

RIVERSIDE SCHOOL



Anti-Bullying Policy

APPROVED BY GOVERNORS

RESPONSIBLE PERSON - HEADTEACHER

Contents

Statement of Intent

1. Legal Framework
2. Definitions
3. Types of Bullying
4. Statutory Implications
5. Prevention
6. Signs of Bullying
7. Staff Principles
8. Key Roles and Responsibilities
9. Cyber Bullying
10. Procedures
11. Sanctions
12. Support
13. Follow-up Support
14. Bullying Outside of School
15. Monitoring and Review

Appendix 1 – Bullying Report Form

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.

These strategies, such as learning about tolerance and difference as part of the school's curriculum, and 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, school staff and parents.

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 (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'

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

- Regulation Support Policy
- Online Safety Policy

- Social Media Policy
- Equality Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy and Procedure for Staff
- Disciplinary Policy and 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 identified 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 people have towards those who are different from themselves. Vulnerable pupils may include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils who are adopted, fostered or in the care system.
- Pupils suffering from poor physical or mental health or a diagnosed health condition.
- 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 Procedures. This will also be true for bullying by staff of any individual or group outside of the school premises and/ or not in term time.

3. Types of Bullying

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

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership (in employment only)

- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

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

Bullying can be acted out through the following mediums:

- Verbally
- Physically
- Emotionally
- 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 based on another person’s gender ‘variance’ or for not conforming to ‘traditional’ 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 include inappropriate sexual behaviours or misogynistic attitudes.

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 gender stereotypes or sexist or misogynistic attitudes.

4. Statutory Implications

The school understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, and the updates in the Equalities Act 2010 (Amendments) Regulations 2023 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 this.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and

people who do not share this.

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

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, updated 2023 it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another 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 and covers behaviour which alarms or distresses the victim.
- 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 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, violence against women and girls 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 the leadership team.

Staff encourage pupil cooperation and the development of interpersonal skills through the use of group and pair work. Bullying is discussed as part of the curriculum, as are diversity, difference and respect for others. These qualities are promoted and celebrated through various lessons. The school also has a Belonging Agenda and actively promotes this.

Seating arrangements in class and class timetables will be changed and organised in a way that prevents instances of bullying where appropriate.

Measures will be taken to safeguard and promote the welfare of potential victims of bullying, for example, they may be 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.

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

A safe, supervised place is available for pupils to go to at unstructured times if they are involved in conflict with their peers. Staff will encourage pupils to discuss any bullying, whether they are victims or have witnessed an incident. Staff will encourage pupils not to be a bystander, but to actively seek support from an adult if they witness 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 uses software called Behaviour Watch to track trends and document any potential incidents of bullying. In the event of incidents linked to pupil's or staff's protected characteristics these are 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 may 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
- Poor attendance
- 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
- Physical marks
- Lack of appetite
- Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices
- Becoming agitated when receiving calls or texts

Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to social, emotional or mental health issues, and should be investigating.

Staff are encouraged to look out for signs of concern from both pupils and other staff and to report these to a safeguarding lead or line manager. Anyone raising a concern in good faith will do so in line with the Low-Level Concerns Policy and the Raising Concerns in School Policy.

7. Staff Principles

Prevention is at the forefront of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy. Principles our staff follow to prevent bullying include, but are not limited to:

- All reports of bullying are taken seriously
- Staff do not ignore the signs of suspected bullying
- Unpleasantness from one pupil towards another is challenged
- Staff take action immediately when they become aware of a bullying incident; this applies to all staff, not solely teaching staff.

Staff respect pupils' privacy, and information about specific instances of bullying; however, this will be reported via Behaviour Watch (for a pupil) and to a member of senior leadership. If the member of staff believes the pupil is in serious danger e.g., of being hurt, they will inform the designated safeguarding lead and take appropriate action immediately.

Follow-up support is given to both the victim and the bully following any incidents, to ensure bullying has ceased.

