

Riverside School

'Respect and Protect'

Anti-Bullying Policy

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To be reviewed biennially.

Next review – Spring term 2026

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ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Statement of intent

At Riverside we believe that everyone within the school community has the right to work, play and socialise in an environment where they feel safe and happy. Everyone has the right not to be bullied.

Bullying is an unacceptable and insidious activity in schools which can have a profound and debilitating effects on the individuals concerned (as bullies, victims or observers), and on the whole school community.

At Riverside we are committed to promoting positive interactions with the aim of preventing bullying within the school. We have a clear set of procedures to deal with any incidences of bully that happen in our community. Through the implementation of our Policy we want to empower our students and support them in developing ways of preventing and counteracting bullying.

If bullying does occur at Riverside, we want students to let us know and to have confidence that the bullying behaviour will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We hope and expect that anyone who knows that bullying is happening within the school will tell us. We believe that we are a 'telling' school.

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 is the deliberate, and persistent use of verbal, psychological, emotional, social or physical aggression with the intention of hurting or undermining another person, usually someone who is powerless to resist. Bullying can be direct or indirect and will almost invariably result in pain or distress to the victim.

Bullying can happen to anyone. This policy covers all types and forms of bullying including:

- **Verbal bullying** is saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes:
 - Teasing
 - Name-calling
 - Inappropriate sexual comments
 - Taunting and insulting
 - Threatening to cause harm
 - Making fun of someone because of how they look and behave
 - Making fun of someone because they find something difficult

- **Social bullying**, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Social bullying includes:
 - Leaving someone out on purpose
 - Telling other children not to be friends with someone
 - Spreading rumours about someone
 - Embarrassing someone in public
 - Insisting someone do something they don't want to do or preventing them from doing something they do want to do
- **Physical bullying** involves hurting a person's body or possessions. Physical bullying includes:
 - Hitting/kicking/pinching
 - Spitting
 - Tripping/pushing
 - Taking or breaking someone's things
 - Making mean or rude hand or body gestures

Further types or motivations for bullying include; prejudice, crime related, bullying of people with additional educational needs or disabilities, homophobic and transphobic bullying or bullying related to race, religion or culture, bullying related to appearance or health, bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances, sexist or sexual bullying.

There is no hierarchy of bullying – all forms should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately.

Not all disagreements or arguments between people could be classed as bullying. It is acceptable to have a difference of opinion with someone and tell them what your view is -this is not the same as bullying them.

Bullying is when someone deliberately or persistently tries to make another person feel bad. Staff at Riverside work hard to ensure that not only is all and any bullying reported, but that students understand what it is to be bullied.

Where and when can bullying occur?

Bullying can happen at different times of the day and in different places and contexts. For example, bullying can occur; during the journey to and from school, out in the local community, in the various locations within school, during extracurricular activities linked to the school such as breakfast club, after school clubs and residential school trips. Bullying can also take place online on various platforms such as social media and gaming platforms (at times such as evenings, weekends and during holiday periods). Riverside School staff and students will address bullying regardless of when or where it takes place, working towards supporting and educating all parties involved.

Cyberbullying

The increasing use of digital technology and the internet has also provided new and particularly intrusive ways for bullying to occur. We will ensure that our students are taught safe ways to use the internet (see our e-safety policy) and encourage good online behaviour. Online safety advice will be delivered in assemblies, PSHE lessons and through the ICT curriculum.

Whilst most incidents of Cyberbullying occur outside school we will offer support and guidance to parents/carers and their children who experience online bullying and will treat Cyberbullying the same way as any other forms of bullying, swiftly and thoughtfully. Occurrences of cyberbullying will be thoroughly addressed and monitored. Riverside students require additional thoughtful support to help them navigate the intricacies and complexities of communication online (emojis, GIFs, voice messaging, social media groups, 'blocking', screenshotting and sharing links and images).

Why do some people bully?

Bullying is usually linked to prejudice, some reasons why people bully are:

- They are being bullied or have been bullied themselves and want to take their anger or frustration out on someone else
- The person they pick on annoys or unsettles them in some way
- They have seen people they respect use bullying behaviour
- They have never been told that this kind of behaviour is wrong
- They feel pressurised into acting this way by other people
- They have already been labelled as a bully and feel that nobody expects any different from them

How we aim to prevent bullying at Riverside

At Riverside we aim create a positive environment ensuring that:

- All students understand and abide by and are accountable to the school rules
- All staff model good behaviour at all times – our staff must be aware of and respect others' feelings at all times.
- All staff regularly explore and examine key points of this policy routinely with students to ensure everyone understands that bullying is not tolerated at Riverside.
- Key points of this policy have been produced in *Communicate in Print* form

OUR ANTI-BULLYING CODE IS FOR EVERYONE

Everyone has the right to enjoy learning, teaching and working without fear, free from intimidation.

