Anti-Bullying Policy

Rationale

This policy is based on DfE guidance "Preventing and Tackling Bullying" July 2017 and supporting documents.

RGSGQ has an agreed anti-bullying policy to ensure that all school stakeholders (students, parents, staff and administration) understand what the common definition of bullying is and the collective community response to it is. The anti-bullying policy must cover all aspects of school life and all stakeholders without exception to ensure that all those who work in the school do so in a safe, positive learning environment. The anti-bullying policy is linked directly to the RGS core values and in particular:

- Inclusivity
- Respect
- Courage
- Collaboration

Therefore, it is essential that all members of the school community understand and abide by the policy and model respectful behaviour in all situations. This encourages and empowers all stakeholders to be proactive in creating a positive sense of community and responsibility so that the opportunities for bullying to exist are minimised.

Aims

The aim of the policy is to ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, safe and caring environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable. We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure environment. Further aims are: -

- To give all stakeholders an understanding of what bullying is
- All staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when it bullying is reported
- All stakeholders should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying occurs
- To deal effectively with bullying
- To ensure that all members of the school community feel responsible for combating bullying
- To promote the vision and core values of the school

Procedures

Why do we need an Anti-Bullying Policy?

Persistent bullying can severely inhibit a child's ability to learn effectively. The negative effects of bullying can have an impact on a person for their entire life. RGS wishes to promote a secure and happy environment free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behaviour. Therefore, this policy promotes practices within the school to reinforce our vision and to remove or discourage practices that negate them.

What is Bullying?

Bullying can be defined as "behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally". (DfE "Preventing and Tackling Bullying", July 2017). Bullying may take many forms including:

- **Verbal** bullying which includes name calling, taunting, mocking and making offensive comments.
- **Physical** bullying which can include kicking, hitting, pushing and taking away belongings.
- **Emotional** bullying which includes gossiping, excluding people from groups, isolating an individual and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours about them.
- **Racist** bullying occurs when bullying is motivated by racial, ethnic or cultural prejudice.
- **Sexual** bullying is where someone makes unwanted physical contact or makes sexually abusive comments.
- **Sexist** bullying occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against someone because of their gender.
- **Cyberbullying** is the above unacceptable behaviours expressed online. It can include: sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos.
- Bullying is recognised by the school as being a form of peer on peer abuse. It can be emotionally abusive and can cause severe and adverse effects on children's emotional development
- Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour such as becoming shy or nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school.

Some warning signs that a student is being bullied:

- Changes in academic performance
- Appears anxious
- Regularly feeling sick or unwell. Wanting to visit the nurse regularly.
- Reluctance to come to school
- Clothes/bags torn or damaged
- Money/possessions going missing
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Unexplained behaviour changes such as moody, bad-tempered, tearful
- Loss of appetite. Not sleeping. Weight loss.
- Seen alone a lot
- Not very talkative

Some reasons why people bully:
- Desire to appear powerful
- Unhappiness

- Feelings of inadequacy
- Difficulties at home
- Learned behaviour

What is not Bullying?

- One-off incidents

Bullying is persistent and repetitive, and generally fits a pattern of behaviour. However, there will be occasions when a one-off incident is so significant that it causes long term effects, and is therefore categorised as bullying. One example may be extreme public humiliation that deters someone from engaging in discussions or social events.

- Mutual conflict

A disagreement, argument or fight in which both parties have equally participated and where there is no imbalance of power.

Responding to bullying

The following steps may be taken when dealing with all incidents of bullying reported to the school:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached or witnessed the concern
- All parties involved in incidents will be listened to
- The school will provide appropriate support for the person being bullied – making sure they are not at risk of immediate harm
- A clear written account of the incident will be recorded and given to the relevant Pastoral Lead
- The Head of School will be informed of serious cases of bullying together with the parents/guardians of both victim and perpetrator. Parents/guardians are encouraged to support the school to ensure that bullying does not continue

Cyberbullying

Please see ICT Usage and Safety Policy

Supporting pupils

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Reassuring the pupil and providing continuous pastoral support
- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their teacher, the designated safeguarding lead, or a member of staff of their choice
- Working towards restoring self-esteem and confidence
- Where necessary, providing ongoing support; this may include: working and speaking with staff, offering formal counselling, engaging with parents and carers

Pupils who have perpetrated bullying will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened, establishing the concern and the need to change

- Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude and behaviour of the child
- Providing appropriate education and support regarding their behaviour or actions
- If online, requesting that content be removed
- Sanctioning, in line with school behaviour/discipline policy; this may include official warnings, detentions, removal of privileges (including online access when encountering cyberbullying concerns), and fixed-term or permanent exclusions.

Preventing bullying Environment

The whole school community will:

- Create and support an inclusive environment which promotes a culture of mutual respect, consideration and care for others, which will be upheld by all
- Recognise that bullying can be perpetrated or experienced by any member of the community
- Recognises the potential for children with SEN and disabilities to be disproportionately impacted by bullying and will implement additional pastoral support as required
- Challenge practice and language (including 'banter') which does not uphold the school values of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect towards others
- Be encouraged to use technology, especially mobile phones and social media, positively and responsibly
- Celebrate success and achievements to promote and build a positive school ethos

The Anti-Bullying Policy Links with the below school policies and practices:

- Whole School Behaviour Policy
- ICT Usage and Safety Policy

Evaluation

This policy will be updated following consultation and agreement of any changes through working parties, and at the end of the academic year. Any changes to be clearly communicated to all teaching and learning teams.

Appendices