



**Midhurst Rother College**

The best in everyone™

Part of United Learning

# Midhurst Rother College

## Anti-Bullying Policy

**Written by:** Paul Thompson

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**Review cycle:** Bi-Annual

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

### Statement of Intent

Midhurst Rother College is a friendly, caring College committed to providing a safe environment for all our students so they can learn in a calm and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable, if bullying does occur, all students should be able to tell someone at College so that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone that knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell staff.

The College recognises its legal duty to ensure the safety of students and to prevent and respond to all forms of bullying (Children's Act 2004, Education and Inspections Act 2006 and Children & Families Act 2014). Prevention and responses to bullying and harassment are also an essential part of ensuring compliance with equalities legislation. The Equalities Act 2010, requires schools to protect students from discrimination and harassment based on disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race, religion or belief; and sex and sexual orientation.

The College's motivation (and response to prevent bullying) goes beyond the law; it recognises that students who are safe and happy make better learners.

### Objectives of Policy

- ✓ All Governors, teaching and support staff, students and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is
- ✓ All Governors, teaching and support staff should know what the College policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported
- ✓ Inform parents of the framework within which behaviour management at Midhurst Rother College will be implemented
- ✓ The College takes bullying seriously; students and parents/carers should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported
- ✓ Highlight the importance of the anti-bullying policy as part of the overall strategy of the College.

### Definition of Bullying

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying can be carried out physically, verbally, emotionally or more commonly through cyberspace.

- ✓ Bullying behaviour deliberately causes hurt (either physically or emotionally)
- ✓ Bullying behaviour is usually repetitive (one-off incidents, such as posting an image or sending of a text that is passed around a group, can quickly spiral into bullying behaviour)
- ✓ Bullying behaviour involves an imbalance of power (the person or people on the receiving end feel like they cannot defend themselves)
- ✓ Bullying behaviour is not teasing or falling out between friends (though in some cases this can lead to bullying).

### **What might some of the signs and symptoms of bullying be?**

- ✓ Property or money has gone missing, or property is damaged, a student having physical marks on their body (i.e. scratches)
- ✓ A gradual change in behaviour (i.e. having trouble sleeping)
- ✓ Excessive use of social networking sites
- ✓ Constant use of mobile phone
- ✓ Having trouble with College work for no apparent reason
- ✓ Using a different route to get to College
- ✓ A student is easily upset or irritable
- ✓ A student making excuses not to go to College.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility.

### **How can Parents/Carers help?**

Praise them for telling you and reassure them that they've done the right thing in letting you know what's happening.

Try to find out the facts – what exactly has happened? Get dates, names, locations, etc. and keep a written note of the facts. Either report the incident on the MRC website or arrange to see your child's Tutor (as the first point of contact) or Pastoral Leader.

Use your best listening skills. Accept your child's feelings, encourage them to talk about their worries by listening, and don't belittle what they're going through – however minor it may seem to you, the feelings are very real for them.

Help your child to think about what they'd like to happen, and ask how you can help. Don't rush this step.

If your child feels in danger, you'll need to make sure that they have a plan for keeping safe. Talk about ways of avoiding those doing the bullying, e.g. staying with a group of friends, staying in safe areas, knowing who to go to for help, etc. Tell them that you have to involve their Tutor or Pastoral Leader, and how you can do it in the best way for them (so that other children aren't aware of the visit for example).

Bullying destroys our confidence and your child will be feeling vulnerable, so work doubly hard to help them feel loved, valued and important. If you tell your child to fight back, or say something 'clever' to the people bullying them, they may well end up feeling twice as bad. They might get into trouble, they might get hurt, they might be laughed at more, and they'll feel a double failure – not only are they bullied, but they've failed to stop it as well.

### **Action that will be taken by the College in the event of bullying:**

If the incident is reported via the MRC website, a confidential email is sent to the admin team who record the incident. The information is then passed to the pastoral team.

If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached in line with the MRC Anti-Bullying Reporting Procedure (Appendix A). A clear account of the incident will be recorded by the Pastoral Leader and they will interview the victim and make necessary notes. This information will then be passed to the behaviour and pastoral team, who will carry out the necessary restorative meeting with the perpetrators and record the actions

taken, following the College behaviour procedure. Parents will be informed and where necessary the Police will be informed. The perpetrator can then be placed on report (when necessary) and feedback provided to the victim.

The College will work to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour if appropriate. Where appropriate the Police will also be asked for their advice after the incident has been dealt with. Each case will be monitored to ensure no further incidents occur.

### **Bullies and the Bullied**

We recognise that it is not always easy to identify those who bully and those who are bullied. No-one is born a bully or a victim of bullying. Bullying can be overt and detectable, such as physical assault, or it can be subtle and more difficult to spot, such as the spreading of rumours or deliberate social exclusion. Some students may both bully and be bullied by others.