Everyone has the right to be treated with respect.

Everyone has the right to learn and teach in an environment where everyone feels comfortable and safe.

Everyone, whether they are being bullied, friends of the bully or person being bullied, or onlookers, has a responsibility to report a bullying incident to an adult.

Everyone should be able to report bullying without fear.

Everyone should know that all bullying concerns will be dealt with promptly, sensitively and effectively.

What students should do if they feel someone is bullying them:

- Tell or signal for them to stop
- Tell a member of staff
- Tell a friend or any other adult you trust
- Try not to let yourself be provoked into retaliating verbally or physically – this will not help in the long run

What students should do if they think someone else is being bullied

- Tell a member of staff
- Tell a friend or any other adult you trust

Guidelines for Riverside staff

- Always listen to any student who reports bullying
- Always be alert to any situation which could develop into bullying
- Always offer support/intervention if students are unable to resolve disagreements amicably
- Always communicate with all those involved in the disagreement
- Always be sensitive to the location of any discussions that take place, and respect confidentiality
- Always acknowledge the feelings of the students involved
- Remember that an angry or upset student will generally need time out on their own to calm down. Do not try to insist that they apologise for their behaviour before they are ready to do so
- Always report the incident clearly and immediately – the school's SOLAR System and incidents of discrimination pack may need to be used
- In the majority of cases, (unless there is a sound reason not to), parents should be contacted - ensure this is done sensitively. All incidents will be followed up and monitored by the school's senior management team

Reparations and sanctions

The school has a wide range of sanction choices to tap into according to the levels of understanding of the students concerned to ensure that the seriousness of the concern is recognised and dealt with so that any bullying is stopped (see *Behaviour Management Policy* for details).

However, the fundamental principles in all cases is reparation and reconciliation so that any student who has been bullied can feel safe, and preferably enjoy the company of the bully after reconciliation (although this cannot always be guaranteed). As a part of reparation, we prioritise spending time reflecting with students, encouraging them to explore behaviours and responses, to challenge prejudices and find new ideas, and new ways to think about situations, people and themselves.

We will approach any occurrence of bullying as a learning opportunity where all parties involved can gain a deeper understanding, staff will support this by utilising the most appropriate modes of communication and specific approaches as per the needs of the students involved.

Information for parents

If you worried that your child may have been bullied at school, please inform your child's teacher immediately. Equally, please inform the school if you are worried that your child may be bullying others. We will always investigate the incident and will report back to you. If you are in any way dissatisfied with our actions, you may follow this up through our complaints procedure.

'Respect and Protect' / Anti-Bullying Week

Riverside holds a 'Respect and Protect / Anti-Bullying Week' annually. At Riverside classes, groups and individual students assess and report, (with adult help if necessary), the effectiveness of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy, procedures, culture and atmosphere.

Team 1 and 2 students discuss issues either wholly verbally, or verbally assisted by various augmented communication approaches such as Makaton.

Students from Teams 3, 4 and 5 deploy a range of other approaches such as pictorial validation exercises, giving an anti-bullying bracelet to a friend, Hands of Friendship circle etc.

Some activities are shared with Mulberry Woodside. Shared activities between the schools can include student visits to each others' schools to join in themed assemblies, joint audiences for plays put on etc.

Role of the Head Girl/Head Boy and their Deputies

The Head Girl/Boy and their Deputies review the Policy during the *Respect and Protect* week, leading a group of other Team 1 students.

The Head Girl/Boy and their Deputies also share the Headteacher's Post Box, and students (with or without adult assistance) can write to them with any concerns.

Measuring progress

To monitor and measure the effectiveness of this policy Wellbeing Lead, Kelly Whiting will host a termly review of the following; SOLAR incident reporting, curriculum content coverage, student views and experience shared as part of student council meetings and reflections on current themes or trends arising. Findings and action recommendations from the review will be shared with staff school wide.

For further information about the Riverside's approaches to keeping students safe, please refer to the following policies, all of which can be found on the school's website under the 'Safeguarding' tab:

Behaviour Management Policy

Online Safety Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy