parents of the bully and victim will be kept informed and if necessary ask to see the principals to discuss matters.

All reported incidents will be taken seriously. Students and parents will be supported if they report bullying is taking place.

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- a Offering immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their personal tutor or a member of staff of their choice
- b Reassuring the student
- c Offering continued support
- d Restoring confidence and self-esteem

Students who have bullied will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened
- Discovering why the student became involved
- Establishing the wrong doing and the need to change their behaviour and attitude
- Making them aware of the effect of their behaviour upon others
- Informing parents or guardians to help change the attitude of the student

The bully will be asked to offer a genuine apology, verbally or in writing.

The following disciplinary steps can be taken:

- Official warnings to stop offending
- Detention
- Minor fixed-term exclusion
- Major fixed-term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion

Staff involved will work towards the bully and victim finding a way forward. After the incident has been dealt with, monitoring will continue to ensure that there is no reoccurrence. This will be done through personal tutor interviews and meetings to check that the situation is better than previously.

We raise the awareness of the nature of bullying through PHSE, regular personal tutor interviews, class discussions and form times to help minimize such behaviour. We try to maintain an atmosphere where students can feel at ease and confident enough to speak about their problems with someone they can trust.

During College hours there will always be a trained member of staff available for students to confide in if they are, or know of, a student who is a victim of bullying or racial remarks. Normally this will be the designated CPO. However other members of staff will also be available should the student prefer to talk to them. If a student wishes to speak to somebody not related to the college they can discuss matters with the independent listener or other outside contact. Their numbers can be found in the Handbook and in the Staff Handbook and on the College website.

Outside College hours the helpline numbers listed in the Handbook and the Staff Handbook and on the College website can be contacted.

All College staff should note that this policy must be followed at all times. It is not appropriate to shout at, use intimidating body language or to use swear words.

The College will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the College.

Training

All staff are issued with the staff handbook with our anti bullying policy as part of their induction training. Staff also receive basic child protection as part of their induction. As part of our ongoing professional development training key staff attend relevant INSET meetings.

OTHER CONTACTS

Bullying Online	www.bullying.co.uk
Youth Access	0208 772 9900

Children's Legal Centre 0845 345 4345

Kidscape Parent's Helpline 0845 1 205204

Stonewall– Tackling Homophobic Bullying 0207593 1850

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) 0808 800 5793