

ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

Statement of Intent

We, the students, staff and governors of Royds Hall Community School are committed to providing a caring, secure and non-threatening atmosphere for learning. We have a 'zero tolerance' policy towards harassment. Anyone who knows that harassment is happening is expected to report the matter to staff and be confident that all incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. The school will promote vigilance amongst staff and students to ensure that any form of bullying is identified and dealt with – this includes cyber bullying which can often take place out of school hours. Student voice will be an important feature of gauging our effectiveness and will lead to ongoing adjustments to practice to ensure that we are as effective as possible in stamping out bullying and ensuring that students feel safe and happy.

What is Harassment?

Harassment is behaviour which has the intention of annoying, frightening or hurting another person and includes all types of bullying. When someone behaves in a way that makes another person feel distressed, humiliated or threatened, this is harassment. Harassment usually involves repeated behaviour that is unwanted by the victim. It could take place several times a day or over a prolonged period. Harassment doesn't just involve 'face to face' behaviour and can also include unwanted texts or messages, using social networking sites and/or mobile technology which cause the victim alarm or distress.

Harassment results in pain and distress to the victim. It is anti-social behaviour and can be categorised as follows:-

- **Emotional**: Being deliberately unkind, shunning, excluding or tormenting (e.g. hiding books, leaving a student out of a game, etc).
- **Physical**: Pushing, kicking, hitting, tripping, punching or using any other sort of violence against a victim.
- **Racist**: Taunts, slurs, gestures, graffiti directed around a victim's race, religion or ethnicity.
- **Sexual**: Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments (e.g. grabbing a victim's body or using derogatory remarks such as "slut")
- **Homophobic**: Any harmful references or conduct focusing on the issue of a victim's alleged or actual sexual orientation (examples of names include 'gay' or 'dyke').
- **Transphobic**: Any bullying that affects young people who are trans but can also affect those questioning their gender identity as well as students who are not trans but do not conform to gender stereotypes. This also includes bullying related to a student's family being or being perceived to be trans
- **Verbal**: Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing (e.g. making fun of a student's appearance, mannerisms or intelligence).

Some incidents may display more than one kind of harassment.

Harassment: The Context

Harassment can take place in the classroom but is more than likely to happen on the way to and from school or outside lesson time. It can also include bullying based on family members, for example, name calling about poverty, sexuality, spreading rumours or abusive comments about family members. It can occur several times a day and may be sustained over a long period of time. Bullies get satisfaction from another person's pain and humiliation. They depend for their success on the silence of their victims.

Harassment can be carried out by individuals or groups and most bullies feel confident enough to act in public, the onlookers becoming part of the process.

Why is it Important to Respond to Harassment?

Everybody has the right to be treated with respect and no-one deserves to be bullied. Bullying hurts and has even been linked to teenage suicide. Bullies have a greater chance of becoming aggressive adults. Tolerance and safety are rights we expect in our personal and working lives. Schools should be no different.

Objectives of this Policy:

- All governors, teaching and support staff, students and parents/carers should have a full understanding of what harassment is and encompasses;
- All governors and staff should be thoroughly familiar with the anti-harassment policy and should follow it accordingly when harassment is reported or observed;
- All students and parents/carers should, through familiarity with our policy, know what steps to take when harassment occurs. This is emphasised on page 28 of the student planner;
- Students and parents/carers should be reassured that the school takes harassment very seriously and will support victims and their families when serious incidents are reported;
- Harassment will not be excused, permitted or tolerated under any circumstances.

Warning Signs and Symptoms of Harassment

Victims of harassment are often reluctant to admit they are suffering at school. Many feel embarrassed to admit what is happening, are afraid no one will believe them or that their torment will increase if they 'tell tales'. Everyone must emphasise the importance of reporting all incidents of harassment whether it is observed or experienced first-hand.

In the event that a student is not forthcoming about harassment there may be signs or symptoms suggesting a problem. Adults should be aware that the following signs/symptoms may indicate harassment.