### **Bullying, prejudice and discrimination**

Bullying can be motivated by wider prejudice and discrimination, for example, homophobic bullying; bullying of students with AEN and disabilities; bullying related to race and religion; and gender-based bullying. The prejudice that drives some bullying can be found in society at large, communities and homes. This means it is important for the College to examine the motivation behind bullying and look at whether, as a College, it needs to challenge prejudice and discrimination on a wider basis. The College therefore looks at data in terms of micro-populations (e.g. gender, AEN, racial etc.).

### **Emerging types of bullying**

Developments in technology have provided new opportunities for inter-relational conflict and harassment, commonly called cyber-bullying. Cyber-bullying, as with any form of bullying, is driven by a desire to cause hurt. Cyber-bullying can include sending or posting harmful messages, comments and images online or through mobile phones; excluding others from social networking; and impersonating other people in order to cause harm.

Sexual bullying is a form of gender-based bullying; it includes behaviour with a sexual element that is harmful, non-consensual and repeated. Typically this could include sexual comments and name-calling; spreading sexual rumours; use of technology to spread sexual gossip, comments and images; and can also involve non-consensual touching (for example, touching, pinching or slapping body parts, pulling bra straps and clothes, pulling down trousers, or lifting up skirts). Girls are most likely to face sexual bullying, perpetrated by boys, but boys can also be subject to sexual bullying by girls, and there can be sexual bullying between young people of the same sex.

### **Bullying outside of College**

Bullying behaviour can take place both inside and outside College. Bullying outside College may include incidents of cyber-bullying and arguments between peers outside of College time (whilst not wearing uniform). The College is not legally obliged to take action in matters outside College time but it is prepared to take action if a child reports the incident to a member of staff or via the MRC website. In such cases, the College will follow the Anti-bullying procedure (appendix A) and ensure parents are fully aware, and where appropriate contact the Police or other authorities. If the incident is not reported to the College, we advise that parents and carers should always refer the matter to the Police. The College will take action in all cases where bullying occurs on the way to and from College.

## **Bullying and Crime**

There are times when bullying behaviour can become a criminal offence, for example:

- ✓ Cyber-bullying - Improper use of a communications network under Section 127 of the Communications Act
- ✓ Threatening or actual physical assault; threatening or actual sexual assault; theft
- ✓ Coercing others to commit a crime hate crime (for example, racism)

Where the Principal and Behaviour Team believe a crime may have been committed, the Police will be contacted for advice. Where there may be child protection concerns in relation to an incident the Child Protection policy will be followed, contact (where necessary) being made with the relevant agencies.

## **Serious bullying incidents**

All bullying incidents will be taken seriously, as all incidents of bullying are painful and have consequences. Some incidents may result in either internal or external exclusion, a criminal investigation and/or referral to specialist support. Parents/carers will be informed at each stage. In determining sanctions, the College will carefully consider whether the behaviour of the student is a result of provocation, bullying or harassment.

In rare cases where bullying is ongoing and persistent the Principal will consider permanent exclusion, in line with the DFE Guidance on Exclusion 2017, which states that a Headteacher may permanently exclude ***“where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school.”*** The United Learning policy on exclusions states that permanent exclusion can be considered for bullying in cases where there are ***“very significant/extreme bullying and/or harassment including racial, sexual or homophobic harassment”***. Persistent bullying is a line in the sand in the MRC rewards and behaviour policy, section 2.6.

## **Leadership**

The Governor with oversight of bullying issues, together with Mr. Paul Thompson, Director of Welfare as the Senior Member of Staff are responsible for dealing with bullying. All bullying incidents are recorded, with action taken and monitored to ensure no further incidents occur.

Within the curriculum the College will raise awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in PSHE curriculum, Internet Safety in ICT, Anti-Bullying Week, Tutor Time and Whole school/Year Group Assemblies. The activities are designed to develop empathy and emotional intelligence through Social and Emotional Literacy education, in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour.

The College works in partnership with the Local Authority, and regularly participates in training and awareness days linked with West Sussex. All members of the Pastoral team have had training in Restorative Justice (RJ). The Colleges' Student Council has opportunities to raise any concerns or issues relating to bullying. The [College website](#) contains hyperlinks to many external sites providing a wealth of information as well as documents useful for both student and parent.

The College also assesses its environment through monitoring systems within the academic year, ensuring that students feel safe and are confident that there are staff within the College who they can approach with any worries.

This policy has been developed and implemented in consultation with the whole College community

including students, parents/carers, staff, governors and partner agencies. The policy will be reviewed bi-annually.

