

ROEDEAN

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Aims

School Aims: Roedean aims to provide a stimulating education and exciting extra-curricular opportunities in an environment which is supportive and friendly.

In order to support the wider school aims the Anti Bullying Policy aims to ensure that all pupils are free to enjoy a stimulating education and exciting extra-curricular opportunities free from :

- the fear of being bullied
- opportunities to act with bullying behaviours

and certain of:

- who to go to, to ask for help and what will happen when they ask for help
- what the factors are which can increase the likelihood of bullying behaviours so that they can be prevented

Objectives

In order to fulfil these specific anti-bullying aims, Roedean:

1. Ensures that the whole community of parents, pupils and staff understand what bullying is.
2. Equips pupils with strategies which enable them to respond to bullying behaviour.
3. Reinforces the anti bullying message with pupils specifically through the Houses (to ensure that there are no 'initiation ceremonies' intended to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation) , PHSE, Tutor time, Assemblies, Chapel services; and in general through the curriculum, using projects, drama, stories, literature, historical events, current affairs and the daily interactions between staff and pupils.
4. Reinforces the anti bullying message with parents through regular formal parent communications, informal communications which reinforce the school's aims and quick response to concerns as they are aired.
5. Reinforces the anti bullying message with the whole staff community through regular general and specific INSET, staff meetings and individual communications between staff members.
6. Ensures that parents, staff and pupils are aware of the procedures to follow if they are the victim of alleged bullying or if they feel that they might be acting in bullying ways.
7. Ensures that parents, staff and pupils understand the signs of bullying.
8. Provides a school Counsellor to support those who are the victims of bullying and those who are perpetrating bullying behaviours.
9. Provides Peer Listeners to support those who are the victims of bullying in tandem with other adult support services.
10. Ensures that all pupils understand the school's Behaviour Policy and the sanctions which may be put in place in response to substantiated incidences of bullying.

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Understanding Bullying: A definition

It is important to recognise what, in law, is defined as bullying. Bullying can be defined as:

“Deliberate, hurtful behaviour repeated over a period of time, and in circumstances where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.”

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- Roedean School does not tolerate any form of bullying.
- It is up to everyone in the community to stop bullying by making it unacceptable for anybody to be a bully without being found out.
- Bullying can take a wide range of forms, but anything which is done to another person which is meant to hurt them or embarrass them, either by an individual or as part of a group, may be considered to be bullying.

Some of the different types of bullying recognised by the school include:

- Emotional (being unfriendly, threatening looks/gestures, tormenting such as hiding belongings)
- Physical (pushing, hitting, shoving or any form of physical violence)
- Verbal (name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours)
- Sexual and sexist (unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments or those which are sexist)
- Cyber (all forms of abuse involving the internet, social websites, chat rooms, mobile phones, email, text messages, photographs etc)
- Exclusion (deliberately ignoring and refusing to allow someone to join in)
- Interference with possessions (hiding, stealing and destroying belongings)
- Racial (emotional, physical, verbal, sexual, cyber, exclusion, interference with possessions which is done in the name of the victim's perceived racial differences)
- Religious (emotional, physical, verbal, sexual, cyber, exclusion, interference with possessions which is done in the name of the victim's perceived religious differences)
- Cultural (emotional, physical, verbal, sexual, cyber, exclusion, interference with possessions which is done in the name of the victim's perceived cultural differences)
- Homophobic (emotional, physical, verbal, sexual, cyber, exclusion, interference with possessions which is done in the name of the victim's perceived differences in sexuality)
- Bullying (emotional, physical, verbal, sexual, cyber, exclusion, interference with possessions) which is done in the name of the victim's disability.

Cyber Bullying

It is recognised that in the case of cyber bullying, the victim and aggressor may not both be on the school premises at the time when the incidents occur. However, the school recognises its responsibility to address the problem where possible and will take action to prevent incidents of this nature, which may include consultation with the IT Manager. Where there is a question of a law having been broken, consultation of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 should be made, on a case by case basis. It includes legal powers that relate more directly to cyber-bullying; it outlines the power of head teachers to regulate the conduct of pupils when they are off site and provides a defence in relation to the confiscation of mobile phones and other items. It is also recognised that 'bystanders' can easily become perpetrators – by passing on or showing to others images designed to

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humiliate, for example or by taking part in online polls or discussions. Pupils, parents and staff should also refer to the School's I.T. policy for further information and details on how cyber bullying is discouraged.

