

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

This policy will be reviewed annually

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V0	23/11/2021	Annual review and update.
V1	22/11/2022	Annual review.
V2	21/11/2023	Annual review, update on reference to MASH team/Ofsted/peer-mentoring/curriculum content.

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Ready Respectful Safe and Anti-Bullying

Ridgewood High School is a place where being Ready Respectful and Safe are at the heart of our behaviour policy and practice. Our anti-bullying policy relates closely to the principles of the behaviour policy and the safeguarding policy. We believe that every member of the school community has the right to enjoy learning and leisure; free from any bullying, feeling safe and respected by others.

Respecting others and acting in a way that makes others feel safe are part of children's rights at Ridgewood High School. Our anti-bullying policy aims to increase the capacity of children as rights holders to claim their rights. The policy also increases the capacity of adults to fulfil their obligations to ensure that children enjoy these rights.

This policy uses the term children to describe children at Ridgewood High School. As people under the age of 18 all children at Ridgewood High School are entitled to the right to feel safe. Children are also protected by The Children Act (1989) and the Equality Act (2010). Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm then bullying may need to be dealt with as a child protection offence and the safeguarding policy adhered to. Where appropriate the school may refer to the MASH team via a request for help and support through the Dudley Children's Portal site, police or facilitate an Early Help referral.

Through the effective implementation of the anti-bullying policy, strategies of prevention, early intervention and prompt support, Ridgewood High School works to:

- Protect children from harm
- To ensure that children are treated with dignity and fairness
- To enable them to develop their full potential
- Recognise commonalities and celebrate differences
- Respect all children in the school community
- Celebrate diversity
- Promote emotional health and well-being
- Work together to support everyone involved in and affected by bullying
- Ensure that a common understanding of what bullying is and its effects is held by the whole school community

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Ridgewood High School. If bullying does occur, all children should be able to inform staff and feel confident that the incidents will be dealt with as promptly and effectively as possible.

Sometimes it is necessary to implement sanctions in line with Ridgewood's behaviour policy when a child is found to have bullied, but it is always essential to help them to understand why bullying is wrong. Punitive approaches may not always be as effective as restorative approaches, although it is recognised that every case is different. Ridgewood aims to provide support for all children involved in bullying behaviour/incidents. Our work in supporting both victims and those accused of perpetrating is a vital part of our work in ensuring the best outcomes for all children attending our school.

Ridgewood High School Anti- Bullying Ethos

The school ethos on bullying reflects the core principles of Ready, Respectful and Safe. Children have been inducted into these principles in line with the school's Behaviour Policy.

The anti- bullying policy reflects the rights of children to be protected and to feel safe and able to participate fully in school life.

The anti-bullying policy has been drawn up with reference to different stakeholders in the school community and the results of a survey. The policy will be reviewed annually with reference to different parts of the school community.

One of the key aims of the policy is to work in tandem with the Behaviour policy to create an environment where the children themselves do not tolerate bullying. We want the children to continue to develop the good behaviour evidenced by the recent Ofsted visit in 2023. Good behaviour is respectful and does not encourage others to bully. We need an ethos where children believe that the right thing to do is to tell, rather than acting as a bystander who tolerates and encourages the bully.

What is bullying?

Bullying is usually repeated behaviour, designed to embarrass or scare the victim to make the perpetrator look or feel tough or funny, and therefore more popular (in their mind) or to make a group feel closer because they are making someone an outsider. Bullying is usually done on purpose, but sometimes someone may feel bullied when there is no intent to harm from the person displaying the bullying behaviour.

Bullying may take many different forms including physical, emotional and cyber-bullying. It can involve physical violence, isolation and even low-level verbal bullying may have a significant impact on the victim.

Identifying bullying

It may be difficult to be certain that a particular case is bullying. However, any time a person complains of bullying this should be recorded along with action taken to support the child. Sometimes what is identified as bullying may be more accurately described as relational conflict. In reality it can be difficult to separate bullying and relational conflict, but the following may be useful as a guideline.

Relational conflict	Bullying
Equal power	Imbalance of power
Happens occasionally	Repeated negative action
Accidental	Deliberate
Remorse shown	No remorse
Effort to solve problem	No effort to solve problem

Relational conflict and bullying can both cause significant problems and the Support and Guidance team will offer support which may include Restorative approaches.

