



Subject: Anti Bullying	Number: POL00120
Approved by: Managing Director	Type: Policy
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1. Objectives

1.1 Overall Aims

The Robert Holme Academy is committed to providing a nurturing, safe, secure and friendly environment for students to fulfil their potential.

The Robert Holme Academy recognises the lasting effects that bullying can have on a student in their educational life and beyond. No one deserves to be the victim of bullying. Robert Holme Academy believes all students have the right to be treated equally and respectfully.

The students in our care may have special needs and educational difficulties and this can make communication very challenging. We are not complacent regarding the nature and effects of bullying, but are proactive in recognising the signs of bullying, in all its forms, while ensuring every student in our care is protected.

We embrace difference and celebrate individuality. The Robert Holme Academy aims to create a caring, protective atmosphere where no one feels abused, intimidated or humiliated. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable.

If bullying does occur, all students are able to inform staff and know that it will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We operate in an open and transparent environment and anyone, be they staff, students, parents or carers, that knows, or suspects bullying is taking place is expected to inform those who are able to deal with it.

2. Scope and Applicability

This policy is applicable to all management, teaching staff and support staff, as well as students attending the Robert Holme Academy.

Bullying is intentionally hurting another person or using behaviour or words that are meant to frighten, intimidate or hurt that person. This policy covers, but is not limited to, any threat or physical assault based on grounds of:

- behaviour;
- appearance;
- race;
- religion;
- sexuality; or
- gender.

Bullying is deliberately hurtful, systematic acts that are difficult for the victim to defend themselves against. It can be an abuse of power. It is usually repeated over a period and can be overt or covert. Individuals who are more likely to be bullied are those who are vulnerable, non-assertive, anxious students.

We also recognise that bullies themselves are more likely to be previous or current victims of bullying, people who enjoy feeling the power it gives and are copying behaviours they have seen.

Bullying is not just between two students but can be between students and staff. It can be obvious or subtle, one-off or sustained.



3. Procedure

3.1 Responsibilities

The Robert Holme Academy have a responsibility to respond promptly, effectively and appropriately to concerns of bullying. All staff have a duty to report any suspicions or actual incidents of bullying and work towards eliminating all forms of bullying.

All staff monitor the interactions between students and help to maintain a positive environment. Staff should help with the whole approach to increase student's abilities to communicate and improve their behaviour regulation skills, as well as helping students to understand right and wrong, acceptable behaviour and empathy.

All staff are responsible for dealing with minor incidents of bullying, including any investigation, reporting and subsequent actions. All staff must be vigilant for any signs of bullying, cyber bullying or intimidation. They must complete incident reports and alert Headteacher immediately if a serious event occurs.

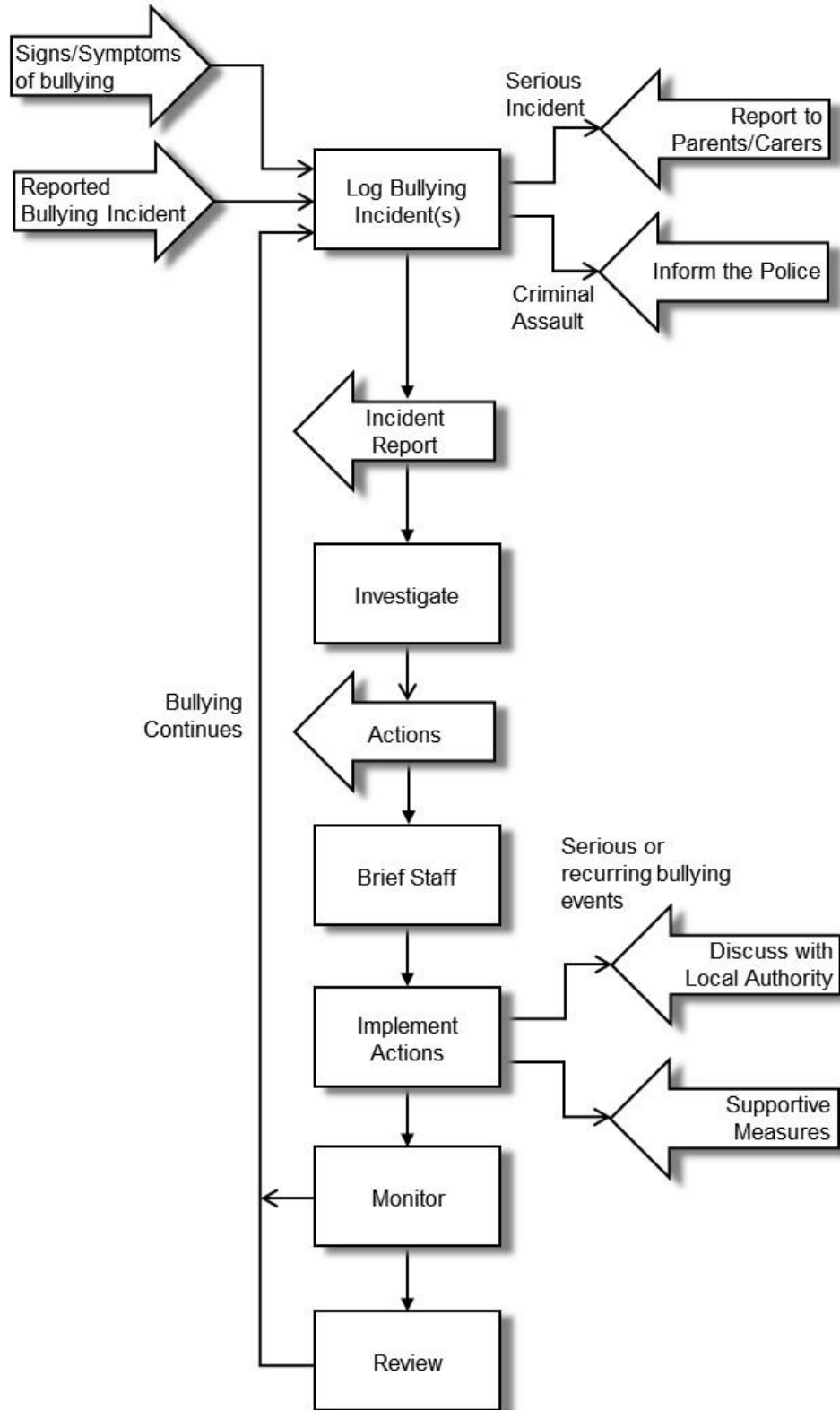
The Managing Director or Headteacher are responsible for investigating any serious reports of bullying and for initiating appropriate actions to eliminate the cause.

