Anti-Bullying Policy

Approved by:	Board of Trustees
Last reviewed on:	November 2023
Next review due by:	November 2025

Our Vision

At Rugby High School, we set heights in our heart.

While striving for excellence for all, in all its forms, our aim as a school is to encourage our students to be ambitious and creative thinkers, to face challenges, to work together, to learn to apply and adapt their knowledge and understanding so that they are prepared and excited for the future, whatever it may bring.

Our aspiration is that all our students understand what it is to show compassion and empathy and to take responsibility as brave, independent global citizens.

Our students will move on from Rugby High School knowing how to be Resilient, Healthy and Successful.

Inspired by their curiosity and love for learning our students will leave us with a confident voice, ready to take their place, knowing that their actions have the potential to change the world.

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The Policy

This policy is informed by 'Preventing Bullying Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies DfE 2017' , 'Tackling Cyber Bullying, DFE 2014' and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.' This policy should be read in association with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which includes the Child on Child Peer Abuse Policy (of which this policy forms a part), the mobile phone policy, behaviour policy and its eSafety Policy. It has been consulted on with students, staff and parents.

Statement on Bullying

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in this school. Rugby High School's ethos is one of Kindness, Care and Respect, and as such we expect every member of the community to behave with Kindness, Care and Respect to every single member of the community.

Bullying has no place at Rugby High School, and will be challenged in every case.

Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

If bullying does occur, we operate a "call it out" approach, so all students must tell a member of staff if they witness bullying, and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

It is not enough to be silent bystander: "Call it out." This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening, or has witnessed bullying is expected to tell a member of staff, who will then follow the anti-bullying procedure.

Definition of Bullying

There is no one definition of bullying, but for clarity, this school has chosen to adopt Warwickshire's Safeguarding Children definition:

"When a person's or group of people's behaviour, over a period of time, leaves someone feeling one or more of the following: Physically and/or mentally hurt or worried Unsafe and/or frightened Unable to do well and achieve 'Badly different', alone, unimportant and/or unvalued Unable to see a happy and exciting future."

Bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This may involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship making it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or from having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Bullying can take many forms

Bullying can include:

- Name-calling, taunting, mocking or making offensive comments
- Offensive graffiti
- Excluding people from groups
- Gossiping and spreading hurtful or untrue rumours
- Theft/ taking belongings
- Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)

- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist: racial /religious taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments or comments focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber-bullying: 'virtual' bullying occurs online. It can occur in or outside school at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click. It can include: sending inappropriate, offensive or degrading text messages, emails or instant messages via the internet, setting up websites designed to embarrass or upset individuals or excluding them from social networking sites. (See appendix 2)
- Homophobic/biphobic or transphobic comments
- Students may be bullied for a variety of reasons, including:
- ethnic background, religion or culture
- disability, special educational needs or a particular ability
- sexual orientation
- gender (including sexualised bullying)
- size, appearance or health conditions
- social or economic status (poverty, class)
- age/maturity
- home circumstances – certain groups such as students in public care, or young carers, or those with same sex parents/carers or whose parents/carers have mental health difficulties may be particularly vulnerable.

Friendship Issues and Bullying

For instances where friends may fall out on several occasions over a period of time, it may not be regarded as bullying. We must be careful to avoid the term 'bullying' being used as a term that may be chosen by one of the party's involved to try to escalate the seriousness of the matter. The school works hard to ensure that all students know the difference between bullying and simply "falling out".

Rugby High School Anti Bullying pledge:

For pupils who experience bullying:

If you are being bullied:

• You will be heard and supported in reporting bullying and given help. Action will be taken. We are a Call it out school

• You will be supported and helped to rebuild confidence and feel safe again at Rugby High School

For pupils who engage in bullying behaviour:

• Sanctions and 'restorative conversations' hold them to account for their behaviour and help them to face up to the harm they have caused.

• They learn to behave in ways which do not cause harm in future because they have developed their emotional skills and knowledge

• They learn how they can take steps to repair the harm they have caused

For Rugby High School:

• The whole community is clear about the anti-bullying stance the school takes; pupils, as well as staff and other members of the school, are fully engaged in developing and reviewing anti-bullying work in the school. Every chance is taken to develop prevention and consideration for others through our ethos of Kindness, Care and Respect

• All pupils are clear about the roles they can take in preventing bullying, including the role of bystanders.