Effects of bullying

Bullying can have a serious and lasting impact on a child's life and on those around them. It can also affect the person carrying out this behaviour, their supporters and bystanders. It can take away the rights of a child to develop their potential and take an active part in school life.

Being bullied can damage a young person's confidence and sense of self-worth, making them feel at fault or isolated. It can lead to prolonged damage for some individuals, with outcomes such as depression, self-harm or even suicide in extreme cases. Some children truant to avoid being bullied, hindering their education as a result.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional - Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
- Physical - Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Sexual - Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Verbal - Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Indirect - Rumour spreading or non-verbal threatening gestures
- Extortion - Taking money, food or personal belongings
- Cyber - All areas of internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse, mobile phone threats by text and calling, misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities.

People can find that they are bullied for different reasons and also for no obvious reason at all. Bullying can be related to:

- Race, religion or culture
- Perceived sexual orientation, transgender and Homophobia
- Special educational needs
- Disabilities
- Appearance or health conditions
- Any other perceived difference – for example, children who receive free school meals, young carers, looked after children, travelers, asylum seekers or mid-term admissions

Aims of policy

All teaching and non-teaching staff, children, parents and governors should have an understanding of the definition of what bullying is.

- All teaching, non-teaching staff and governors should know what the school policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- Support and Guidance staff includes Heads of Year, Support and Guidance assistants.
- All children and parents/carers should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.

- All children not to tolerate bullying and to create a climate where bullying is not comfortable. Children who act as bullies will know that their behaviour will be reported and acted upon.
- Ridgewood High School takes bullying seriously. Children and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

Consultation Process

As part of the process of reviewing the anti-bullying policy, Ridgewood High School has conducted a survey of children's feelings about safety and bullying. A group of children from different year groups will discuss the policy before it is agreed by governors. Governors will also discuss the policy before it is implemented.

The role of staff and staff training

Staff must promote and reinforce the notions that IT IS SAFE TO TELL and IT IS EASY TO TELL because the school finds bullying behaviour harmful and unacceptable – this message is supported by the high value placed on Ready Respectful and Safe. Staff must always listen effectively and non-judgmentally when children are trying to communicate about a bullying issue, and through training and support, be fully aware of strategies that might be usefully employed in response. Senior staff and pastoral staff have a particular responsibility to support colleagues in dealing with incidents of bullying. Consideration must also be given to individual needs and circumstances.

Staff are given regular training through whole staff and Year meetings. This includes updates in policy, curriculum or legislation. Specific training information, findings from surveys and work with children is disseminated to staff on Inset days.

Ridgewood High School will support staff's needs for in-service training to help ensure that anti-bullying strategies are effective and raise awareness of possible bullying risks and vulnerable groups/individuals.

Staff should always consider their responsibility as role models and subsequently go about their duties in an anti-oppressive manner.

School staff are on duty around the school before school, during break and lunch and after school. All staff have a duty to record and report any observations or disclosures of bullying to the appropriate year team and/or Support and Guidance. CPOMS is the place where bullying incidents and actions to support children are recorded. This enables us to have a clear record of reporting and intervention. Support and Guidance staff will work together with form tutors and other relevant staff to ensure effective intervention.

The Support and Guidance team, including Heads of Year ensure that form tutors are informed and able to monitor and support children daily. They may also decide that extra support is needed from Heads of Year, Support and Guidance or Peer Mentors. However, form tutors are normally the first line of support and daily contact for children experiencing

difficulties.

Parents/carers must be informed of their child's involvement in any incidents of bullying behaviour and strategies put in place by the member of staff dealing with the incident/s.

Bullying of or by school staff whether by children, parents or staff must be reported to the relevant line manager and Head Teacher. Matters should be dealt in line with relevant discipline policy guidelines.

The role of children and participation

Children must be actively involved at all stages in anti-bullying activity. They are canvassed from time to time via questionnaires in tutor time to ensure that they understand that Ridgewood is always actively involved in ensuring that their rights to enjoy learning and leisure are protected.

