

RIVERSIDE SCHOOL



Anti-Bullying Policy

APPROVED BY GOVERNORS

RESPONSIBLE PERSON - HEADTEACHER

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Statement of Intent

Riverside School believes that all pupils are entitled to learn in a safe and supportive environment; this means being free from all forms of bullying behaviour. This policy outlines how instances of bullying are dealt with, including the procedures to prevent occurrences of bullying.

Riverside School further believes that all staff are entitled to work in an environment that is safe and supportive and free from bullying or harassment.

Various strategies, such as learning about tolerance and difference as part of the school's curriculum, aim to promote an inclusive, tolerant and supportive ethos at the school.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 outlines a number of legal obligations regarding the school's response to bullying. Under section 89, schools must have measures in place to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures are part of the school's Regulation Support Policy, which is communicated to all pupils, staff and families.

All staff, parents/ carers and pupils work together to prevent and reduce any instances of bullying at the school. There is a zero-tolerance policy for bullying at Riverside School.

1. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to legislation, including but not limited to the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010, Amendments from Jan 2024
- Children Act 1989
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Communications Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Education Act 2011

This policy has been written in accordance with DfE advice, including but not limited to the following:

- DfE 'Preventing and tackling bullying' (2017)

This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Regulation Support Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Equality Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Procedure for Staff
- Disciplinary Procedure for Staff
- Raising Concerns in School Policy

2. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, bullying is defined as persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically or emotionally harming another person or group.

Bullying is generally characterised by:

- Repetition – Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over a period of time.
- Intent – The perpetrator(s) mean to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
- Targeting – Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- Power Imbalance – Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

Vulnerable pupils are more likely to be the target of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves.

Vulnerable pupils may include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Pupils who are adopted, fosters or in the care system.
- Pupils suffering from a health problem.
- Pupils with caring responsibilities.

It is recognised that staff may also be the target of bullying and this will not be tolerated; any reported incidents will be investigated and if appropriate managed under Riverside's Disciplinary Procedure for Staff.

3. Types of Bullying

Many different kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying and can be related to almost anything. The Equality Act 2010 identifies protected characteristics; these are:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender reassignment;
- Marriage or civil partnership (in employment only);
- Pregnancy or maternity;
- Race;
- Religion or belief;
- Sex; and
- Sexual Orientation.

Teasing another pupil because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, home life, culture, disability or special educational needs are some of the types of bullying that can occur.

Bullying can be acted out through the following mediums:

- Verbally;
- Physically;
- Emotionally; and
- Online (Cyber).

Racist Bullying

Bullying someone based on their ethnic background, religion or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Public Order Act 1986.

Homophobic Bullying

Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

Transphobic Bullying

Bullying someone based on another person's gender 'variance' or for not confirming to dominant gender roles.

Sexist Bullying

Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.

Sexual Bullying

Bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal or non-verbal sexual dimension/ dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.

4. Statutory Implications

The school understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, it has a responsibility to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The school understands that, under the Human Rights Act 1998, it could have charges brought against it if it allows the rights of children, young people, staff or visitors at the school to be breached by failing to take bullying seriously.

The National Association of Head Teachers has guidelines that recommend headteachers must 'satisfy themselves' that their school's Anti-Bullying Policy complies with the HRA; the headteacher understands that they cannot do this without fully involving their staff.

Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/ or communications may be considered criminal offences:

- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or in any way which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or contains information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
- The protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- Section 127 of the Communication Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means

of a public electronic communications network, a message, or another matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.

- Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to the Police include: violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation and hate crimes.

5. Prevention

The school clearly communicates a whole-school commitment to addressing bullying in the form of a written statement (see statement of intent) which is regularly promoted across the school.

All reported or witnessed instances of bullying in the school are investigated by a member of staff.

Staff encourage pupil co-operation and the development of interpersonal skills through the use of group work and pair work. Bullying is discussed as part of the curriculum as are diversity, difference and respect for others. They are prompted and celebrated through various lessons.

Seating arrangements in class will be changed and organised in a way that prevents instances of bullying where appropriate. Potential victims of bullying are drawn into working groups with children who do not abuse or take advantage of them. Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills are provided through participation in special events, for example, expressive arts, sporting activities and clubs.

All members of the school community are made aware of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy. All staff members receive training on identifying and dealing with the different types of bullying.

A safe, supervised place is available for pupils to go to at unstructured times if they are involved in conflict with their peers, or wish to avoid a bully. Staff will encourage pupils to discuss any bullying, whether they are the victims or have witnessed an incident.

If staff are made aware of any incidents of bullying during home school transport, they will report this to a member of the leadership team, who will liaise with SEN transport.