For School staff (including Governors):

• They promote a climate where bullying and violence are not tolerated and cannot flourish, and they continually develop best-practice based on knowledge of what works

• There is a review of the schools anti-bullying policy at least every two years and, as a result, the policy and procedures are updated as necessary curriculum opportunities are used to address bullying, pupil support systems are in place to prevent and respond to bullying

• They have addressed school-site issues and to ensure all spaces remain safe, all staff take part in relevant professional development, and are clear about their roles and responsibilities in preventing and responding to bullying, including reporting

• All staff are aware of the importance of modelling positive relationships

• Data systems (MyConcern/SIMS) gathers information about anti-bullying incidents, and this data is used for monitoring and evaluation

• They work in partnership with parents, other schools and with Children's Services and community partners to promote safe communities.

For parents:

• Rigby High School does not tolerate bullying of any kind

• The term 'bullying' is not an umbrella term that can be used for all incidents where one person has been hurt by another (either physically or emotionally)

• If you are concerned about any issues regarding bullying, please contact the school

• As a parent/career you can be confident all reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with in a manner sensitive to the needs of the individual child concerned

• You will be kept informed as the matter progresses

Prevention Methods

At Rugby High School, everyone is expected to conduct themselves with Kindness, Care and Respect

This is enshrined in the Code of Conduct and key policies such as Behaviour, Esafety and Safeguarding policy.

At Rugby High School we are vigilant for signs of bullying and always take seriously reports of bullying. We use the curriculum, tutor time, assemblies, the personal development programme and other appropriate times to reinforce the ethos of the school and help students to develop strategies that combat bullying-type behaviour.

We use a variety of methods to help students prevent bullying. As and when appropriate these may include:

- 'Call it out' approach, that expects anyone who witnesses, or considers an action to be bullying to report to an adult.
- Zero tolerance approach from the headteacher and all staff at RHS
- Restorative conversations that ensure students understand the impact of bullying actions
- Buddy/mentoring systems and peer listeners
- Assemblies
- Cool to be Kind week
- Internet Awareness
- Display materials around the school by a variety of means (posters, website etc)
- PSHE sessions on E-safety and bullying
- Behaviour curriculum
- Parental/Staff/Student surveys
- External workshops/performances
- Celebrate difference and diversity through diverse displays, books and images, the work of our diversity prefects, whole school culture day; Black History Month; the celebration of different religious and cultural festivals across the year; LGBQT+ History Month and Pride Week
- Early Help: It is recognised that both victims and perpetrators may benefit from the provision of early help. Early Help includes help and support provided by the school e.g. building a circle of protection through friendship groups, buddying and or mentoring, Lifespace coaching, pastoral intervention, counselling, a formal Early Help Assessment involving both the student and their parents and carers and a variety of external agencies. Early help is not a sanction. Early intervention is a means of supporting students. Early help requires the consent of those to whom it is offered. It may be offered to victims and to perpetrators irrespective of whether or not an allegation is proven, not proven or judged to be false.

The responsibility of "all" cannot be stressed enough. The responsibility of the bystander challenging bullying (not being complicit) is vital. All students should know that the school cares about bullying.

Signs of Bullying Incidents

Everyone should be alert to signs of distress in students. Students are sometimes reluctant to disclose bullying either because of threats or because they believe that disclosure will make the problem worse so it is especially important that all members of the RHS community are alert to the

signs and symptoms that a child may be being bullied. These may be the early signs of bullying. These may include:

- Fears of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go to school on the school/public bus
- asks to be driven to school all the time
- changes their usual routine
- does not want to attend school (school phobic)
- begins truanting school
- asks for money or starts stealing money
- comes home starving
- stops eating
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- some possessions go 'missing'
- dinner or other monies continually get 'lost'
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- starts becoming aggressive, disruptive, unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- is scared to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

Students MUST NOT:

- take part in any kind of bullying and should watch out for potential signs of bullying among their peers.
- be bystanders to incidents of bullying.

Students MUST:

- support the victim if they witness bullying, encourage them to report the bullying and, if possible, accompany them to tell a trusted adult.

Parents and carers SHOULD:

- look out for potential signs of bullying incidents (see above)
- tell their child **not to retaliate** and support and encourage them to **report the bullying**.

Bullying which occurs outside school premises

Where bullying or harassment occurs off the school site, including cyber-bullying, the school will always recommend reporting the incident to the police. School staff members have the power to discipline students for misbehaving outside the school premises under Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. This may include bullying incidents that occur off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside local shops, or in a town or village centre or online outside of school hours. *If a member of the senior team deems it appropriate, the school on occasion will implement a sanction and restorative conversation with a perpetrator for an incident that has been perpetrated offsite, but in all cases of incidents offsite the school will encourage and support a victim to report incidents to the police.*

The School's Duties

The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 provide that the proprietor of an Academy or other independent school ensures that bullying at the school is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy.

A key provision in The Equality Act 2010 is the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which came into force on 5 April 2011 and covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

-   eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
-   advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
-   foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Criminal law

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986. If the relevant member of staff feels that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, any person who sends an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender, is guilty of an offence if their purpose in sending it was to cause distress or anxiety to the recipient.

Reporting Bullying

Bullying is a form of abusive behaviour and is not acceptable. Students who experience bullying and their parents and carers are encouraged to report instances promptly to a member of staff: "Call it out."

Prompt reporting means that the incident can be investigated and early help put in place to support the victim and support (and if necessary impose a sanction on) the perpetrator. Any member of staff who receives a disclosure in relation to bullying should treat it as a safeguarding matter and should

follow the guidance in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy with regard to listening to the disclosure, reporting and recording it (using either My Concern or a green form – in serious circumstances, and if a child is at immediate risk of harm, the member of staff should contact a DSL personally immediately.)

Reporting Methods

- Talking to a member of staff of their choice (particularly Tutor, Head of Key Stage/Year, pastoral team member
- Online via the "student concern for another student" button, or "report a safety concerns button"
- Contacting local and national support agencies for advice/support listed on the school website and regularly shared by the Pastoral team before Christmas, Easter and Summer holidays
- Talking to parents/carers and this information being passed to the school
- Call ChildLine to speak with someone in confidence on 0800 1111
- Via the prefect teams, form captains, peer listeners or any of the prefect and Senior Student teams

There are a few support plans that can be put in place for a pupil who feels they are being bullied, and for a pupil who may be the perpetrator of bullying.

Support in place could be one of the following:

- Safe Space
- Lunch time groups
- Work in boost
- Drop-ins
- Referral to Lifespace
- Peer-Mentoring
- Meet and Greet
- Self-awareness and self-esteem workshops
- Body language and communication workshops
- Friendship and peer pressure groups and discussions

Responding to and Investigating Bullying (see appendix 1 Response to Bullying Flowchart)

The School

The school will take the following steps when dealing with concerns about bullying:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, it will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been made aware;
- A clear account of the concern will be recorded and given to the Head of Key Stage in KS3 and KS4 and the Head of Year 12 or 13 in KS5.
- The Head of KS/Year will take accounts from everyone involved and keep a detailed record and enter the incident on to MyConcern
- Form tutors will be kept informed and if it persists the form tutor will advise the appropriate subject teachers
- As this is such an emotive and dangerous subject, parents and other relevant adults will be kept informed. All communication with home should be recorded.

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- Where bullying occurs outside school, any other relevant schools or agencies (e.g. youth clubs, transport providers, PCSOs) will be informed about the concerns and any actions taken where appropriate, or parents will be given advice about who they can contact.
- We are a restorative school, but sanctions will be used as appropriate
- Bullies often seek to isolate their victims and there will be circumstances in which it may be impossible to find independent witnesses or other evidence to corroborate accounts received from those involved in an incident. On occasions staff investigating an incident may have to use their professional judgement when considering uncorroborated and conflicting evidence

Students

Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- offering an opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff of their choice as soon as they are available
- providing reassurance that the bullying will be addressed and in a manner that will not exacerbate the problems they are experiencing
- Restorative justice meetings should only take place if the student feels sufficiently confident to meet in the same room as the bully/bullies
- offering continuous support
- providing them with a notebook/staff contact to record any future incidents and check with them regularly
- restoring self-esteem and confidence
- developing anti bullying techniques
- employing the use of specialist interventions and/or referrals to other agencies where appropriate (Counselling)

Students who have bullied will be helped by:

