



## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

***“As members of Rawlins Community College, we recognise that bullying can be verbal, psychological and physical. We have a commitment to prevent and stop all forms of bullying. We are aware that such situations can arise and we will try our best to deal with them in an appropriate way, with the utmost discretion. We will support any victim or bully and do our best to help them. We aim to keep a happy, caring and welcoming environment.”***

(Bullying Statement written by Year 11 students)

### **Statement of Intent**

Bullying is not accepted at Rawlins, whether verbal or physical. However, we recognise that it does take place on the way to and from school, in lessons, between lessons, at breaks and at lunchtimes.

We always take a student’s complaints about bullying seriously and always follow-up such complaints with the parties concerned and sometimes, if appropriate, with their parents.

We recognise that all cases of bullying are serious and that if the situation is allowed to escalate then the education of the students concerned will inevitably suffer.

Copies of the bullying statement above are printed in the Home–School Organiser and in the Prospectus, as well as being displayed around the school. An anti-bullying code is printed in the Home–School Organiser. Bullying is also covered by the Classroom Rules adopted as part of our approach to classroom discipline/management. At the start of Year 10 all students are provided with information about bullying in October. Copies are posted if the students are absent.

At various times, bullying issues are addressed in assemblies, both Year and Division. Many students choose to consider the matter in projects for their academic subjects, such as Humanities and Drama, and support and information is always made available by staff.

Teachers in their roles as tutors and subject teachers and duty staff and other adults at Rawlins are expected to look out for warning signs of bullying; for example, distress, work difficulties, absence patterns.

Members of staff are expected to follow up any suspicions they have of bullying or cases where students have confided in them. Reference should be made to the tutor or Division Head or another member of the Pastoral team, or at the Health Drop-in Centre.

We have also consulted the Educational Psychology service about our policy and strategies and a member of staff has attended a bullying workshop with four Year 10 students, representing the Divisions, as a way of looking at ways in which we might enhance our strategy. Two members of the group also attended a three day training course for students dealing with anti-bullying strategies, designed to help them support other students.

## **Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Students who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

## **Signs and Symptoms**

A student may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a student:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins truanting
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- shows a decline in motivation at school
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions go "missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

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

## **Strategies which might be adopted**

There is a range of strategies which might be adopted, depending on the situation and on the students involved.

- **‘No Blame Approach’**

Effective where the scenario is too complex to unravel and where roles of bully and victim are blurred. The students are encouraged to rectify the situation through discussion with a teacher. Blame is not apportioned and punishment is not meted out. The students are charged with the responsibility to regulate their own behaviour. Support for all students involved needs to be offered at all stages. The victim, and sometimes the bully as well, is asked to write down how s/he felt and feels. This is then read to the person who has caused the distress and forms the basis of a discussion with the teacher. This can be very powerful, but is not always appropriate and should never be done without seeking the victim’s prior consent. Careful follow-up is usually needed.

- **Clarification**

The two parties are brought together with a member of staff, probably a Division Head or Head of Main School to check out the situation and to identify the problem and what has caused it. The discussion takes place away from third parties. In some cases a minor problem or disagreement has been aggravated as a result of mis-information, gossip and hearsay. Once clarified, the problem may no longer exist.

- **Disciplinary Sanctions**

The whole range of disciplinary sanctions is available in cases which are clear-cut. Care must be taken to ensure that fear of reprisals and actual reprisals are avoided. Where students continue to bully despite a formal warning, an exclusion may be imposed.

- **Counselling**

May be offered to all parties through the college counsellors. The bully is often reacting to having been a victim of bullying himself or herself. Victims and bullies can discuss their feelings and develop strategies to deal with similar situations or feelings should they arise again as well as strategies which should help the students avoid such situations in the future. Increasing self-esteem through counselling and through adopting assertive behaviour may also help.

- **Parental Contact**

- **Involvement of outside agencies, such as EWO, Police, etc.**

We cannot make a complaint on behalf of a student. The injured party alone can do this. We will, however, support any police involvement. Sometimes, it can be very helpful, even if the police simply interview the bully and take no further action.

- **Continue to monitor but take no immediate action**  
Sometimes students fear that a situation can be made worse if a bully is confronted by an adult. They may wish to tell someone that they are being picked on but do not wish for action to be taken at that stage. It is important that we do not however allow a student to continue to suffer because he or she is afraid.
- **Arrange for students to be escorted to and from lessons**
- **Introduce the victim to the bullying support group**
- **Provide access to supervised areas at breaks and lunchtimes**
- **Encourage the student to keep in touch and to report further incidents immediately**
- **Consider practical measures which can help to alleviate the problem and reduce the victim's anxiety**  
Moving students from one tutor group or class to another, changing buses or Options can separate the bully and the victim and so help.

In some cases several of these strategies will be used. In some instances the bullying is very difficult to stop: it may stop for a while and then resurface or the method of bullying may change or move to out-of-school. For this reason, it is important to keep monitoring the situation.

Some follow-up is always advisable in order to check that the situation has been resolved and that the bullying does not begin again after an interval. Such follow-up contacts also help the victims to feel that they are being supported all the time and can help to increase their confidence.

It is important to recognise that bullying is an issue which causes great concern for many students and their parents.

We always try to ask the victim what he/she would like to be done about the issue before acting. It is important that he/she is happy with the possible consequences first.

## **Sanctions**

Initially, where bullying takes place during lesson time, the report card system, with appropriate targets for behaviour may be suitable.

Where bullying is severe, physical violence is involved or where it continues despite warnings, a formal fixed term exclusion may follow.

In particularly protracted instances, and following prior fixed term exclusions, a permanent exclusion may be the final sanction.

**At Rawlins we believe that all students have the right to feel confident, safe and valued.**

**Therefore, we all have a responsibility to respect ourselves and others, and report all incidents of bullying.**

**Useful follow-up resources.**

<http://www.kidscape.org.uk/professionals/antibullpolicy.shtml>

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/bullying>

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying/>

[http://www.ncb.org.uk/aba/aba\\_purpose.pdf](http://www.ncb.org.uk/aba/aba_purpose.pdf)

<http://www.bullying.co.uk/>

[http://www.bullying.co.uk/parents/parents\\_lAdvice.htm](http://www.bullying.co.uk/parents/parents_lAdvice.htm)

<http://freespace.virgin.net/lesgay.action/courage.html>

<http://www.childline.org.uk/>

<http://www.parrotfish.co.uk/>

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)	020 7354 8321
Children's Legal Centre	01206 873820
KIDSCAPE (Parents Helpline, Mon-Fri 10-4)	020 7730 3300
Parentline Plus	08088 002222

For a copy of Kidscape's free booklets "*Stop Bullying*", "*Preventing Bullying*" and "*You Can Beat Bullying*", send a large (A4) self-addressed envelope with two 1<sup>st</sup> class stamps to:

Kidscape, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London. SW1W 0DH