



RIDGEWAY ACADEMY

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

This document is based on the Anti Bullying Policy (2006) of Worcestershire County Council Children's Services. A full copy of this is available in school for reference.

Young people have a right to be protected against bullying. This policy will help to raise awareness and reduce bullying. Equally, young people have responsibilities not to be bullies themselves either to other young people or adults. Bullying or harassing anyone, in or out of school, is unacceptable. Young people should do all they can to discourage bullying in their peers whether the bullying is of another young person or an adult.

At Ridgeway Academy, we are committed to the creation of a positive, safe environment in which everyone has the opportunity to thrive. Bullying should not be tolerated in any setting and we expect everyone to contribute to the eradication of bullying. Systems are in place for recording bullying incidents, monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of policy and practice.

AIMS

The aims of this policy are:

- To raise awareness of the nature and the impact of bullying.
- To promote a consistent coherent approach towards identifying, challenging and responding to bullying.
- To promote a culture of openness to enable the existence of bullying to be acknowledged.
- To promote the understanding that the management of bullying is the responsibility of us all.

DEFINITIONS

Bullying can be described as the systematic use of power, to deliberately or repeatedly harm others.

Bullying can take various forms i.e. emotional, physical, online, cyber, racist, sexual, homophobic, verbal, written.

Bullying is an abuse of power – that is, a more powerful person or group will be intentionally causing harm, physically, emotionally or psychologically, to a less powerful person or group. It is generally agreed that a single incident of verbal or physical aggression is not necessarily considered to be bullying – there needs to be evidence of persistent victimisation over a period of time.

It can include one or more of the following:

- Being hit, kicked, pinched, spat at or threatened
- Being called names
- Making a fool of someone
- Teasing or sending nasty notes
- Spreading rumours and malicious gossip about someone
- Deliberately destroying another person's property
- Repeatedly excluding a child / young person by not talking to them, or not letting them join in
- Locking someone in a room
- Malicious texting, emailing etc.
- Hurtful remarks about people's sexual orientation

BUT it is not bullying when two children / young people of approximately the same age and strength have the occasional fight or quarrel.

PROCEDURES

At Ridgeway, the staff adopt the following principles in practice:

We...

- do not leave groups unattended, and arrive in classrooms or playground before the pupils if possible
- identify times and places where bullying is known to occur and arranging for spot-checks to be carried out frequently e.g. in corridors, toilets, cloakrooms, areas of the playground
- wait with the children for school buses at the beginning and end of the day
- encourage children / young people to report incidents of bullying by listening carefully, and following up by appropriate action – be known as a 'listening school'
- are on the alert for behaviours which may indicate that a child / young person is being bullied, and investigate carefully
- support victims of bullying
- help bullies by encouraging them to change their behaviour, using good role models in drama and PSHEC, discussion in Circle Time, assemblies
- discuss the problem with other staff in school to ensure a consistent approach.
- liaise with parents
- create 'safe areas' at break times – study centre, art room, alternative programmes, activities.
- We seek the views of all stakeholders.

When Bullying has happened

Incidents of bullying will occur sometimes. **All incidents and reports of bullying will be investigated.** Good practice should aim to make the bully consider the effects and consequences of their actions, both for themselves and the victim, helping them to engage in more constructive social relationships.

At Ridgeway, we use a variety of approaches in dealing with bullying incidents.

- Restorative Justice. This approach ensures that the victim's needs are addressed, bullies are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and all those affected by the incident are involved in the reparation process.
- The Pikas approach. This involves the teacher meeting with members of a gang individually and making each one aware of his or her own feelings of unease or embarrassment about the gang's bullying.
- The No Blame approach. This requires all those involved in presenting their view of what happened and helping the bullies to understand the consequences of their actions.

