

RAMKRISHAN PARAMHANS SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

Introduction

We seek to fulfil the needs of learners in a caring, happy environment, enabling them to realise their true potential as young people and citizens. We aim to enable our learners to :-

PREPARE for adult life in a happy, caring and purposeful environment.

ACHIEVE their full potential regardless of individual needs.

CARE for everyone and encourage respect and tolerance.

ENJOY education and rejoice in success.

This policy is designed to provide information and guidance for all members of the school community on the issues of bullying, discrimination and harassment. It outlines action to be taken against perpetrators of bullying and harassment.

Aims and Objectives of the Policy

- To satisfy the requirements set out in the CBSE circular no : Acad - 17/2015 (CBSE / Acad / Dir (Arti)/2015) dated 9th March 2015)
- To ensure the school creates a community in which every individual feels valued, diversity is celebrated and all members feel safe.
- To raise awareness of issues related to all aspects of bullying, harassment or discrimination amongst students, parents/carers, teachers and the wider school community.

- To create simple channels of communication and systems to deal with bullying and harassment for school staff, students and parents/carers.
- To promote the importance of preventing bullying whenever possible, as opposed to reacting to it.
- Through its implementation, instances of bullying will be more readily identified, confronted and reconciled.
- The policy will identify a range of strategies and sanctions that can be used to deal with bullying.

Definition of terms

Bullying : The definition of bullying is, “Behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. The definition also recognises the imbalance of power between the victim and perpetrator.

Harassment : is a similar phenomenon. Should an individual or group be the victim of constant verbal or physical abuse, then this is harassment. It can also take a sexual form, when the victim is being targeted by the perpetrator due to his/her gender.

Discrimination : is the deliberate targeting of individuals or groups due to their religious beliefs, disability, gender, appearance or race. It can be verbal and physical in nature.

The above terms often overlap and could all be applicable in certain cases.

Protected Characteristics

The Fundamental rights states that it is unlawful for a school to discriminate against a student or by treating them less favourably because of their :

- Sex
- Race
- Disability (including special educational needs)
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity

RKP School also adopts these categories when dealing with inter-student relationships and identifying types of bullying, discrimination and harassment.

Our pledge and expectations of students

The school refuses to countenance any kind of bullying, discrimination or harassment. We expect students to respect the rights of every member of the school community, regardless of appearance, race, gender, sexual orientation/gender reassignment, disability or religion.

Any incident of bullying, discrimination or harassment made known to the school will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken. RKP School takes a firm line against such behaviour and a range of sanctions, including permanent exclusion from school, will be considered. Such behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Forms of bullying and harassment

Bullying can take many forms and the list below is designed to highlight some of these:

- **Physical** - Hitting (major assault or persistent minor assault) – punching, kicking, damage to personal property, theft of money and attempts to extort money.
- **Verbal** - Name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks, persistently humiliating others by making them the subject of jokes or comments.
- **Indirect** - Spreading stories about someone, excluding from social groups, repeating rumours, acting as a go-between to incite fights or arguments.
- **Emotional** - Isolation – passing notes – use of e-mail, internet or other electrical devices for the purposes of bullying or threatening behaviour.
- **Bullying by race, gender, sexual orientation or disability** - Any physical or verbal action which targets an individual or group in any of these categories. This can include racist abuse or harassment, wearing provocative badges/insignia, bringing racist literature to school, racist or abusive graffiti, or refusal to cooperate with others from a different ethnic group. Bullying in relation to sexual orientation/gender reassignment, verbal or physical abuse or written abuse relating to gay, lesbian or homophobic issues. Furthermore, any behaviour or action that targets pupils with special educational needs or a disability is also included in this category.
- **Cyber-bullying** - The advent of social media has created numerous challenges for parents/carers and schools. Very often harassment via social media takes place out of school. If serious threats are made against your child, parents/carers should inform the police in the first instance. The school is aware that often incidents will start outside of school but then come into school. In all instances, the school will do what it can to support parents/carers and students and advise on courses of action to take.

Procedures to follow when dealing with bullying/harassment – Teachers and all school staff

What are the warning signs?

There are numerous signs that a student is the victim of bullying or harassment:

- **Absence from school** - look for patterns Missing certain lessons – truanting Change in behaviour/ personality Frequent visits to staff to report illness Torn/dirty clothes.
- **Physical injury** – bruising, cuts etc.
- Reluctance to leave classroom at the end of lessons.
- Attention seeking behaviour.
- Unusual aggression or unusual reticence.
- Changes in work pattern both homework and classwork.
- Changes in friendship group.
- Student who suddenly becomes isolated.
- Student who is regularly the source of teasing by others.

In all instances, it is vital that staff are vigilant and act accordingly, deal with issues and refer to ANTI BULLYING COMMITTEE.

What do I do if I feel a student is being bullied/harassed ?

The 'golden rule' is never to ignore such behaviour. If a student(s) is a victim of bullying/harassment in class, speak to the perpetrators and issue sanctions accordingly. It may be that a verbal warning is sufficient. Should the behaviour continue, sanctions must be issued. Inform the same to Anti bullying committee. This will give the committee a record of the behaviour of certain students. The committee will then take further action if necessary. Those students involving themselves in bullying/harassment on a persistent basis will face more serious sanctions, including exclusion from school. Very serious incidents may lead to permanent exclusion.

What if a student approaches me to report an incident ?

