



The Regent School

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THE REGENT SCHOOL - ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

A definition: Bullying is an “unprovoked and repeated behaviour that meets a need for excitement, status, material gain or group process and does not meet the needs or rights of other people who are harmed, made to feel miserable or frightened by the behaviour”

It is likely to occur between pupils, but also between staff and pupil. Teasing and exclusion is less serious in that no physical harm is caused but can lead to just as much distress and unhappiness. In every case, there is an imbalance and abuse of power: the stronger (not necessarily the older or bigger) inflicting an abuse of his / her power upon a person who is somehow perceived as weaker. By clear preventative steps and an open policy against bullying, we hope that The Regent School will remain as free as possible from the problem.

Measures designed to support the school’s policy:

Pupils are told that bullying is not tolerated at The Regent School. This is reinforced by Class Teachers through PSHE, Circle Time and Assemblies, which focus on aspects of bullying and interpersonal relationships. Openness is encouraged.

Staff are advised on measures to prevent, detect and deal with bullying, whilst non - academic staff are encouraged to report unacceptable behaviour they witness and pupils who seem anxious or unhappy. Parental support and communication is encouraged.

The “**Who will listen to me?**” poster is displayed around the School. It is explained to pupils by Class Teachers emphasising the options open to them for communication of all problems to someone who will listen and help.

Reliance is placed on the Class Teachers, where pupils should feel they have access to a confidential ‘ear’ on a regular basis as they will see the pupils daily. They are alert to pick up an ‘atmosphere’ and unusual patterns of behaviour. PSHE lessons also provide an open forum for discussion where concerns can be voiced and support sought and offered. In addition, Duty Staff visit remote parts of the school regularly during the duty day. Children are also encouraged to talk to any member of staff they feel comfortable with, if they feel they need someone to confide in. All pupils are encouraged to speak to any member of staff they feel they can trust.

However, sometimes children can be, and are, nasty to each other and the following guidelines offer help in how to deal with such situations. These guidelines are for the use of pupils and teachers who come across any form of bullying.

First steps for:

Pupils:

- a) If you feel you are being “picked on” (or teased) tell a member of staff (Class Teacher or any other) in confidence.
- b) If you see anyone being bullied (or teased) inform a member of staff immediately.
- c) Never support a bully.
- d) Do not accept a bully as a friend.
- e) Remember that you can hurt others by doing and saying unpleasant things as well as being a physical bully.
- f) Remember also that by doing and saying nothing, you are helping the bully.

Parents:

- a) Talk to your child and gently find out as much information as possible. Listen attentively to your child when he or she talks about the bullying. Your child’s emotional expression is an important aspect of healing. Ask for details, but don’t push too hard.
- b) To ensure that trust is maintained with your child, be discreet at all times when dealing with the information they may give you.
- c) Try to see both sides of any situation.
- d) Give your child positive and constructive advice on how to deal with the situation over the next few days.
- e) If the problem persists make contact with your child’s Class Teacher. This could be done via an email, a phone call through the School Office or in person.
- f) A meeting can be held with the relevant teacher in order to find a way forward to assist your child.
- g) The school will always be willing to listen to any concerns that parents may have about the well - being of their child. Communication is very important.

Staff:

- a) Remain calm; you are in charge. Reacting emotionally may add to the bully's fun and give the bully control of the situation.
- b) Take the incident or report seriously. Incidents need to be resolved, not just smoothed over.

- c) Take action as quickly as possible, but give yourself time to think through the situation before reacting. Blame may not be one sided. Both victim(s) and alleged bully(ies) must be spoken to. Do not jump to conclusions.
- d) Think hard about whether your action needs to be private or public.
- e) Reassure the victim(s). Don't make them feel inadequate or foolish.
- f) Offer concrete help, advice and support to the victim(s).
- g) Make it plain to the bully that you disapprove.
- h) Encourage the bully to see the victim's point of view and put themselves in his/her place.
- i) Deal with every bully in an appropriate way. Take into account your knowledge of him / her and which type of "punishment" would be effective for the bully. For example: some children will respond to a teacher's anger / disapproval by being mortified and by changing their behaviour; whereas others might be so used to hearing angry and disapproving words from adults that a teacher's anger would not be effective and so much more counselling could be necessary.
- j) Remember it is known that the "blame - punishment" approach is flawed – the bully usually ends up feeling abused and vengeful. It does not encourage the bully to accept responsibility for their behaviour and try to change.

The Regent School's approach should be constructive and positive and not only punitive.

Involving others – DO

- Inform the Headmaster, Heads of Departments or Year Group Leaders.
- Inform colleagues if the incident arose out of an unexpected situation where everyone should be vigilant in the future.
- Fill in the Incident Sheet which each Head of Department holds.

Final steps – DO

- Make sure that the incident doesn't live on through reminders from you or others.
- Try to think ahead to prevent a recurrence of the incident, if you uncover the trigger factor.

If you have to deal with bullying, what should you avoid?

DON'T

- Be over-protective and refuse to allow the victim to help him or herself.
- Do not assume that the bully is bad through and through; try to look objectively at the behaviour with the bully. Deal with the incident not with the person.
- Keep the whole incident a secret because you have dealt with it or if the victim asks you to.
- Call in the parents without speaking to the Headmaster or Heads of Department first and without having a constructive plan to offer either side.

The elements of the school's policy are:

- Bullying is wrong and all members of the school, children, teachers and parents, have a responsibility to report any incidents. The prevention of bullying is everybody's business.
- Any reports of bullying will be taken seriously.
- The Headmaster or Heads of Department should be informed of any incidents of bullying and they will decide whether parents should become involved.
- Parents of pupils involved should be notified of any incidence of bullying.
- Teachers should use the curriculum to get across messages about acceptable behaviour - drama, discussion groups, role - play etc.
- Everybody is encouraged to speak out against bullying. Everybody must care and accept responsibility to prevent it. Silence and secrecy nurture bullying.
- If in doubt, speak to the Headmaster, Heads of Department or Year Group Leaders.

The School's Responsibility

The Headmaster and his Staff take a very serious view of bullying and will investigate all cases with vigour and urgency.

- a) The School's ethos encourages and supports an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding.
- b) Pupils are assured that someone will listen to their version of events.
- c) Systems are in place to allow all staff to report concerns about pupils to the senior staff or Class Teacher.
- c) A meeting between the Headmaster / Head of Department and the parent (and if need be the culprit or / and victim) will take place.
- d) Counselling by an appropriate person will be offered to all sides.
- c) The Regent School will undertake to remove from school on a temporary or permanent basis anyone who makes another person's life miserable. These decisions will be made at the discretion of the Headmaster.

M. Dickson

Headmaster

January 2014

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