

Anti-Bullying Policy



Legislation and guidance that inform this document

- Safe to Learn – Embedding anti-bullying work in schools (DCSF 2007)
- Preventing Bullying (Gov.UK 2013)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (Gov.UK July 2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (Gov.UK Sept 2018)
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying - Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies (DfE July 2017)

Other Red Balloon policies to be read in conjunction with this one

- Behaviour for Learning
- Curriculum
- Esafety
- Exclusion
- Staff Code of Conduct

Responsibility for Implementation

All staff must read and implement the policy to ensure that students are free from bullying.

Statement of intent

Red Balloon Centres aim to promote the values of respecting others and celebrating individual differences by maintaining a culture in which every member of the community can be themselves and develop confidence, self-efficacy and tolerance. Centres set out to enable all students to recognise their talents and to help them realise their potential; similarly they seek to meet the educational and pastoral needs of all students by ensuring a secure setting in which students will feel valued and respected. To achieve this end, the overarching goals of this policy are to:

- prevent bullying occurring in the first place;
- ensure positive (speedy and effective) resolution of bullying when it does occur.

Red Balloon is committed to ensuring that student safety in the virtual world is maintained with equal vigilance as that in the 'real' world. The organisation holds an esafety policy that aims to ensure this is the case.

Red Balloon Centres seek to provide a setting in which each student is personally involved, where individuality is celebrated and individuals can flourish without fear in a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment.

We aim to establish an ethos of respect and mutual tolerance. Even though centres are small, the student population is often diverse, with students between the ages of 11 and 17 (occasionally older) and from a variety of cultural, social, religious and ethnic backgrounds who have different learning styles and abilities. We aim to ensure that every student is safe and happy regardless of their age, culture, gender or sexual preference.

Objectives

- All staff, students and parents/carers should understand what bullying is.
- All students and parents should know what Red Balloon policy on bullying is, and what they should do if bullying occurs.
- All students should be aware of the serious consequence of bullying and know that this behaviour is unacceptable.
- Those children who do bully should be treated with respect and enabled to understand how their behaviour impacted on another person, how they can change it and what amends need to be made.
- *All students must understand that if they are 'bystanders' and 'do nothing' (reporting to an appropriate adult is sufficient), then they are as guilty of bullying as the perceived perpetrator.*

Definition of bullying

Bullying is any *repeated* behaviour that

- causes a detriment;
- is unwanted by the recipient; and

- is unwarranted.

It is not possible to produce a list that covers every action or activity that might be classed as bullying, but Red Balloon will work with students to ensure they understand the following descriptions / definitions:

Bullying involves actions (includes physical, spoken, written, drawn, gesture, specific body language, facial expression... and can be actual or virtual ie online) that physically, verbally or indirectly hurt or injure another individual, that threaten or frighten, that are demoralising or humiliating, that psychologically hurt or injure. It may involve:

- the use of demeaning, ageist, racist, religious, cultural, sexual, sexist and homophobic names or language, or language related to special educational needs and disability - it can be direct or indirect;
- hurtful, upsetting or distressing comments about another individual's or group's racial, ethnic, cultural or linguistic background, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, age or gender identity;
- hurtful, upsetting or distressing comments about one or more individuals with a special educational need or disability or learning difficulty;
- picking on an individual or group;
- pushing, punching, hitting, kicking or any physical violence;
- teasing, mocking, taunting or making offensive comments;
- spreading rumours;
- ostracising a student - deliberately ignoring or avoiding a fellow student or students and/or encouraging others to do the same;
- repeatedly criticising or making personal comments to an individual or group;
- threatening behaviour;
- unacceptable body language;
- taking or damaging property;
- producing offensive graffiti;
- placing a victim in a position where they cannot defend themselves.

Specific types of bullying

Bullying related to race, religion or culture

This includes racist or faith-based bullying. Political and social issues can also be a factor in bullying and harassment.

Bullying related to special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities

Students with SEN or disabilities can be more at risk of bullying than their peers. They do not always have the social confidence and competence to protect against bullying. SEN students may behave in a bullying manner or be bullied.

Bullying related to appearance or health conditions

Perceived physical limitations, such as size and weight, and other body image issues can be the object of bullying, and obvious signs of affluence (or lack of it) can also be so.