- discussing what happened
- discovering why they became involved
- establishing the wrongdoing and the need to change
- looking at the dangers/consequences of bullying
- Understanding and acknowledging the harm they may have caused
- informing parents to help change the attitude of the student
- the use of specialist interventions and/or referrals to other agencies where appropriate

The following disciplinary steps can be taken:

- official warnings to cease offending and educate on impact of behaviours
- Parental contact
- Parental meeting
- detention/s
- exclusion from certain areas of school premises
- loss of social time
- internal isolation
- minor suspension
- major suspension
- permanent exclusion

The nature of any sanctions will depend on the nature of the incident, the context in which it has occurred. Suspension and Permanent exclusion can only be imposed by the headteacher.

In considering any sanctions, the investigator should consider what educative element needs to be included in the sanction e.g. if the investigator is recommending a detention as a sanction, what type of learning do they recommend takes place during the detention? Educative work may include, but is not limited to:

- reflection on the incident, identification of the unacceptable behaviour(s)
- research either general or specific on the impact of this behaviour or similar behaviour on
- victims. This might be followed by reflection on their behaviour, and its possible impact on
- their victim
- advice and guidance to students: this might include advice about how to behave towards others, advice about sources of support (both external and internal) for support for students who are facing difficulties, suggestions for how the school might reduce incidents of bullying.

In all cases the restorative approach will be adopted.

Parents

Bullying is very emotive and it is therefore vital that parents feel listened to and that action points are carefully recorded and their implementation passed on

- Most concerns about bullying will be resolved through discussions between home and School, however, where a parent feels their concerns have not been resolved, they are encouraged to use the Formal Complaints Procedure.
- Where a student is involved in bullying others outside school, e.g. in the street or through the use of the internet at home, parents will be asked to work with the school and external agencies in addressing their child's behaviour, for example restricting/monitoring their use of the internet or mobile phone
- Referral of the family to external support agencies will be made where appropriate

Investigation Outcomes and Sanctions

The investigator will set in their report, the nature of the allegation, their review of the evidence and their conclusions.

The possible outcomes are:

- ***Allegation proven***: this means that there is sufficient evidence to substantiate the allegation.
- ***Allegation not proven***: this may be because there is insufficient evidence to establish that what has alleged took place. It does not mean that what has alleged did not occur, just that there is insufficient evidence in the investigator's opinion to establish that it did.
- ***False Allegation***: in this case there is evidence to establish that what was alleged did not take place. *In these circumstances, the investigator is asked to consider whether there is a malicious element to the allegation (i.e. was the allegation made falsely with the deliberate intention of getting the person who is the subject of the allegation into trouble).*

In cases where there is insufficient evidence to substantiate an allegation, the investigator should still give consideration to what measures need to be put in place to protect the victim (ie what