Riverside School now uses software called Behaviour Watch to track trends and report any potential incidents of bullying. IN the event of any incidents that were linked to a pupil of staff protected characteristics these would be flagged and shared with senior leaders, including the designated safeguarding lead.

6. Signs of Bullying

Some of the signs that a pupil may be a victim of bullying include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Being frightened to travel to or from school.
- Asking to be driven to school.
- Unwillingness to attend school.
- Truancy.
- Becoming anxious or lacking confidence.
- Saying that they feel ill in the morning.
- Decreased involvement in school work.
- Returning home with torn clothes or damaged possessions.
- Missing possessions.
- Missing dinner money.
- Asking for extra money or stealing.
- Cuts and bruises.
- Lack of appetite.
- Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices.
- Becoming agitated when receiving calls or texts.
- Lack of eye contact.
- Becoming short tempered.
- Changes in behaviour and attitude at home.

Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental health issues, so are still worth investigating.

Pupils who display a significant number of these signs are approached by a member of staff, in order to determine the underlying issues, whether they are due to bullying or other issues.

Staff are encouraged to look out for signs of concern from other staff and to report these to a line manager. Anyone raising a concern in good faith will do so under the protection of the Raising Concerns in School Policy.

7. Staff Principles

Staff at Riverside School adhere to the following principles:

- Prevention is at the forefront of the school's Anti-bullying Policy.
- Staff treat all reports of bullying very seriously.
- Staff do not ignore signs of suspected bullying.
- Unpleasantness from one pupil towards another is always challenged and never ignored.
- Staff take action immediately when they become aware of a bullying incident; this applies to all staff, not solely teaching staff.

- Staff always respect pupils' privacy, and information about specific instances of bullying are not discussed with others, unless it is in a setting that the victim has given consent to if the member of staff believes the pupil is in serious danger e.g., of being hurt, they will inform the designated safeguarding lead immediately.
- Follow-up support is given to both the victim and the bully in the months following any incidents, to ensure all bullying has stopped.

8. Key Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Board evaluates and reviews this policy to ensure that it is non-discriminatory.

It is the responsibility of all staff to be alert to possible bullying of pupils and to deal with incidents as the highest priority.

The headteacher reviews and amends this policy, taking into account new legislation and government guidance, and using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in the previous year to improve procedures.

Senior leaders keep a record of all reported incidents, including which type of bullying has occurred, to allow for proper analysis of the data collected. Senior Leaders are also responsible for arranging training for all staff members.

Teachers are alert to social dynamics in their class and are available for pupils who wish to report bullying. They also provide follow-up support and liaise with families if bullying is identified.

All members of staff:

- ensure that they are alert to possible bullying situations particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and that they inform the pupil's teacher of such observations.
- avoid gender stereotyping when dealing with bullying.
- understand the composition of pupil groups, showing sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying.
- have a duty to report any instances of bullying once they have been approached by a pupils for support.

Parents/ carers are advised to inform their child's teacher if they are concerned that their child may be being bullied or be involved in bullying.

Pupils are advised:

- to inform a member of staff if they witness bullying, or are victims of bullying.
- not to make counter-threats if they are victims of bullying.
- to walk away from any dangerous situations and avoid involving other pupils in incidents.

- to retain all evidence of cyber bullying.

9. Cyber Bullying

The school has in place a Social Media Policy, which outlines the school's zero tolerance approach to cyber bullying.

Riverside School views cyber bullying in the same light as any other form of bullying and will follow the sanctions set out in section 11 of this policy if they become aware of any incidents.

The school will support pupils who have been victims of cyber bullying by holding formal and informal discussions with the pupil about their feelings and whether the bullying has stopped, in accordance with sections 12 and 13 of this policy.

In accordance with the Education Act 2011, the school has the right to examine and delete files from pupils' personal devices e.g., mobile phones, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

Teachers receive training on internet safety and current trends, in order to teach and keep their pupils safe in a personalised and meaningful way. The designated safeguarding lead cascades any new trends and information surrounding Internet Safety with the whole staff body as and when needed, and shares on the school's website to support families and staff training needs – for more information please see our E-Safety Policy.

If an electronic device is seized by a member of staff, and there is a reasonable ground to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, the device must be given to the Police as soon as it is reasonably practicable.

If a staff member finds material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, the headteacher or a deputy headteacher in their absence will decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of the relevant policies.

10. Procedures

Minor incidents are reported to the victim's teacher, who investigates the incident, sets appropriate sanctions for the perpetrator and informs the assistant headteacher in writing of the incident and outcome.

