



Ripley Court School

Against Bullying

STATEMENT OF INTENT

At Ripley Court School, our community is based upon respect, good manners and fair play. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can develop his/her full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed; but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other.

Ripley Court prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting us in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions.

Bullying, harassment and victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying may be defined as the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person by physical (including sexual), verbal (including chat room and SMS messages), and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory.

Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, homophobic, which focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time. We always treat it very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the school's policy on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles.

SIGNS OF BULLYING

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to school
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoiled by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Diminished levels of self confidence
- Frequent visits to the Medical Centre with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact

- Difficulty in sleeping, experiences nightmares
- Talking of suicide, attempting suicide, running away

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

We take the following preventative measures:

- We use appropriate Assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying. Our PSHE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. The programme is structured to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other.
- Other lessons, particularly RS, English and Drama highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing social skills.
- All our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place.
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents. All incidents of possibly bullying must be referred to the Headmaster.
- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team of Teachers, Form Teachers, Heads of Section House Master/Mistresses who support the Head and are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and are alert to possible signs of bullying.
- Our pastoral team gives support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies.
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site, particularly areas where bullying might occur. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour.
- The informal house system is important in reinforcing a pupil's standards and values, providing the opportunity for friendly, informal discussion of matters of concern to the individual pupil outside the formal classroom.
- We encourage close contact between Teachers and parents/guardians, and would always ask the Head or Deputy Head or Head of section make contact if we were worried about a pupil's well-being, or make this contact ourselves after consultation.
- All pupils have access to a telephone helpline, enabling them to call for support in private.
- We have no initiation ceremonies designed to cause pain anxiety or humiliation.
- We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the school, involving our pupils
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.

CYBERBULLYING – DEFINITION

Mr Bill Belsey, the creator of the web site: <http://www.cyberbullying.org/> defined this unpleasant phenomenon in the following terms:

“Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.”

Cyberbullying can involve Social Networking Sites, like Bebo and Myspace, emails and mobile phones, used for SMS messages and as cameras.

CYBERBULLYING – PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

In addition to the preventative measures described above, Ripley Court:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its charter for the safe use of the internet. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department monitors pupils' use.
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- Does not issue pupils with their own personal school email address. Access to sites such as "hotmail" is not allowed.
- Adheres to the BECTA guidelines regarding E-teaching and the internet.
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in PSHE lessons, which covers blocking and removing contacts from "buddy" lists.
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- Periodically offers training to parents on internet safety.
- Mobile phones are not permitted in classrooms, public areas of the school, or where they may cause annoyance to others.
- The use of cameras on mobile phones is not allowed in washing and changing areas.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH REPORTED BULLYING

If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedures are adopted:

- The member of staff to whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the pupils involved.
- He/she will inform the Headmaster or in his absence the Deputy Head or a senior colleague as soon as possible.
- The member of staff will imply that the strongest measures will be taken to control the situation but will not mention specific punishments.
- The victim will be interviewed on his/her own and asked to write an account of events.
- The bully, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events.
- The incident should be recorded in all pupils' files, and in the Headmaster's disciplinary book if suspension or exclusion are included..
- All relevant members of staff will be informed immediately, and the issue will be discussed at the next staff meeting.
- The victim will be interviewed at a later stage by the form teacher, separately from the alleged perpetrator. It will be made clear to him/her why revenge is inappropriate. He/she will be offered support to develop a strategy to help him or herself.
- The alleged bully will be interviewed at a later stage by the form teacher or Headmaster or Deputy Head, and it will be made clear why his/her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. He/she will be offered guidance on modifying his or her behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions.
- The parents/guardians of all parties will be informed and invited into school to discuss the matter with the Headmaster. Their support should be sought. Notes will be taken of these meetings and placed on the pupil's files.
- A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling, will be agreed and if necessary imposed. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures.

- A meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, may be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode.
- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place.
- In very serious cases, it may be necessary for the Headmaster to make a report to the Police or to the Social Services. However, it is the policy of Ripley Court to attempt to resolve such issues internally under the school's own disciplinary procedures, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely.

Background and references for further information from the ISBA:

A Legal Requirement, an ISI Reporting Standard and
An OFSTED Standard for Boarding Schools

References:

Legal Framework

- A. Education and Inspections Act 2006
- B. Human Rights Act 1998
- C. The Education (Independent School Standards)(England) Regulations 2003 as subsequently amended (SI2003/1910)
- D. Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001
- E. Anti-Discrimination Legislation

General Guidance:

- F. “Don’t suffer in Silence” Comprehensive anti-bullying pack for schools and teachers promoted by the DfES (Now DCSF).
<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/DfES%200064%20200MIG479.pdf>
- G. “Safe to Learn: Embedding Anti-Bullying Work in Schools”(DCSF guide)
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/doc/11907/Summary%20-%20Safe%20to%20Learn.pdf>
- H. “Bullying”: An ISC Child Health and Wellbeing Working Party Guidance Update Five
<http://www.antibullying.net/adultsinschools.htm> - Source of anti-bullying support for school communities)
- I. “Where You are NOT Alone” <http://www.bullying.org/>

Technological

- J. “Cyberbullying” A briefing note on the ISBA web site by Farrer & Co
- K. <http://www.cyberbullying.org/>
- L. “Child Protection and New Technologies” by Childnet International
- M. <http://www.childnet-int.org/>
- N. Safe to Learn Tackling Cyberbullying
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/>
- O. “Guidance on e-strategies for schools, including technological bullying”
http://schools.becta.org.uk/index.php?section=is&catcode=ss_to_es_pp_ob_03&rid=14905

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- P. Ofsted “Reference Guide to the key standards in each type of social care service inspected by Ofsted” (Reference 080117)
[http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Other/General/Reference-guide-to-the-key-standards-in-each-type-of-social-care-service-inspected-by-Ofsted-for-inspections-from-1-August-2008/\(language\)/eng-GB](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Other/General/Reference-guide-to-the-key-standards-in-each-type-of-social-care-service-inspected-by-Ofsted-for-inspections-from-1-August-2008/(language)/eng-GB)
www.boarding.org.uk