Peer bystanders – Bullying will continue unless someone is able to deal with the problem. Children are encouraged to report if they have seen bullying at the earliest opportunity and not let the bullying continue – this includes if they are part of a group that is bullying.

Children are informed of their role and responsibility through the understanding and agreement to Rights Respecting School Pledge. The role of bystanders will be addressed in assemblies at least once a year.

All children should be made aware of safe methods of reporting bullying incidents through their child planner, form tutors and the Support and Guidance team.

Peer Mentoring – The Peer Mentoring scheme in Ridgewood has been re-launched post-covid following updated training provided by Phase Trust. The peer mentoring scheme is available to any child needing support in Y7-9. Children may refer themselves or be recommended by staff or parents. The scheme involves matching the younger child with someone in Y10 or 11. They meet formally one morning during registration in the Library. Peer mentors undergo specific training and have to go through a formal application process.

The Peer Mentors are proactive in promoting an anti-bullying environment within Ridgewood through raising awareness of issues and organising anti-bullying week activities.

The role of form tutors

Form tutors have a key role as a protective factor for children. They see children very day and notice changes in mood and behaviour. Form tutors need to be vigilant and encourage children to be open about their experiences of school. Form tutors also need to engage with CPOMS to log and record the follow up to any reports of bullying.

The role of Governors

The Governors ensure that the policy is implemented across the whole of the school.

Governors receive a report each half term on all bullying and prejudice related incidents. This includes a regular review of the policy and information obtained from monitoring data and surveys. Governors also apply the disciplinary sanctions as appropriate to the circumstances.

The governors are always consulted about the policy.

The role of parents/carers

The parent/carer is vital in the implementation of this policy. Sometimes a child will not inform school staff if they are being bullied but will inform their parent or other family member. When this is done the parent/carer is expected to contact the form tutor or a member of the Support and Guidance team to discuss the incident to enable staff to deal with the issue.

A parent/carer may also see changes at home that may possibly indicate that bullying is taking place. It is again vital that the parent communicates any concerns to school staff.

Anti-bullying information is passed onto parents throughout their child's time at Ridgewood; general information at induction evening, displays at parent events, newsletter articles and e-safety awareness sessions.

The parent/carer of a child displaying bullying behaviour must be contacted by school staff and then, if necessary, invited into the school to discuss the behaviour shown by their child. It is also essential that the parent/carer of the child doesn't feel isolated and that they are also getting support in ensuring that the behaviour is not repeated.

Parents/carers must be informed of any bullying issues and informed of any interventions.

Methods of reporting bullying

Ridgewood High School endeavors to establish an environment where children feel safe and confident in reporting incidents of bullying.

Staff - Children are advised and supported in reporting incidents/concerns to staff. In particular form tutors, pastoral staff or SLT. Children are advised that matters are dealt with sensitively and always with the minimal risk of repercussions. Any actions taken will be done after discussion with the child who is reporting it.

Support for children who are bullied

If a child has been bullied the priority is help them feel safe. School staff must ensure that at all times the child's needs are paramount. The child complaining about bullying should be central to decision making about next steps. If it is needed the child must be allowed time to discuss what has happened. Provision of a bullying diary can help to monitor and identify the difficulty for the child and adults. The parent must also be involved and reassured that the

matter is being dealt with effectively and that their child is safe.

Peer mentors - Peer mentors are available to all children in Year 7-9.

Kooth.com, a free online counselling service, is introduced to children in Year 7 and children are reminded of this throughout their time at Ridgewood.

There are a range of strategies which can be offered to the child being bullied. These include:

- Talking with parents
- Speaking to the other child/children
- Provision of safe area/ adult to report to
- Diary/log
- Restorative approaches – meetings
- Provision of peer mentor
- Head of Year involved.
- Other child spoken to by teacher
- Other child isolated
- No-blame strategy
- Moved class
- Teaching staff made aware
- Time Out
- Support and Guidance mentor
- Sanctions for the bully – evidence must be clear

When receiving information of bullying problems staff must act in a sympathetic manner and find out as much detail as possible.

Agreed packages of support can be written up and reviewed between the child, parent/carer and school staff. This provides confidence and clarity to the support being provided.