Bullying on the Basis of Race, Colour, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexual Orientation or Age

Alleged bullying which focuses on the areas of equality and diversity will be addressed in the same way as other forms of bullying. However it will be seen in the context of Roedean's commitment to promoting an environment where all members of its community are valued and celebrated equally for their differences.

Signs of bullying

Bullying can cause serious psychological damage and even suicide. Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour. A pupil who is being bullied may display some of the following signs:

- Becomes frightened of coming to school, or frightened to attend specific lessons or go into specific areas of the school
- Changes to their usual routine
- Becomes more withdrawn or anxious than previously
- Begins stammering
- Threatens to run away or runs away
- Threatens suicide
- Begins to perform poorly at school
- Frequently has missing or damaged possessions
- Is always asking for extra money or never has money
- Has unexplained injuries
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Begins to bully others
- Stops eating or attending meals
- Is afraid to use the internet or a mobile phone
- Becomes nervous when a cyber message is received
- Is reluctant to discuss reasons for any of the above



Pupil's guide to how to respond if you are being bullied

If you are being bullied the following responses should help:

1. Explain to the bully that her words/actions are upsetting; she may not be aware of this. However if the bullying continues try not to show your feelings
2. Walk away quickly and confidently, even if you don't feel that way inside
3. If you are different in any way, be proud of it – it's good to be an individual
4. The bully will not stop if she thinks she can get away with such behaviour. Discuss the problem with your friends, tell a member of staff or ask our friends to tell a member of staff on your behalf. Don't forget to use your peer listeners.

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Pupil's guide to how to respond if you think someone is being bullied and how to prevent bullying

You can help to stop bullying:

1. If the girl being bullied is in any danger, fetch help. If she isn't, remain with her; your presence may ease the situation
2. Show that you and your friends disapprove
3. Give sympathy and support to other girls who may be bullied.
4. Be careful about teasing or making personal remarks. If you think they might not find your comments funny don't say them
5. If you know of serious bullying tell someone. The victim may be too scared or lonely to tell.



Parents' guide to bullying behaviours

Parental Involvement

Whenever a serious case of bullying is uncovered the parents or guardian of both the victim and the bully would normally be informed either in writing or by personal contact.

If your daughter is being bullied

Parents along with peers will probably be the first to hear of a bullying incident. They should not dismiss it. Parents should contact their daughter's Housemistress, Tutor, Senior Tutor, Deputy Headmistress or Headmistress if they are worried. It is essential to stay calm, supportive and find out the facts of the situation. Reassurance will be needed in order to persuade your daughter that she has done the right thing by telling you. You may find it helpful to have the following checklist at your side to ensure that correct information is passed to the school.

- Who was involved?
- Where did it take place?
- How often?
- Why did it take place?
- What form did the bullying take?

When you inform the school of these details you will want to ask what you can do to support the school in the action taken to support your daughter. You will also want to make a note of the suggested strategy the school intends to take. Stay in touch with the school so that they can be kept informed of how things are improving and to establish further contact if necessary.

If your daughter is involved in the bullying

It is important to work with the school to modify the patterns of behaviour which are causing your daughter to bully. Do not panic and blame yourself. Acknowledge that these things do happen and the school has mechanisms in place to deal with this issue. It is helpful to recognise some of the reasons why pupils behave in this way from time to time.

Children sometimes bully others because:

- They are not aware of how hurtful it is
- They are copying the behaviour of older siblings or people they admire
- They have a temporary difficulty integrating in their peer group
- They are bullying others because of encouragement from friends
- They are going through a difficult time personally and need help
- They have not yet learnt satisfactory ways for making firm relationships

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To stop your daughter from bullying others

- Talk with your daughter and help her to understand that what she is doing is unacceptable as it makes other girls unhappy
- Discourage other members of the family from using aggressive behaviour in order to get what they want
- Suggest ways of joining in activities with other pupils without bullying
- Liaise with the school: Housemistress, Tutor, Deputy Headmistress or Headmistress
- Make time to have regular chats about how things are going at school
- Check that your daughter has identified an adult at school to whom she can go to if she has a problem or a worry of any kind

Please note that the School will want to and need to take action if bullying occurs. The matter will be sensitively handled but it needs to be effective. Sanctions will dovetail with those outlined in the School's Behaviour Policy.