Bullying related to sexual orientation

This refers to any hostile or offensive action against lesbians, gay males, bisexual or transgender people, or those perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Homophobic bullying is perhaps the form of bullying least likely to be self-reported, since disclosure carries risks not associated with other forms of bullying (for example, the student may not want to report bullying if it means 'coming out' to teachers and parents before they are ready to). This type of bullying may also affect students whose parents or other family members are (or are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

Sexist or gender based bullying

Sexist bullying affects all genders. Sexist bullying may be characterised by name-calling, comments and overt 'looks' about appearance, attractiveness and emerging puberty. In addition, uninvited touching, innuendo and propositions, pornographic imagery or graffiti might be used, using mobile phones (sexting) or computers to send sexual images.

Students identified as transgender or experiencing gender dysphoria (feeling that they belong to another gender or do not conform with the gender role prescribed to them) can also be targeted.

Cyber bullying (Red Balloon has a separate safety policy)

This includes malicious, upsetting, repeated emails, photographs, texts, tweets or other messages or postings sent directly to, or about, an individual. Cyber bullying may involve the use of mobile telephones, email, internet messaging services, social websites (eg FaceBook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat), and other technologies and applications that may be developed and become available in the future. There is no escape for the victim as there is 24/7 contact using communication technology and the impact of such bullying is magnified due to its relentless nature and the massive potential audience.

Child protection / safeguarding issues:

Statutory guidance (KCSiE Sept 2018) clearly states that peer on peer abuse, particularly sexualised abuse, including verbal use, may become a child protection issue if it is not resolved swiftly.

If an individual or group of students persist(s) in such behaviour, then the coordinator may choose to remove them from the community temporarily or permanently, but s/he will seek advice from statutory agencies, as appropriate, and make a referral if an incident meets the referral threshold set by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. If a child is considered to be in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, an immediate referral to children's social care and/or the police will be made. As required by statutory guidance (Working Together, July 2018) coordinators and / or their safeguarding lead will ensure that information is shared with all agencies and professionals involved with the child or family.

As stated elsewhere within the policy centres will always attempt to support both the victim(s) and the perpetrator(s). Consideration will always be given as to how support may be provided eg through counselling or mentoring... BUT the requirement for every young person attending Red Balloon provision to perceive themselves to be safe physically and emotionally remains paramount. Thus, should an individual or group of students either be unable or unwilling to

modify their behaviour and another student or other students continue to feel unsafe, the rights of the many (the community) will be deemed to override those of the individual(s) (perpetrator(s)) and the latter will not be allowed to remain within the community (see Red Balloon's exclusion policy).

Responding to bullying

Bullying hurts and inevitably results in pain and distress. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Students who are carrying out bullying behaviour need to understand and acknowledge the negative impact of their actions.

Whilst bullying can take many forms, all bullying must be viewed as very serious, not least because bullying has the potential to cause psychological damage and may lead to suicidal thoughts or actions.

Bullying is not, in itself, a specific criminal offence. However, there are laws which apply to harassment because of age, race, culture, disability, gender identity and sex, the misuse of technology, threatening behaviour and, specifically, to racist behaviour.

The centre coordinator will ensure that all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities and of good practice, and ensure that students are aware of the policy and of their responsibilities within it.

All members of staff will:

- know the policy and procedures and deal with incidents in accordance with the policy;
- be observant and, should they suspect bullying, ensure students have opportunities to discuss what is happening (see the behaviour for learning policy concerning the use of restorative justice practices and unconditional positive regard);
- take action to reduce the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely;
- always express displeasure, and take further action if appropriate whenever incidents of bullying, including sarcasm, unpleasant behaviour or put-downs, whether on-site or off-site, in person or virtually, occur.

Red Balloon staff will always keep written records of any bullying behaviour that does occur and will review these records to ensure careful monitoring of behaviour and to identify any 'patterns' of behaviour that might occur.

Guidance for students

What to do if you are bullied or see other students being bullied

You must tell someone - to ignore it allows bullying to get worse. To become angry or upset in the presence of a person who is carrying out bullying behaviour will probably encourage them to persist.

If you tell a member of staff, that member of staff will follow up the case. They may bring other staff into the process after consulting you. Staff will listen carefully and record everything that has happened. They will tell you that you have acted correctly in reporting the bullying. You will not be put under any pressure. You will not be made to feel that your complaint is silly or time wasting, that you have 'asked for it' or the person doing the bullying 'can't help it'.