We have a dedicated trained member of staff who deals with these incidents and ensures:

- **that all incidents are recorded**
- **that all staff are informed of outcomes and**
- **that they are followed up to ensure that all parties are moving forward.**

Strategies for supporting bullies and victims

- **Peer mentoring/counselling**
- **Circle time – as a response to a particular incident or to explore general issues**
- **Assemblies – whole school to reinforce the ethos and class assemblies to discuss specific situations**

- **PSHE – elements of the curriculum aimed at supporting discussion on a general level**

If there is evidence of further bullying or provocation, we

- arrange to meet with the parents / carers of those involved to discuss the nature and level of the support the school intends to make and identify how they might help to meet the individuals' needs.
- agree on and implement an appropriate course of action.
- monitor the situation

When we call in parents / carers, we make sure that we are well prepared with records of concerns and actions taken to support the individuals, as well as constructive options to resolve the problems successfully.

We make sure that the parents or carers are:

- aware of our concerns.
- aware of our Anti-Bullying Policy and the rationale behind it, through the school prospectus
- encouraged to support their children in modifying their behaviour in a way which is consistent with the school's approach.

The policy will be reviewed annually.

APPENDIX 1

Some indicators that bullying may be taking place

- Change in behaviour e.g. uncharacteristic withdrawal, moodiness, tearfulness, depression, secretiveness – reluctance to offer reasons for this.
- Items of clothing, schoolwork etc damaged or lost
- Deterioration in attainment
- Reluctance to attend school
- Money going missing at home/school
- Sleep problems/nightmares
- Coming home hungry (extortion of dinner money)
- Frequent injuries – bruises, cuts
- Running away or absconding
- Increased levels of aggression or anger
- Headaches, stomach aches, reporting feeling unwell
- Wanting to change normal daily routines unexpectedly
- Increased internet/ mobile phone use may indicate on-line/text bullying

Preventative measures

- Be aware that bullying happens everywhere at some time and be vigilant
- Spot checks in toilets and secluded locations are effective
- Have a policy that makes it clear that bullying will not be tolerated and ensure that everyone knows about it – review the policy regularly
- Create a catchphrase
- Teach children how to challenge bullying behaviour
- Use PSHE&c sessions to discuss issues, and techniques such as circle time to strengthen social relationships
- Ensure that everyone knows they will be listened to if they report bullying or have seen bullying taking place
- Identify those who are potentially vulnerable or isolated and try to encourage others to include them
- Provide training for staff and carers
- Improve the environment

What to do if you feel you are being bullied

- Tell someone - your class teacher, school counsellor, buddy mentors, parents
- If you do not feel you can talk about it, write it down
- Remember, it is not your fault

What to do if you think your child is being bullied

- Encourage your child to talk about it
- Contact the school to let us know – through class teachers in the first instance
- Keep us informed of any changes in behaviour so that we can monitor this

We take all allegations of bullying seriously and investigate thoroughly, working in partnership with parents to make sure that school is a safe place to be.

APPENDIX 2

Anti-Bullying Questionnaire - staff

Please would you answer the following questions in order for us to review and update the anti-bullying policy. Feel free to answer in as much or as little detail as you like, dependent on your experience and views.

Does the ethos of the school – its general atmosphere and purpose – encourage or discourage bullying?

Are you aware of policies and strategies in school which specifically identify and address bullying? If so, how are they being implemented and are they effective?

How do children, young people and adults know what the policy on bullying is?
Does the policy apply to staff, parents / carers?

Does everyone within school know what actions will be taken against bullying?

How do children, young people and adults report bullying and are complaints dealt with effectively and quickly?

Is there someone that a victim can talk to in confidence and is support provided for victims? Are there opportunities for children, young people and adults to discuss safely what is happening?

Has the school carried out an audit to identify areas within the environment where bullying is more likely to take place? Do staffing policies take into account supervision of areas where children and young people are more vulnerable to bullying?

How are children and young people encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and others?

How does the school work with bullies? Are records kept of bullying incidents to look for common themes and to pinpoint areas in which specific intervention would be useful?

How do staff within the school involve parents in its anti-bullying work?

Are training needs audited?

How does the school involve relevant stakeholders and outside agencies, including the voluntary sector, in the formation and review of their policy?

With reference to schools does the school clearly set out its complaints procedure in the school prospectus or annual report?

Do governors monitor parents' complaints on bullying?

Could the governing body justify the school's responses in court?

Does the school's insurance cover the school for negligence claims by pupils?