measures would they have put in place, or would they have recommended be put in place, to protect the victim had there been sufficient evidence to substantiate the allegation). In cases where the allegation is judged to be false, it is essential to consider what support measures need to be put in place to support the alleged perpetrator as well as the alleged victim.
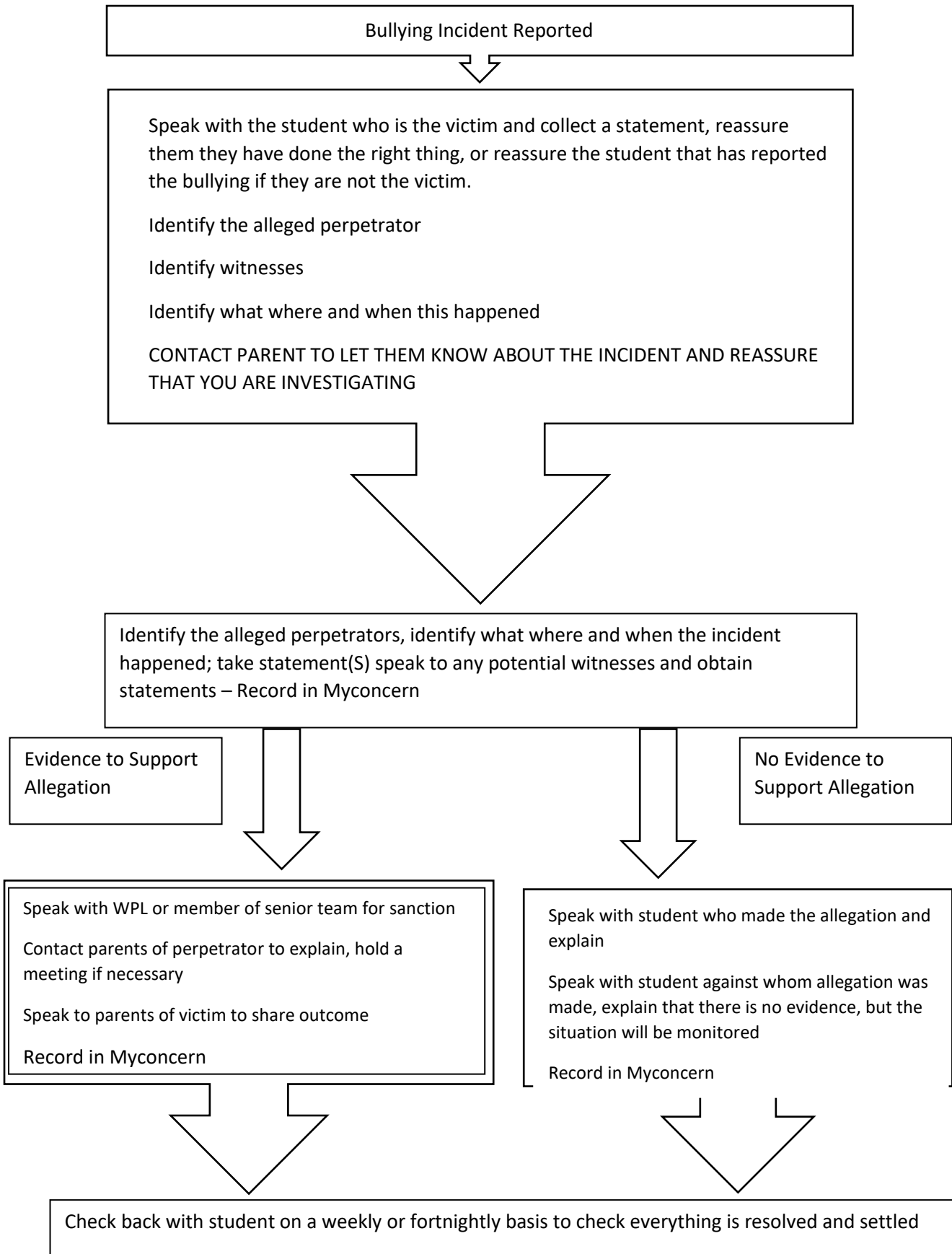
Staff Development and training

- develop awareness of preventative practices, spotting signs of bullying and procedures to follow if bullying occurs.
- Use of scenarios to support this.
- Training of all staff in recognising and dealing with bullying
- Conflict resolution—Staff empowering students to manage low level unpleasantness independently
- Mediation/Restorative
- Investigations by Tutors, Pastoral Leaders, Learning coaches and welfare Managers
- Restorative practices (justice) - when the investigations are complete and consequences (if necessary) applied, we will aim to get the victim and bully together. The victim gets the opportunity to explain how they feel, then the bully can do likewise and hopefully a genuine apology is offered to the victim, perhaps accompanied by an agreement to some actions that can help redress the situation.

Linked Policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- E-safety Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy

Appendix 1

Bullying Investigation Flow Chart

Bullying Incident Reported

Speak with the student who is the victim and collect a statement, reassure them they have done the right thing, or reassure the student that has reported the bullying if they are not the victim.

Identify the alleged perpetrator

Identify witnesses

Identify what where and when this happened

CONTACT PARENT TO LET THEM KNOW ABOUT THE INCIDENT AND REASSURE THAT YOU ARE INVESTIGATING

Identify the alleged perpetrators, identify what where and when the incident happened; take statement(S) speak to any potential witnesses and obtain statements – Record in Myconcern

Evidence to Support Allegation

No Evidence to Support Allegation

Speak with WPL or member of senior team for sanction

Contact parents of perpetrator to explain, hold a meeting if necessary

Speak to parents of victim to share outcome

Record in Myconcern

Speak with student who made the allegation and explain

Speak with student against whom allegation was made, explain that there is no evidence, but the situation will be monitored

Record in Myconcern

Check back with student on a weekly or fortnightly basis to check everything is resolved and settled