8. Key Roles and Responsibilities

Governors are responsible for the following:

- Evaluating and reviewing this policy to ensure that it is non-discriminatory

The DSL is responsible for the following:

- Reviewing and amending this policy, taking into account new legislation and government guidance to improve procedures

Senior leadership is responsible for:

- keeping a record of all reported incidents, including which type of bullying has occurred, to allow for proper analysis of the data collected.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff members.

Staff are responsible for the following:

- Being alert to possible bullying of pupils and to deal with incidents as the highest priority.
- Teachers will be 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.
- Ensuring that they are alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and that they inform the pupil's teacher of such

observations.

- Avoiding gender stereotyping when dealing with bullying.
- Understanding the composition of pupil groups, showing sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying.
- Reporting instances of bullying once they have been approached by a pupil for support.

Families are responsible for the following:

- Informing their child's teacher if they are concerned that their child may be being bullied or are involved in bullying.

Pupils are responsible for the following:

- Informing a member of staff if they witness bullying or are victims of bullying.
- Not making counter-threats if they are victims of bullying or witness a bullying incident.
- Seeking adult support in dangerous situations and avoiding involving other pupils in incidents.
- Retaining appropriate evidence of any 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 procedures 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 further, in accordance with sections 12 and 13 of this policy.

Pursuant to 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; however, unless there is felt to be a significant risk of harm by not contacting a family this would be sought.

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 Online Safety Policy.

If an electronic device is confiscated by a member of staff, and there is reasonable

grounds to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, the device must be given to the Police as soon as 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

One off incidents that do not involve significant harm are reported to the victim's teacher, who investigates the incident, sets appropriate next steps for the perpetrator and informs their line leader in writing of the incident outcome. This should also be logged on Behaviour Watch by the member of staff who witnessed or was made aware of the incident.

When investigating a bullying incident, the following procedures can be 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 a minimum possibility of contact between the pupils being interviewed, including electronic communication.
- If a pupil is injured, members of staff seek first aid advice from a qualified first aider for a medical opinion on the extent of their injuries.
- A room is used that allows for privacy during interviews.
- Another adult can be present where appropriate.
- If appropriate, the alleged bully, the victim and the witnesses are asked to communicate details of the incident.
- Premature assumptions are not made, staff are not judgmental when fact finding.
- Members of staff listen carefully to all accounts, in a non-confrontational manner and do not attach blame while fact finding or investigating the incident.
- Pupils concerned are informed that they must not discuss the interview with other pupils but are given supportive trusted adults whom they can talk to if they feel this is needed. They are also encouraged to talk to families.

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. Procedures for Bullying Behaviour

If a senior leader is satisfied that bullying did take place, the pupil will be helped to understand the consequences of their actions for themselves, and adults will support them to ensure there are no further incidents.

Families are informed of any bullying incidents, as well as what support has been put in place as a result of any bullying identified.

A senior leader will monitor the pupils involved to ensure there are no further incidents of bullying behaviour.

12. Support

The teacher or other appropriate adult informally checks whether the bullying has sopped in an appropriate and timely manner after the initial complaint of bullying.

The victim is encouraged to tell a trusted adult in school if there are any repeated incidents of bullying behaviour. The victim is encouraged to broaden their friendship groups by appropriate and trusted members of staff in a way that is meaningful and deliberate.

13. Follow-up Support

The progress of both the bully and the victim are monitored. One-on-one sessions to discuss how they are progressing may be appropriate. If appropriate, follow-up correspondence is arranged with families after the incident.

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

- Being listened to.
- Having an immediate opportunity to meet with a trusted adult who is aware of the situation.
- Being reassured.
- Being offered continued support in the way that is meaningful to them.

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

- Understanding the emotive feelings that have been raised by their actions for themselves and others.
- Being able to discuss what happened.
- Being helped to reflect on why they became involved.
- Being helped to understand what they could do differently if the situation were to arise again.
- Appropriate assistance from families.

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 the school ELSA, Bromley Y, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services or other appropriate internal or external support mechanism.

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 families and local authority.

14. Bullying Outside of School

Where bullying outside of school is reported to school staff, it is investigated and acted upon. 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. However, the school would seek to understand and support all pupils involved in the behaviour or incident to ensure this is understood and that pupils have the guidance and support needed whatever their role.

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?