Details of the incident should be recorded carefully in writing on a 'Pupil Statement Form', noting the time, the date, and any witnesses to the incident. A judgement has to be made concerning the level of severity of the incident. Lower level incidents can be dealt with and reconciled by individual staff but reference should be made to the Anti Bullying Policy. More serious cases should be referred to the appropriate committee.

IN EVERY CASE ANY NOTES MADE SHOULD BE PASSED TO THE COMMITTEE. EVERY MEMBER MUST RECORD INSTANCES OF BULLYING/HARASSMENT.

How to deal with perpetrators - action

The following points will help to structure any investigation : -

- Deal with the situation as thoroughly as possible and make a full written record of evidence from all parties involved. This will be placed in student files.
- Listen to the victim, acknowledging the sincerity of the report.
- Regard the matter as serious and a priority.
- Listen to both sides of the story separately and make a judgement. If it is appropriate bring both parties together for reconciliation.
- Inform parents/carers as soon as possible and bring into school if necessary. Sanctions should be proportionate to the offence. Committee will consult to decide on a suitable sanction.
- All sanctions from detentions, placement in the Isolation Room/Inclusion Room, parental interviews and fixed-term exclusions will be considered. In very serious and repeated cases, permanent exclusion may be considered.
- Make contact with all concerned to ensure people understand what is happening and the action taken.
- Monitor the situation – speak to the victim to ensure the situation has not arisen again at a future date. It is vital that victims are offered support and spoken to after the event.
- Victims and perpetrators may be referred to the counsellor for support.

Perpetrators should be left in no doubt that their behaviour is unacceptable and they should be encouraged to view the situation from the perspective of the victim (through the Restorative Approach). They should also be made aware that further examples of their behaviour will incur a more severe sanction.

How can we help to prevent bullying?

- The Guidance states that prevention is the most effective way to counter bullying.
- The 'Positive Relations Policy', which identifies sanctions to be used for unacceptable behaviour, is available on the school website and is included in an abridged format in student planners and the Parent Information Booklet/prospectus (available from the school reception).
- A robust approach against any form of bullying, discrimination and harassment.
- Tutors will discuss bullying, discrimination and harassment in tutorials. Tutors will foster a caring and supportive atmosphere within the school, based on respect.
- Cover the theme of bullying, discrimination and harassment in curriculum areas where possible (for example, in English, Humanities and assemblies).
- Supervise corridors between lessons in accordance with guidelines issued.
- Ensure staff attend staff duties in the designated areas on time.
- Staff to be vigilant to inspect the quiet out of the way corners when on duty.
- Use of students as 'buddies', who will pass on information to the committee. Victims may feel more inclined to divulge incidents to other students.
- Encourage students to report any form of bullying, discrimination or harassment and not to suffer in silence.
- Use of safe havens, clubs, societies, library at lunchtimes.
- Discuss these issues in departmental meetings, staff meetings and assemblies.

Warning signs for students and parents/carers

All parents naturally worry from time to time that their child may be subjected to bullying, discrimination or harassment. Listed below are a few signs and symptoms, which may indicate this is taking place. However, many of these signs could be indicative of other problems. Parental judgement is vital in this area. It must also be stressed that parents must also look for signs of their child being the perpetrator as well.

Signs that may indicate your child is a victim of bullying

- Reluctance to go to school.
- Not wanting to go out alone at weekends or in the evening.
- Torn, damaged or dirty clothes when they come in.
- Loss of money, property, asking for money repeatedly.
- Not sleeping, having nightmares, bed wetting.
- Lower standard of work.
- Change of mood, behaviour, emotional state.
- Unusual aggression or reticence in the home.
- Physical injuries.
- Change of friendship group patterns
- Distressing or anonymous telephone calls at home.

We strongly advise you to check your child's use of e-mail/internet facilities or mobile phone (text messaging and social media sites). Unfortunately, this is an ideal medium for a child either to be a perpetrator or victim. If you suspect your child is being bullied, try to encourage them to discuss it with you. If appropriate, inform the school. We will always endeavour to resolve the issue and take any necessary step.

Student Advice – steps to take

- If you have been the victim of bullying, discrimination or harassment, report it as soon as possible.
- DON'T SUFFER IN SILENCE. Should you feel uneasy about speaking to staff about the issue, report it through the complaint box. This is checked weekly and reports are followed up.
- Be assertive but not aggressive. Tell the perpetrator to stop, say you don't like their behaviour. If it continues, don't let the perpetrator see you are upset. This is what they are trying to achieve.
- Tell someone as soon as possible when an incident occurs. (A trusted friend, a teacher, your parent/ carer for example). Should you feel uneasy doing this, we have older students who act as mentors and these will be publicised during the school year.
- Join a club. Get involved in school activities.
- Avoid risky situations. Don't go into isolated areas.
- Be proud of yourself – you have got qualities and strengths. Don't let perpetrators make you feel ashamed of yourself.
- Take a pride in your personal appearance and hygiene.
- Don't be tempted to stay away from school. Come to school, report the situation. We will investigate it and support you.
- Don't give in to demands made by perpetrators to provide them with money, sweets or other more valuable items. Say 'no' and report it to parents/carers or a teacher.

Students and parents/carers should be aware that school rules covering all aspects of behaviour extend to cover the daily journeys to and from school and, of course, all school trips.

Sanctions

- Oral/written warning.
- Suspension from attending classes/school for a specified period.
- Withholding or cancelling the results.

- Imposition of fine upto a specified amount.
- Expulsion/rustication from school in rarest of rare cases.