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Appendix 2

Cyber-bullying

Online bullying (cyberbullying) can occur at any time. Cyberbullying, like other forms of bullying, affects self-esteem/self-confidence and can have a detrimental effect on mental health and wellbeing, in the worst cases leading to self-harm and suicide. It may have its roots in a single abusive comment which is liked, reposted or forwarded by others. The school has a duty to act to protect its students from bullying whether it occurs face to face on school premises or online. Incidents of cyberbullying will be investigated in a similar way to incidents of face to face bullying. The school will encourage students to use blocking and reporting functions on social media platforms and, if necessary, will help students and parents to request that material be removed or taken down. The school is committed to working with other schools and external agencies to tackle cyber-bullying. Students are educated about cyberbullying in PHSE, Computing and through assemblies and specialist workshops.

The Different Forms of Cyber-Bullying

(drawn from Childnet International Cyberbullying Understand, Prevent and Respond Guidance for

Schools)

Threats and intimidation

- Threats can be sent by mobile phone, email, within online games, via comments on websites, social networking sites or message boards.
- Threats can include violence, including sexual violence, or threats to disclose information about someone that may harm them, or that they are not ready to share – for example, the threat to make someone's sexual orientation or gender identity known (to 'out' someone) when they may not feel ready for this.

Harassment or stalking

- Repeatedly sending unwanted text or instant messages, or making phone calls (including silent calls).
- Using public forums, such as social networking sites or message boards, to repeatedly harass, or to post derogatory or defamatory statements.
- Tracking someone's activity and collecting information about them, for example by searching databases and social network services; by pretending to be other people and 'friending' the person; or by using spyware.
- Doxing: the practice of posting personal information about someone online without their permission.

Vilification/defamation

- Posting upsetting or defamatory remarks about an individual online, or name-calling, general insults, and prejudice-based bullying, for example sexist, homophobic and racist messages.
- 'Slut-shaming' attacking girls and women on the grounds of perceived or fabricated transgressions of socially acceptable sexual behaviours i.e. reposting of texts or images, or the fabrication of information.
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Ostracising/peer rejection/exclusion

- Online exclusion may be harder to detect than people being marginalised in a physical space, such as a classroom.
- On some services, it is possible for members to set up a closed group, which can protect members from unwanted contact, but can also be used to exclude others. Functions that can be used to block abusive behaviour can also be used to exclude others online.

Identity theft/unauthorised access and impersonation

- 'Hacking' is generally used to mean accessing someone else's account, by finding out or guessing their username and password information for example. Unauthorised access to computer material is illegal. Often hacking is followed by information or document being changed or shared. Sometimes people pretend to be someone else online. On occasions, the impersonator may behave in a way calculated to get the person that they are impersonating into trouble. This should be borne in mind when investigating cases of cyberbullying.

What makes Cyberbullying Different?

The use of technology in cyberbullying means that there are some significant differences between this and bullying that takes place in physical spaces. Online communications leave a digital trail so it is often easier to establish what has happened because the evidence is online. A single incident – one upsetting post or message – may escalate into cyber bullying involving a number of people over time.

People do not have to be physically stronger, older, or more popular than the person they are bullying online. Cyberbullying is not confined to a physical location and it can take place at any time. It is very difficult for victims to create a safe, private space. Online content can be hard to remove, and can be re-circulated and reposted. The potential numbers of people who can see content posted online is very large. Single incidents of online abuse can quickly escalate into cyberbullying, for example, by reposting, sharing and commentary. The person being bullied does not always know the identity of the person or people bullying them. They will not know who has seen the abusive content and that can create a lot of anxiety.

Initial incidents escalate because of sharing and reposting. By endorsing or reposting someone else's abusive post people are actively participating in bullying, although they often don't recognise this. The following groups of students are particularly vulnerable to cyberbullying:

- Girls
- students with special education needs and disabilities
- students who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender

Students may also be targeted because of their race, ethnicity or national origin, or religion.

Searching Electronic Devices

The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff who has been formally authorised by the headteacher, that staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

If a member of staff has reasonable ground to suspect that an electronic device contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must give the device to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable. Material on the device that is suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, or that is a pornographic image of a child or an extreme pornographic image, should not be deleted prior to giving the device to the police. If a staff member finds material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, they can decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of school discipline.