All staff are responsible for implementing actions arising from bullying reports and monitoring expected outcomes.

Parents/Carers are expected support us in the teaching of communication and behaviour management skills. They are encouraged to work with us to maintain a safe, secure environment that is bully free. Parents/Carers are also encouraged to keep us informed of any concerns, worries or relevant information concerning matters of bullying and report any incidents so that we can take appropriate and prompt action.



3.2 Process





Any sign, symptom or concern of bullying (see below) or actual incident of bullying is reported to a member of staff. Staff are required to formally record all reported signs, symptom or concern of bullying, as well as actual incidents. Staff also formally record any act of bullying that they witness. In serious cases, parents/carers of both the victim and perpetrator(s) are informed and invited in for a meeting to discuss the problem.

All incidents of bullying are recorded in an incident report. Where appropriate, a record of the incident may also be added to the MyConcern log.

The police are informed if a serious event or criminal assault has occurred. The police must also be called if anyone is in immediate danger.

All reports of bullying are investigated immediately to stop the bullying activities as quickly as possible. Investigations may include discussions with the victim and the perpetrator. Where necessary, a plan and agreement will be formulated to guide and encourage positive behaviour from the bully. This includes a restorative conversation where appropriate.

Staff monitor all actions proactively, including the commitments made by the bully, to prevent further reoccurrence of bullying. Further action or escalation may be necessary if bullying persists.

The management team monitor the progress on any actions and review all reports on a half termly basis. If the case is deemed serious or continuous when it should be escalated to them by the end of the day. This will help inform future practice.

Serious incidents may be shared with other key partners including but not limited to Consultants, Educational Psychologists, Therapists and The Local Authority.

Every effort is made to protect victims of bullying, while helping the bully change their behaviour.

3.3 *Signs and Symptoms*

Staff have a professional duty to look for indications of bullying and always investigate reports of bullying or impressions that a student is unsettled. These include, but are not limited to, changes in behaviour where the student:

- seems frightened or nervous;
- does not want to go in transport or asks parents to take them to lessons;
- changes their usual routine;
- feels ill in the morning or is unwilling to attend lessons and becomes phobic;
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or loses confidence;
- starts stammering or struggles to speak in front of the group;
- threatens or attempts to run away;
- threatens or attempts self-harm or suicide;
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares;
- shows a decline in achievements;
- has torn clothes or damaged property;
- has possessions 'go missing';
- has unexplained cuts, bruises or other injuries;
- comes home unusually hungry;
- asks for money or starts stealing money;
- becomes aggressing, unreasonable or disruptive;
- is picking-on other students or siblings;
- feels a need to 'control' things at home;
- loses appetite or stops eating;
- is frightened to explain what is wrong;
- gives unlikely excuses for any of the above.



While these indications could indicate other problems or be associated with specific special educational needs and disabilities, the potential for bullying is always investigated as a possible cause, particularly where behaviours change for no obvious reasons.