Interventions should:

- Avoid humiliating the child who has been bullied or further enforce their feelings of powerlessness
- Consult the child who has been bullied in the planning of the intervention strategy.
- Take steps that do not escalate the bullying
- Work to develop resilience and confidence for the child
- Avoid disruption to the child's daily routine and education
- Encourage the child who has been bullied to report any further incidents

Safeguarding policies may come into force in some rare cases where serious risk is identified. In such situations the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Helen Baldry, must be informed and relevant partner agencies involved.

Support for children displaying bullying behaviour

If a child has displayed bullying behaviour, they need to recognise that their behaviour has been wrong and the reasons why. It must be clearly stated to them that Ridgewood will not tolerate this behaviour and the consequences for them. Consequences should reflect the severity and persistence of the bullying and in line with the schools' behaviour policy.

Personal targets for the child who has displayed bullying behaviour may be included within a behaviour programme for the child. Targets will be supported by the Support and Guidance team.

When appropriate, restorative approaches can be included and can involve the undertaking of peer mentoring responsibilities.

Pastoral staff should provide information and advice to the child who has displayed bullying behaviour and monitor their progress and behaviour. Improvement and positive behaviour should be acknowledged and rewarded as appropriate.

Discipline Procedures

Children who have displayed bullying behaviour must be helped to understand in that they have done wrong and there will be consequences for their behaviour. If a child is found to be bullying the key focus is on fixing the problem rather than a set of inflexible sanctions. In some cases, it may be deemed appropriate for the child to attend a bullying awareness session after school or to produce a project about the issue they have been involved in. If the problems persist the behaviour policy will be followed in issuing sanctions as appropriate. This may include delayed finish of the school day or supervised social time. In rare, very persistent and extreme cases permanent exclusion may be necessary.

Each case of reported bullying must be considered in its own context and discipline procedures administered appropriately.

Parents/carers must be informed of their child's involvement in known incidents of bullying.

Cyber Bullying

Matters relating to cyber bullying are incorporated within the School's procedures depicted in the internet use policy and the e-safety education delivered through the curriculum, awareness raising assemblies and information sessions for parents. Ridgewood recognise that often cyber bullying happens outside of the school, which can at times make school intervention difficult. However, where bullying outside of school is reported to staff, it will be investigated by school and action taken if appropriate. This may involve speaking to parents or involving other agencies. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives school the power to use its disciplinary powers to address children conduct when not on school premises, but only if it would be reasonable for the school to do so. For instance, the journey to and from school could involve incidents on public transport or in local shops, which would be reasonable for school to take action. In such situations where the difficulties are experienced

within the home and/or on personal networks, parents and children are advised that it might be more appropriate to call for intervention from other agencies, such as their service provider and/or police. However, when issues are impacting on school life and the general wellbeing of a child pastoral staff will follow procedures detailed within this policy and support children in the best way possible.

Annual Anti-bullying Week

Activities will run throughout anti-bullying week each year to raise awareness of bullying issues and promote all matters relating to the anti-bullying policy with staff, school governors, parents and children.

Anti Bullying in the Curriculum

Anti-bullying is extensively included in many areas of the curriculum at Ridgewood in a way that not only equips the children with the necessary skills and knowledge whilst at school but also prepares them for life at work and adulthood. PSHCE is integral to this but other subjects will also address these issues.

Anti-bullying messages are regularly integrated into the delivery and content of assemblies. Children are taught to respect difference and value diversity. E-safety and cyber bullying are an integral aspect to the ICT/Computing curriculum throughout KS3 & KS4 including the fact that it is against the law to discriminate against someone because of their protected characteristics.

Monitoring and evaluation

Cases of bullying are recorded, monitored and reviewed by the Support and Guidance team with the Designated Safeguarding Lead who monitors all bullying incidents on CPOMS. Reporting of incidents should be recorded on CPOMS. The Support and Guidance team, with Heads of Year will ensure that form tutors are informed and involved in monitoring and follow up. DSL reports half termly to the governing body the number of incidents and outcomes. The evaluation of the policy will be overseen by the DSL and other stakeholders including Heads of Year.

Links to other policies

E-Safety Policy
Ridgewood Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
Equality Policy
SEN Policy
Behaviour Policy
Attendance Policy
Whistle Blowing Policy