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# THE RIVERBANK SCHOOL



## Antibullying Policy



## Statement of Intent

The aim of the Antibullying policy is to ensure that every child can learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment, without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behavior and affects everyone; it is unacceptable.

If bullying does occur, all learners should be able to tell someone who can intervene, and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly, sensitively and effectively.

## Why do we need an Antibullying 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.

We wish to promote a secure and happy environment free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behavior. This policy therefore promotes practices within the school to reinforce our vision, and to remove and discourage practices that negate this vision.

## Policy Objectives

This policy seeks to:

- Raise awareness amongst members of the school community aware of the types of behaviour involved in bullying.
- Identify what we will do to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying.
- Provide practical advice on how to tackle bullying.
- Give clear guidelines on procedures to be followed when dealing with cases of bullying.

## Responsibilities

- It is the responsibility of:
  - **The Head of School**
- to communicate this policy to the school community, and ensure that disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably
- Identify a member of the senior leadership team to take responsibility for dealing with bullying.



- **Governors** to take a lead role in monitoring and reviewing this policy.
- **All staff**, including governors, senior leadership, teaching and non-teaching staff, to support, uphold and implement this policy accordingly.
- **Parents and Carers** to support their children and work in partnership with the school.
- **Pupils and Students** to abide by the Behaviour and Antibullying policies of the school

### Definition of bullying

Bullying can be defined as **unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical** conducted, by an **individual or group against another person** (or persons) and which is **repeated over time**.

Bullying occurs when an individual or a group **uses strength or power to cause hurt**, either physically or emotionally, by intimidating or demeaning others. Bullying can be emotional, physical, racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, verbal or cyber. It is **usually persistent and is often covert**, and is a **conscious attempt to hurt, threaten or frighten** someone.

Bullying can take many different forms and these can include:

- **Physical aggression.** This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking, tripping people and taking belongings by force. It may also take the form of severe physical assault.
- **Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon.
- **Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying:** This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice can be difficult to detect and may include:
  - Writing insulting things about the student in a public place
  - Passing around notes about or drawings of the student
  - Whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard.



**Relational bullying** occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. Common forms include:

- control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore"(implied or stated)
- a group ganging up against one person
- non-verbal gesturing
- malicious gossip and spreading rumours about a person - giving a student the "silent treatment".

- **Cyberbullying:** This is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as texting, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Making someone the target of inappropriate or unpleasant messages, sending hurtful or degrading images, and spreading rumours and gossip about a person, are the most common forms of online bullying. Cyberbullying is most likely to occur outside school but the school reserves the right to take disciplinary action in any cases where RiverBank students are involved in cyber-bullying, regardless of when or where the bullying takes place.
- **Name calling:** Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Name-calling of this type may refer to physical appearance, accent or distinctive voice characteristics Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This can operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be poor academically. At the other extreme there are those who are targeted because they are perceived as high achievers.
- **Damage to property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, school books or interference with a student's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.
- **Extortion:** Demands for favours or material reward may be made, often accompanied by threats. A student may be forced to give some of his food to a bully or to do work, such as washing clothes. A student may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.
- **Racist bullying** occurs when bullying is motivated by racial, ethnic or cultural prejudice.



- **Sexual** bullying is where someone makes unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- **Disablist** bullying occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against people with any form of disability.
- **Sexist** bullying occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against someone because of their gender

The table in Appendix One summarises the different forms bullying can take:

### Important features of bullying:

1. **The behavior directed at the victim is repeated.** Isolated or one-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour do not fall within this definition of bullying and should be dealt with in accordance with the school's behaviour policy. However, in the context of these procedures, placing a one-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.
2. **The consent of the victim does not mitigate the allegation of bullying.** A student may "agree" to share his food with a bully, or lend him his laptop. He may also say that he doesn't mind being called by an unpleasant name. Victims will often consent to being bullied out of fear of the consequences of standing up to the bully. It is the duty of members of the school community to identify such behaviour as bullying and to intervene on behalf of the victim.

### The consequences of bullying:

**Bullying, if not addressed, has a serious impact on victims.** Victims of bullying are likely to suffer a loss of self-esteem, impaired social interactions and reduced academic performance. In extreme cases, victims of bullying may consider self-harm, including suicide.

**The Riverbank School has a zero-tolerance policy towards bullying.** All members of the school community have an obligation to report any incidents of bullying that they observe, hear about or suspect may be taking place.



### How we deal with bullying

All staff have a responsibility to take a proactive role in preventing bullying and harassment by any member of the school community. To achieve this, school wide approach, staff are expected to:

- Behave respectfully towards all members of the school community and demonstrate what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Ensure that displays in classrooms, and around the school convey respectful information and messages, and involve students in the development of these displays.
- Notice and acknowledge respectful behaviour by learners through positive attention in class and assembly and through the awarding of house points
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school, including language which is deriding according to race, religion, gender, disability or academic achievement.
- Give constructive feedback to learners who do not meet expected standards of respectful behaviour and language.
- Actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure that learners are adequately supervised at all times.

### Additionally we are committed to:

- Maintaining a school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our learners through both curricular and extracurricular activities.
- Whole-staff professional development on safeguarding and bullying to ensure that all staff develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on learners' lives and the need to respond to it.
- School-wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include learners, parent and guardians and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school trips and extra-curricular activities.