A student may be a victim of harassment if he or she:

- Is noticeably frightened or evasive when asked "What's wrong"?
- Suddenly loses appetite;
- Begins bullying or shows unusual aggression with other children;
- Returns home hungry (lunch or lunch money may have been stolen);
- Repeatedly 'loses' lunch money or possessions;
- Has unexplained cuts, scrapes or bruises;
- Arrives home with dirty/torn clothes or with books/other possessions damaged;
- Produces poor school work;
- Repeatedly claims to feel ill before going to school;
- Cries in bed or suffers from nightmares;
- Threatens or attempts self-harm, even suicide;
- Attempts to or actually runs away from home;
- Begins stammering, appears nervous, avoids eye contact;
- Seems withdrawn or suddenly has low self-esteem;
- Truants from school or wants to change schools;
- Makes significant changes to his/her routines;
- Begs to be driven or escorted to school rather than continue walking or using the bus;
- Demonstrates a marked fear of going to school;
- Gives unlikely/unconvincing excuses for any of the above behaviours.

Procedures

Incidents of harassment need to be reported to the relevant Community Progress Leader who will inform the Academic Mentor (in the Primary Phase to a Deputy Head or Head of Primary Phase). Both bully and victim will be counselled by their Community Progress Leader (in the Primary Phase, by a Deputy Head or Head of Primary Phase). Serious cases will be recorded formally by the Headteacher and parents/carers will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the problem.

In particularly serious circumstances other agencies, such as the Police, will be consulted.

The emphasis will always be on stopping the bullying quickly and attempts will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.

Outcomes

- Serious incidents should be recorded in the Royds Hall Community School register of bullying incidents - kept in the Pastoral Office (in the Primary Phase, kept on CPoms and SIMs) on behalf of the Headteacher.
- The person(s) responsible will be asked to genuinely apologise.
- Other punitive consequences may take place.
- Parents/carers will be kept informed.
- In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered.
- If possible the students will be reconciled.
- Community Progress Leader and other staff (in the Primary Phase, Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher of Primary Phase) will monitor each case to ensure a repetition does not take place. Checks will be made with the victim to ensure that things have improved.

Prevention Activities at Royds Hall

- Anti-bullying issues will be addressed during ERIC lessons (in the Primary Phase during class sessions such as 'circle time', PSHCE and morning meetings) in each year group.
- The school fully supports and encourages the work of students in the Peer-mentoring scheme.
- We have students who have been trained as anti-bullying ambassadors. These students present in assemblies, visit academic mentor groups and are available to all students. This is also part of our student leadership development programme.
- We present stories and poems with an anti-bullying theme which will be used in assemblies.
- We have an 'open-door' policy operates for all students with access to any member of staff, especially pastoral staff and the Senior Leadership Team to allow students to report harassment in confidence and with reassurance that something will be done.
- Posters and policies will be displayed throughout the school.
- Students will be regularly made aware of which adults they can talk to – from academic mentors, community progress leaders, members of SLT or any teaching or support members of staff, our school nurse, etc.
- Any adults approached on a harassment matter must respond clearly.
- Students have formed the Diversity Group and Diversity Ambassadors to celebrate and embrace diversity and to educate all students, including considering ways to counteract problems when they occur and as quickly and as robustly as possible.
- The school is a Stonewall Champion school.
- The school provides training and information about how to deal with bullying and specific sessions about cyber bullying and how to deal with this form of harassment.

At Royds Hall Community School we believe in the restorative justice for schools approach. This is based on four key features:

- **Respect** - for everyone by listening to other opinions and learning to value them
- **Responsibility** - taking responsibility for your own actions
- **Repair** - developing the skills within our school community so that its individual members have the necessary skills to identify solutions that repair harm and ensure behaviours are not repeated
- **Reintegration** - working through a structured, supportive process that aims to solve the problem and allows young people to remain in mainstream education

We have four trained members of our Pastoral Team who will work groups of students to resolve differences and ensure that any actions that cause distress through harassment are dealt with effectively