



**'BE THE BEST YOU CAN BE!'**

# **HARASSMENT Policy**

**Lead person responsible:**

**Ms M Loosemore**

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## **Rationale**

Roe Green Junior School recognises that different types of harassment are an increasing problem in our society. Although policies on behaviour and anti-bullying already exist in the school, this policy recognises that harassment poses particular challenges. The policy acknowledges that there are important principles to take into account and teachers will effectively deal with incidents where the school complaint guidelines are followed carefully.

Roe Green Junior School is committed to challenging negative attitudes through the curriculum and to nurture the positive self esteem of all pupils and staff in the school community. The policy makes it clear that it covers members of all ethnic, national groups and gender groups that are represented in the School community, including Gypsy Travellers, asylum seekers and refugees.

## **Definition**

The Law states Racial Harassment is discrimination under the Race Relations Act of 1976. The Criminal Justice and Public Act of 1994 and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 make racial and sexual harassment a criminal offence.

Harassment is recognised by Roe Green Junior School as;

**Any act or expression which causes harm or offence, directed by a member of one racial, religious, ethnic, gender group to others where the motivation or effect is to create dislike or hatred.**

Incidents may include:

- Threatened or actual physical assault.
- Verbal abuse, name calling.
- Expressions of prejudice calculated to offend others or to influence the behaviour of others
- Graffiti on school furniture, walls, books
- Distributing offensive literature
- Wearing badges or symbols belonging to known racist, extremist or sexist organisations.
- Teasing in relation to language, religion, gender, cultural background.

### **It is important to recognise that:**

- Harassment has multi dimensions and can be expressed in various ways.
- Teachers may need to deal with comments made by parents or other adults as well as by children.
- Incidents may involve group as well as individual behaviour.
- Such incidents are often part of complex interactions which may take place in school- for example; an argument about friendships may lead to racist insults.

- Harassment may not be expressed in an explicit way.
- Offensive behaviour can occur without any people of that particular group being present- for example, telling racist jokes.
- Acts or expressions may include negative body language - for example refusing to sit next to a girl, boy, or a pupil of a particular racial or religious background.
- Pupils may be offended by the harassment or offensive behaviour of other pupils. Harassment is not based on intentionality. Whether or not the perpetrator intended to harass, or understands the content of what she/ he has done, the effects of the harassment must be dealt with. The perspective of the child/ adult who has been harassed should be given particular attention.

## **Principles**

The following principles underpin the school's approach to dealing with incidents of harassment:

- The perception of the person who has experienced harassment should be given particular attention.
- All incidents should be responded to immediately and appropriately. Some aspects of the response will need to be dealt with at a later stage, for example, contact with parents.
- School staff should understand that their reactions to such incidents will influence the attitudes of pupils. For example, a failure to respond may be seen as condoning harassment practices.
- It is important that staff acknowledge that pupils who have experienced any form of harassment may have developed strategies to deal with this. Intervention should, where possible, support and empower pupils/ staff who have suffered harassment. A balance should be developed between supporting pupils/staff and protecting them.
- School staff need to recognise that there is no one way of dealing with all types of incidents.
- All incidents of racial harassment should be treated as serious disciplinary matters. It should be dealt with appropriately to the incident itself. For example, a deliberate racist attack (verbal and physical) should be dealt with on the same basis as any other serious attack involving discipline of the offender, support for the pupil/ member of staff who has been attacked and counselling for both parties. Where the incident is judged to be unintentional then the emphasis would be on counselling and support for both parties.
- Consistency in dealing with incidents is essential if pupils and staff are to be clear about the school's commitment to dealing with harassment.

## **Procedures**

- It is important that these measures should be clearly understood by all members of the school community.

- In investigating any alleged harassment it is important that all parties involved are given a fair hearing and an opportunity to say what happened. The possibility of an unjust or invented accusation has to be taken into account.
- Most incidents will be dealt with as they occur. The response will vary according to the nature of the incident and the people involved, where the incident is between pupils or between a pupil and teacher, parents will be involved. If the incident has occurred between colleagues, both/all colleagues will be involved. All incidents will be recorded and reported to the Head teacher.
- Ideally relationship issues and conflicts between colleagues should be dealt with through less formal processes wherever possible. Sometimes people are not aware that their behaviour is unwelcome and an unofficial discussion can lead to greater understanding and an agreement that the behaviour will cease.
- In many cases it may be sufficient for the complainant of the unfair treatment to raise the problem directly with the person they think is responsible. The matter should be raised at the time or as soon as reasonably possible.
- The complainant should explain what the offending and unwanted behaviour is to the perpetrator, the impact and consequences of such behaviour and seek agreement that the behaviour will cease. Offending individuals could be unaware of, or insensitive to, the impact of their actions and such discussions can change behaviour or prevent further incidents. Being aware that the situation is noticed and being monitored also can act as sufficient motive to stop the offending actions.
- Where a less formal process is not successful or not possible, it will be necessary to move to the formal process.
- Responses may require sanctions, withdrawal of privileges, counselling and the involvement of other professionals, for example - Police, Social Services.
- The policy compliments our Equality Policy, Complaints Procedure Policy, Behaviour Policy and Anti –Bullying Policy which all give further information about practice and procedures.