3.4 *Cyber bullying*

Bullying is not always in a physical form but can be in the form of 'cyber bullying'. This is where an intentional and aggressive act is carried out by an individual or group using electronic forms of contact against a victim who cannot easily defend themselves. Contact may be a one-off incident or may be repeated over time. Cyberbullying can be undertaken in many ways, but is more often in the form of:

- text messages;
- pictures or videoclips;
- phone calls or voice messages;
- emails;
- chat-room messages;
- instant messaging; or
- other social media and website messages.

Again, all staff at the Robert Holme Academy are vigilant for indications that a student may be cyberbullying others or may be a victim of cyberbullying. Possible indications that cyberbullying is taking place are occasions where the student:

- quickly switches screens or closes programs when a member of staff or parent/carer are nearby;
- uses technology at all hours of the night;
- gets unusually upset if they are not allowed devices;
- laughs more than usual while using technology; and
- avoids discussions about what they are doing online.

It is also common for the cyber bully to have multiple online accounts, use other people's accounts or creates fake accounts online.

Cyber bullying can be humiliating and extremely stressful for victims. Students who fall victim to this will often be reluctant to report that bullying is taking place or how they really feel about the attacks. They may feel that reporting the attacks may make matters worse. The main signs for the victim of cyberbullying are where the student:

- unexpectedly stops using the computer, games console or mobile phone; or
- is reluctant to use the internet or mobile phone;
- appears unusually quiet or withdrawn;
- appears jumpy and nervous when they receive a notification;
- are more easily frustrated and angry when using or after using technologies and may try to 'hide' or avoid discussions about what they are doing online.

These signs usually occur alongside the general signs and symptoms listed above.

3.5 *Action and Outcomes*

The victims of bullying are closely monitored by staff and are given opportunities to talk about their experiences with staff. Support continues after specific bullying activities have been dealt with and the victim may be referred to specialist counselling if this is required.

Parents/carers are informed when incidents of bullying have been identified to ensure they are aware of the problem, along with the actions that are being taken.



Action is taken to deal with the bullies to prevent any further incidents or upset to the victim. Specific actions depend on the severity of bullying activities and the subsequent action of the bully. The bully may be:

- asked to genuinely apologise and if possible, those involved will be involved in restorative practice to reconcile differences;
- excluded from certain privileges;
- removal of the bully from the group or setting;
- isolated for a period;
- subject to a bespoke behaviour plan;
- formally reprimanded, placed on report and monitored by the Headteacher; or
- excluded for a fixed term (outreach education).

An interim review and update of the student's Educational Health and Care Plan may be necessary in some cases to discuss supportive measures to meet the individual needs. The best interests of all students involved will be at the centre of all decisions.

We also recognise the need to support the student that is bullying. They may be offered additional coaching to build their confidence and self-esteem, along with coping strategies for dealing with peers. We can also direct students, parents and carers to specific support organisations if further help is requested.

3.6 *Prevention and Improvement*

While every effort is made to eliminate bullying in any form, it is possible that bullying could occur from time to time. The performance of this policy, and the supporting processes, are therefore continually monitored to maintain and improve their effectiveness. Performance is measured through metrics derived from bullying reports with the goal of preventing bullying behaviours before they impact any student.

The anti-bullying policy, processes and supporting training materials are reviewed at least annually and are updated, as necessary, to improve effectiveness and performance.

All staff are trained in how to deal with bullying behaviours, along with the controls required by this policy and any subsequent revisions. Training is supplemented with additional workshops and regular discussion to share any current concerns or observations, such as noted changes in a student's behaviours.

Students are made aware of our zero-tolerance policy towards bullying on admission. This is supplemented by regular training, guidance and additional curriculum material to ensure students are remain conscious of the our expectations regarding bullying, while ensuring they also have the confidence to report any bullying activity, even if they are not directly involved. These sessions are also designed to help build healthy relationships, while managing personal emotions and feelings.

Parents/carers are also briefed regarding our anti-bullying policy and are expected to agree to these requirements on admission.

The high staffing levels we implement also mean that students are always monitored, other than using the bathroom, thereby minimising opportunities for bullying to take place. Students are closely supervised while using IT equipment and accessing the internet to ensure appropriate use and prevent potential abuse, including the potential for cyber bullying.

Above all, the Robert Holme Academy is proud to offer an open and transparent environment where students feel able and confident to talk about their feelings.



4 References

Further guidance and information can be found in:

1. Keeping children safe in education statutory guidance 2023, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
2. Bullying at school, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school/reporting-bullying>
3. Department for Education guidance on preventing and tackling bullying, available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf
4. Department for Education guidance Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff, available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/374850/Cyberbullying_Advice_for_Headteachers_and_School_Staff_121114.pdf
5. Equality act 2010 guidance, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>
6. Children act 1989, available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>