When investigating a bullying incident, the following procedures are adopted:

- The victim, alleged bully and witnesses are all interviewed separately where possible, support will be provided by staff as appropriate.

- Members of staff ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the pupils being interviewed, including electronic communication.
- If a pupil is injured, members of staff immediately take the pupil to an appropriate first aider for a medical opinion on the extent of their injuries.
- A room is used that allows for privacy during interviews.
- A witness is used for serious incidents.
- If appropriate, the alleged bully, the victim and the witness are asked to write down details of the incident; this may need prompting with questions from the member of staff to obtain the full picture.
- Premature assumptions are not made as it is important not to be judgmental at this stage.
- Members of staff listen carefully to all accounts, being non-confrontational and not attaching blame until the investigation is complete.
- All pupils concerned are informed that they must not discuss the interview with other pupils.

Due to the potential for sexist, transphobic and sexual bullying to be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviour, staff members involved in dealing with the incident are required to consider whether there is a need for safeguarding processes to be implemented.

11. Sanctions

If a senior leader is satisfied that bullying did take place, the pupil will be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and warned that there must be no further incidents.

A member of the leadership team informs the pupil of the type of sanction to be used in this instance (detentions, service-based activities etc.) and future sanctions if the bullying continues.

If possible, a member of the leadership team will attempt reconciliation and will obtain a genuine apology from the bully. This will either be in writing to the victim (and/ or witnesses if appropriate), or face-to-face, but only with the victim's full consent. Discretion is used here; victims will never feel pressured into a face-to-face meeting with the bully.

Parents/ carers are informed of bullying incidents and what action is being taken.

A senior leader will monitor the pupils involved over the next half term.

12. Support

The class teacher informally checks whether the bullying has stopped on a daily basis for a month after the initial complaint of bullying.

A senior leader formally checks whether the bullying has stopped the week after the

bullying, and again during the same half term.

If necessary, group dynamics are broken up by members of staff by assigning places in classes.

The victim is encouraged to tell a trusted adult in school if bullying is repeated at any time. They are also encouraged to broaden their friendship groups by joining lunchtime clubs or activities.

13. Follow-up Support

The progress of both the bully and the victim are monitored by their class teacher. One-on-one sessions how they are progressing may be appropriate.

If appropriate, follow-up correspondence is arranged with parents/ carers one month after the incident.

Pupils who have been bullied are supported in the following ways:

- Being listened to;
- Having an immediate opportunity to meet with their teacher or a member of leadership of another staff member of their choice;
- Being reassured;
- Being offered continued support; and
- Being offered counselling, where appropriate.

Pupils who have bullied others are supported in the following ways:

- Receiving a consequence for their actions;
- Being able to discuss what happened;
- Being helped to reflect on why they became involved;
- Being helped to understand what they did wrong and why they need to change their behaviour; and
- Appropriate assistance from their parents/ carers.

Pupils who have been bullied will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and a member of the leadership team will, if necessary, refer the victim of bullying to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

In cases where the effects of bullying are so severe that the pupil cannot successfully reintegrate back into the school, the headteacher will review the appropriateness of the continued placement with the parents and local authority.

14. Bullying Outside of School

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside of school premises. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such

as on school or public transport, outside the local shops or in a town or village centre.

Where bullying outside of school is reported to school staff, it is investigated and acted upon. IN all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, members of staff can only discipline the pupil on school premises, or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the member of staff.

The headteacher has a specific statutory power to discipline pupils for poor behaviour outside of school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives the headteacher the power to regulate pupil's conduct when they are not on school premises, and therefore, not under the lawful charge of a school staff member.

If the misbehaviour could be of a criminal nature, or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the Police are always informed.

15. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the headteacher and the designated safeguarding lead.

Appendix 1 – Bullying Report Form

This form will be sent to a member of the leadership team upon completion:

Personal details

Name of person reporting incident	
Name of pupil(s) being bullied	
Sex	
Year Group	
Form	
How may we contact you (please circle)	
At School	At Home
Home address	
Email	
Telephone	

Incident details

What happened?

Where did the incident take place?

When did the incident occur

Who has been suspected of bullying?

Did anyone else see the incident?

According to the victim how often does the bullying take place?

According to the victim, how long has the bullying been going on?

Impact of the bullying

What emotional impact has the bullying had on the pupil?

Was anyone physically hurt?

Did anyone need medical attention?

Has anyone else been informed of the bullying?

If so, when were they informed?

If not, why has the incident not been reported?

Help and support

What type of help and support are still available to the victim?

Do you have any concerns about reporting the bullying?

What more do you think could be done to help prevent instances like this in future?