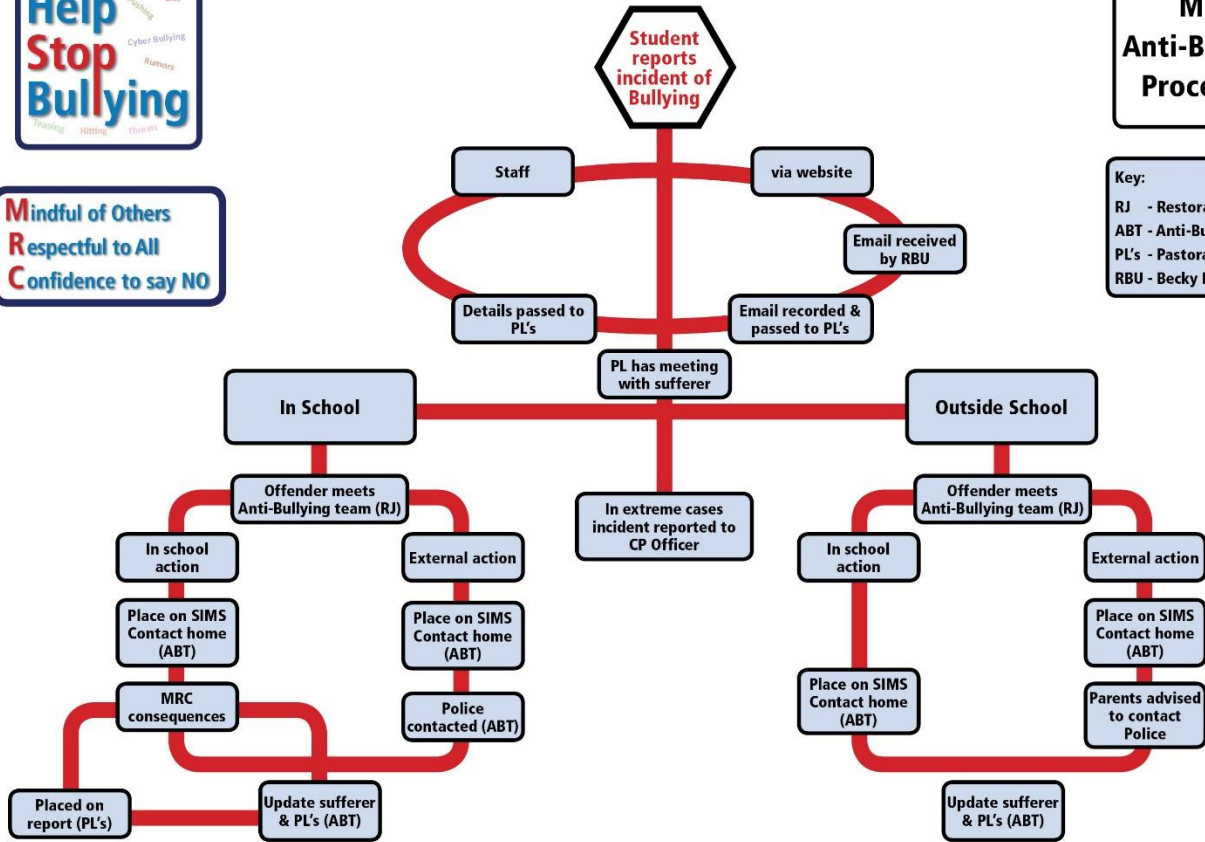
Appendix A



**M**indful of Others  
**R**espectful to All  
**C**onfidence to say NO

**MRC  
 Anti-Bullying  
 Procedure**

**Key:**  
 RJ - Restorative Justice  
 ABT - Anti-Bullying Team  
 PL's - Pastoral Leaders  
 RBU - Becky Bush



## Appendix B

### **Bullying support for parents, carers and College staff**

Action against Bullying Support Line is available on 0845 075 1010 (Monday - Friday 8am-6pm). Calls will be handled through trained staff members who will provide information and guidance, and referral to other specialist services, including the West Sussex Bullying Caseworker.

For schools in West Sussex the key person is Paul Rigglesford (Strategic Lead) who can be contacted on 01243 382911 or via email at [paul.rigglesford@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:paul.rigglesford@westsussex.gov.uk)

Parentline Plus - 0808 800 22 22 - a national help line available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and they also have a comprehensive website ([www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk))

Childline – 08000 1111 - advice and stories from children who have survived bullying  
Bullying on line - [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)

Kidscape – Parents helpline (Monday - Friday, 10am -4pm) [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

### **Useful sources of information:**

**Stonewall** - The gay equality organisation founded in 1989. Founding members include Sir Ian McKellen ([www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk))

**Cyberbullying.org** - One of the first websites set up for young people, providing advice around preventing and taking action against cyber bullying ([www.cyberbullying.org](http://www.cyberbullying.org))

**Chatdanger** - A website that informs students about the potential dangers online (including bullying) and advice on staying safe while chatting (see [www. Chatdanger.com](http://www.Chatdanger.com))

**Think U Know** - The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP), has produced a set of resources around internet safety for secondary schools. [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)