Staff will help you to decide on actions you can take to prevent bullying. Revenge is neither right nor effective.

Staff will see the person who has carried out the bullying and take appropriate action in line with Red Balloon policies and practices. Raising awareness, education and encouraging empathy will be the main actions. Every effort will be made to ensure that the situation improves. Staff will keep checking with you that things have improved.

What happens to the person who has been carrying out the bullying?

In line with Red Balloon's 'Behaviour for Learning Policy', staff will seek to enable the student to change their behaviour by means of discussions about community needs, rights and responsibilities of students, and the use of restorative justice. Staff may seek to involve parents.

If the person carrying out the bullying does not cease the behaviour, s/he may be asked to leave the community temporarily or permanently.

Any instances of bullying will be recorded in a whole school record.

Guidance for parents

Parents **must** inform staff if they suspect or know there is a bullying issue for their own child or for another child, be that as perpetrator or victim. It is not

always easy for a parent to know that their child is being bullied but there are some indicators to look out for:

- changes to usual routine;
- unwillingness to go to the centre;
- reluctance to travel on public transport or school bus;
- pleading to be driven to the centre;
- becoming withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence;
- becoming aggressive, disruptive and/or unreasonable;
- starting to bully siblings and/or other children;
- not eating;
- claiming to feel ill on school mornings;
- having nightmares, crying themselves to sleep, bedwetting;
- personal possessions / clothes being damaged or going missing;
- asking for unusual amounts of money or stealing money;
- attempting to self harm;
- running away from home;
- being afraid to use internet or mobile phone;
- nervous when a text message is received;
- unwilling to discuss behaviour.

The above types of behaviour could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered and investigated.

Incidents reported by parents or students will be followed up immediately. Students will be reassured that something will be done. The person allegedly carrying out the behaviour will be spoken to and the facts of the incident established. Staff will listen sympathetically. The victim's perception of what happened will not be dismissed. Victims will be assured that they have acted correctly in reporting the incident and that the complaint is important.

It is not just parents of victims who should contact the centre - if any parent has reason to believe that their child is involved in bullying another, they should discuss this with staff.

Parents and students should refer to Red Balloon's Complaints Policy if they feel that their concerns about bullying are not being addressed satisfactorily.

Additional sources of guidance and information

Outside agencies that can offer support include:

- Childline: 0800 1111
- NSPCC: 0800 800 5000
- Samaritans: 08457 90 90 90

Ofsted / ISI: parents can report concerns or allegations to Ofsted or ISI (Independent Schools Inspection Service). Anyone wishing to do this should contact either organisation by email or contact their helpline. Ofsted have produced a leaflet that gives information about how to raise concerns about schools; how to raise concerns with Ofsted; what Ofsted can and will do when they receive complaints; and Ofsted's enforcement and other powers. The leaflet, '*Concerns and complaints about childminders and childcare providers*' (first published in 2008, so may be updated soon) can be found at - <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20081007160501/ofsted.gov.uk/ofsted-home/forms-and-guidance/browse-all-by/other/general/investigating-complaints-or-concerns-about-registered-childminders-and-childcare-providers-a-factsheet>

Advisory Centre for Education

LC Aberdeen Studios, 22 Highbury Grove, London N5 2DQ.

Tel: 0207 704 9822 Tel helpline: 0207 354 8321 (Mon-Fri 2-5 pm).

Advice line for parents on all matters concerning schools

Anti-Bullying Alliance

Anti-Bullying Alliance, NCB, 8 Wakeley Street, London EC1V 7QE

Email: aba@ncb.org.uk Website: <http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk>

Advice line for parents and children.

Coram Children's Legal Centre

Riverside Office Centre, Century House North North Station Road, Colchester, CO1 1RE

Tel: 01206 714 650 Website: <http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com>

Publications and free advice line on legal issues.

Kidscape

2 Grosvenor Gardens, London, SW1W 0DH.

Tel: 0207 730 3300 Website: <https://www.kidscape.org.uk>

Has a wide range of publications for young people, parents and teachers.

Bullying counsellor available Monday to Friday, 10-4.

Family Lives

CAN Mezzanine, 49-51 East Road, London N1 6AH.

Tel: 0808 800 2222 Website: <http://www.familylives.org.uk>

National helpline and advice for parents

Updated by Bob Sproson, director of education, Sept 2018 - for annual review.