Complaints against the School

If your daughter is being bullied by a member of staff

You should use the complaints procedure laid down in the Handbook. Staff will receive regular training which enables them, to be aware of their own behaviours which may be interpreted as bullying and also how to reduce the risk of bullying in their work.

If you are not satisfied that the matter has been dealt with

Families who feel that their worries and concerns have not been addressed appropriately might like to consider the following:

- Make an appointment to discuss the matter with the Headmistress, keep a record of the meeting.
- Contact Ofsted directly on 08456 404040

Although the definition of bullying in common law includes a repetitive element, staff should be vigilant about seemingly isolated incidents which can form a pattern or the development of an asymmetrical power relationship.



Prevention of Bullying

The school aims to prevent bullying from becoming established. This is achieved by establishing a culture in which bullying is not tolerated and where it is seen as the responsibility of all members of the school community to report any instances of bullying.

- School Council provides a forum where girls can raise general issues of concern
- The curriculum is used as a vital means of teaching girls how to manage these feelings and specific issues are addressed in PHSE, , Assemblies, Chapel services and taken up by Tutors and House Staff.
- The Medical Centre provides a safe haven for girls who wish to seek more specific help
- The Counsellor and Peer Listening programme exists to support individuals in need.
- Girls are encouraged to develop a strong sense of self belief.

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Procedures for investigating a case of suspected bullying

Bullying events may be identified in several ways:

- Disclosure to a member of staff by the individual being bullied
- Disclosure to another pupil by the individual being bullied
- Witnesses to specific bullying events
- Suspicion of bullying based upon the indicators listed above.

In all cases an allegation of bullying should be treated seriously, open mindedly, fairly and investigated thoroughly.

Investigating a suspected case of bullying

All members of staff have a duty to respond straight away if they suspect, or are made aware of, a case of bullying. It may be possible for the staff involved to carry out an initial investigation; however, the preferred route is for staff to make a note of the date, time and nature of the incident and pass evidence onto the relevant house staff for investigation of the matter, in conjunction with Senior Tutors and the Deputy Head.

An investigation of bullying will take time: there are no instant solutions. However, the member of staff investigating should take the following steps:

- Victim(s), Aggressor(s) and Witness(es) will be interviewed by the member of staff investigating. All parties will be reassured of the discretion of the school in dealing with such matters within the limits of our confidentiality policy. The victim(s) in particular should be reassured that the matter will be dealt with and is being treated seriously.
- If the victim reports the matter, they should be spoken to first. If not, any witnesses should be interviewed, followed by the accused pupil and finally the victim.
- All pupils involved in the situation should be given a fair hearing and be permitted to tell their version of events without comment upon the nature of the behaviour described.
- A written summary of the information gathered should be made, and agreed by the individuals involved. This is important as it will enable the victim and witnesses to feel reassured that action is being taken, and for the accused party to feel that they have had a fair hearing.
- Remember that it can be hard to establish the facts
- A problem solving approach which avoids blame can be more effective in clarifying the situation and achieving change.

Action by the school

If it is felt that bullying has taken place, the victim should be told that action will be taken to prevent bullying from continuing in line with the School's Behaviour Policy. The bully needs to understand the effects of their actions upon the victim, and should be given support in order to modify their behaviour, including, if appropriate, counselling. If, in spite of support, the bullying behaviour continues, there are a number of possible sanctions available to the school. These may include:

- A verbal warning, recorded in the bully's file
- A letter of apology to the victim, with a copy to be kept on file
- Withdrawal of House privileges

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- Referral to the Headmistress for action in the case of persistent or severe bullying

The victim of the bullying will receive support from the School Counsellor or other supportive adults as required and their recovery will be closely monitored by a nominated adult who works closely in partnership with the victim's parents.

Partnership with Parents

Whenever a serious case of bullying is uncovered the parents or guardian of both the victim and the bully would normally be informed either in writing or by personal contact. This contact may involve House staff, the Senior Tutors, the Deputy Head or Headmistress.

Follow Up

The victim should be asked periodically whether the situation has been resolved and has remained resolved (usually after a week, with further follow up after several weeks). If any reprisals are reported, the Deputy Head must be informed immediately for further action to be taken.

Patterns

The Deputy Head will maintain a record of bullying incidents in order to observe any specific patterns or trends which suggest external factors which can be diminished in order to prevent further incidences of bullying.



Please also see the school's policies on:

- **Behaviour**
- **Child Protection**
- **Collective Worship**
- **Complaints**
- **Equality and Diversity**
- **PHSE**