- Involvement of the Student Council in contributing to a safe school environment and promotion of the buddy system, mentoring, Lunchtime Pals and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- The school's antibullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent and guardians are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school .
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures, such as annual Friendship Week, student surveys and regular school or year group assemblies.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. It will be made clear to all learners that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Ensuring that learners know who to tell and how to tell. This includes:
  - Making a direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
  - Getting a parent or a friend to speak on behalf of the victim.  
The school will ensure that there are clear protocols in place to encourage parents or guardian to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
  - Ensuring that bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

### **For students; what you can do about bullying:**

Tell the person(s) involved to stop if you observe them bullying someone.

If you are being bullied, or someone you know is being bullied, report it to a member of staff. You can also report it to:

- A friend
- A teacher
- The Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Lead
- Any member of the Pastoral Care Team
- Any other responsible person whom you trust



## When to report bullying:

- Report bullying as soon as it happens.
- **Do not ignore it**, as it may get worse.

**For staff:** All suspected cases of bullying must be immediately reported to the Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

## How we respond as a school to reported incidents of bullying

**All reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with.** It is important that when learners report incidents of bullying they are considered to be behaving responsibly and are therefore taken seriously.

**The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.**

Staff should take a calm, problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by learners, staff or parents.

## Procedures to be followed when investigating bullying:

- Investigations into bullying should be coordinated by one of the following staff: Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Safeguarding Lead
- The investigation should seek answers to questions of *what, where, when, who and why*. These questions will be answered mainly through interviews conducted with victims, perpetrators and witnesses.
- It is important that all questioning is done in a calm and unemotional manner. This sets an appropriate example in how to deal effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- Interviews of learners should be conducted sensitively and confidentially and steps taken to ensure that witnesses to bullying are protected from undue peer pressure.
- Learners interviewed should be asked to write a statement. They may be guided in terms of the type of information to include but it is important that they are able to write in their own words.





### When it is suspected that bullying has taken place:

- The sectional head will be notified that there has been a suspected bullying incident.
- When it is established that bullying is likely to have taken place, in all but very minor cases, a disciplinary hearing will be held to decide on the appropriate course of action. Acts of bullying will be sanctioned in accordance with the school's behaviour policy. Specifically:
  - Minor cases of bullying - Level 3 Infraction
  - Bullying or cyberbullying - Level 4 Infraction
- In all bullying cases, the perpetrator will be warned to immediately stop the inappropriate behaviour. **This may involve a meeting between both or all parties if they are willing.**
- The safety and welfare of the victim will be given high priority. This will include counselling and practical steps to ensure that the victim feels safe and protected from further bullying.

### Post-intervention strategies by the Pastoral Team will include:

- Monitoring those bullied to ensure their continued safety and wellbeing.
- Checking that the bullying has stopped.
- Counselling for both victim and perpetrator to address any underlying problems.
- Practical steps which may reduce the possibility of bullying behaviour in the future.

### Raising Awareness on Bullying -

There are designated World Anti-Bullying Days and this days will be recognised in the School Calendar. Learners will be encouraged to engage in activities towards this to ensure purpose continues to resonate across the School Campus. Active whole school engagement during the Anti-bullying week

### Links to other policies

List of school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying,  
Behaviour Policy  
Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy  
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy

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Appendix One - Categories of Bullying

TYPE OF BULLYING	DEFINITION
<b>Emotional / Relational</b>	Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malicious gossip</li> <li>• Isolation &amp; exclusion</li> <li>• Ignoring</li> <li>• Excluding from the group</li> <li>• Taking someone’s friends away</li> <li>• Spreading rumors</li> <li>• Breaking confidence               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The “look”</li> </ul>
<b>Physical</b>	Hitting, kicking, pushing, taking another’s belongings, any use of violence
Prejudice-based and discriminatory, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Racial</li> <li>• Faith-based</li> <li>• Gendered (sexist)</li> <li>• Homophobic</li> <li>• Disability-based</li> </ul>	Taunts, gestures, graffiti or physical abuse focused on a particular characteristic (e.g. gender, race, sexuality)  Exclusion on the basis of any on the list
<b>Sexual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explicit sexual remarks</li> <li>• Display of sexual material,</li> <li>• Sexual gestures,</li> <li>• Unwanted physical attention</li> <li>• Unwelcome or inappropriate touching or comments</li> <li>• Harassment</li> </ul>
<b>Direct or indirect verbal</b>	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing



TYPE OF BULLYING	DEFINITION
<b>Special Educational Needs, Disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name calling</li><li>• Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs</li><li>• Taking advantage of some Pupils’/Students’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying</li><li>• Taking advantage of some Pupils’/Students’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.</li><li>• Mimicking a person’s disability</li><li>• Setting others up for ridicule</li></ul>



TYPE OF BULLYING	DEFINITION
Cyber-bullying	<p>Bullying that takes place online, such as through social networking sites, messaging apps or gaming sites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Denigration:</b> Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation</li><li>• <b>Harassment:</b> Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual</li><li>• <b>Impersonation:</b> Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name</li><li>• <b>Flaming:</b> Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight</li><li>• <b>Trickery:</b> Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online</li><li>• <b>Outing:</b> Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images</li><li>• <b>Exclusion:</b> Purposefully excluding someone from an online group</li><li>• <b>Cyber stalking:</b> Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety</li><li>• Silent telephone/mobile phone call</li><li>• Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls</li><li>• Abusive text messages</li><li>• Abusive email</li><li>• Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles</li><li>• Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures</li><li>• Abusive posts on any form of communication technology</li></ul>