



Anti-Bullying Policy

Responsibility	Delegated to the Head Teacher: Students, Parents and Community	
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1. Statement

The Richmond upon Thames School does not tolerate bullying of any kind. This policy sets out how we prevent and address bullying.

2. Introduction

- Every member of staff has a key role to play in promoting and sustaining the highest standards of behaviour for learning. We aim to provide a safe learning environment where everyone feels able to enjoy, achieve and fulfil their potential, free from bullying.
- The well-being of every student is of paramount importance; every learner has the right to a high-quality learning experience at the School, free from harm, neglect and abuse.
- All staff have a duty of care and a responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the well-being of students.
- The School community shares the definition of bullying as 'A persistent and deliberate attempt to hurt or humiliate someone'.
- One-off incidents, whilst very serious and always dealt with, do not fall within the definition of bullying.
- There is a consistent approach to the management of bullying incidents. Parents are involved at the earliest opportunity.
- Students are empowered to develop effective personal strategies rather than building dependency on staff to resolve issues.

3. Types of bullying

There are various types of bullying, but most have three things in common:

- It is deliberately hurtful behaviour.
- It is repeated over time.
- There is an imbalance of power, which makes it hard for those being bullied to defend themselves.

Bullying can take different forms and can include:

TYPE OF BULLYING	DEFINITION
Emotional	Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
Physical	Hitting, kicking, pushing, taking another's belongings, any use of violence
Prejudice-based and discriminatory, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Racial● Faith-based● Gendered (sexist)● Homophobic/biphobic● Transphobic● Disability-based	Taunts, gestures, graffiti or physical abuse focused on a particular characteristic (e.g. gender, race, sexuality)

TYPE OF BULLYING	DEFINITION
Sexual	Explicit sexual remarks, display of sexual material, sexual gestures, unwanted physical attention, comments about sexual reputation or performance, or inappropriate touching
Direct or indirect verbal	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
Online-bullying	Bullying that takes place online, such as through social networking sites, messaging apps or gaming sites

4. Online Bullying

Online bullying is bullying through the use of communication technology such as mobile phones, computers etc. This type of bullying has become prevalent over recent years. It should be noted that this form of bullying may be deemed as illegal activity and as such may result in Police involvement.

There are seven main types of online bullying

1. Text message bullying involves sending texts which are threatening or challenging.
2. Picture/ video clip bullying via mobile phone cameras can be used to make the person being bullied feel threatened or embarrassed; these images are usually sent to other people. E.g. 'Happy slapping' involves filming and sharing physical attacks, sextortion.
3. Phone bullying using silent calls or abusive messages. Sometimes the victim's phone is stolen and used to harass others who then blame the phone owner.
4. Email bullying involves sending bullying or threatening messages sometimes using an assumed identity.
5. Chat room bullying involves threatening or upsetting others in a chat room environment.
6. Bullying through Instant Messaging is an online based form of bullying where threatening and upsetting messages are sent in 'real-time'.
7. Bullying via websites and social networks.

4.1 Generative artificial intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard.

The Richmond upon Thames School recognises that AI has many uses to help pupils learn, but may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

The Richmond Upon Thames School will treat any use of AI to bully pupils in line with our anti-bullying/behaviour policy.

5. Implications of bullying

Bullying is always taken seriously because of the potential impact upon young people.

Many of the outward signs of bullying can be the same as other indicators of abuse such as non-accidental injuries, self-abuse, low self-esteem, unhappiness, fear, distress or anxiety. If unchecked, others may come to see bullying behaviour as acceptable within the School. Victims can become bullies of younger or more vulnerable students. Bullying can have long-term effects on victims which may stretch into their adult lives.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

- The Head teacher has ultimate responsibility for the well-being of all students and staff.
- The Assistant Head teacher with responsibility for Behaviour and Attitudes has been designated to oversee the safeguarding and well-being of students.
- All staff, students, parents and Trustees must be aware of the policy and share responsibility for enforcing its principles.

7. Dealing with Bullying and preventative measures

The School takes a proactive stance to raise awareness about bullying. This is done through a range of strategies including; assemblies, PSHE, Academic Tutor Time, adherence of the behaviour policy and Staff CPD.

The school will:

- Raise awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in PSHE, tutorial time, assemblies, curriculum themed lessons and informal discussion, as appropriate, in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour
- Give care and support to create and maintain a safe learning environment where all pupils feel safe, secure and valued and know they will be listened to and taken seriously in line with the school ethos
- Participate in local and national initiatives such as [Anti-bullying Week](#)
- Seek to develop links with the wider community that will support inclusive, anti-bullying education
- Consider the use of specific strategies, e.g. peer mentoring
- Refer to the Trade Unions and guidelines on 'Bullying in the Workplace' where an adult in the community believes that he/she is being bullied by another adult.
- Have high staff presence/ visibility during lesson change over, break and lunchtimes.
- Review the Anti-Bullying charter with assistance of the School Council

All concerns about bullying will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly. Students who are being bullied may not report it. However, there may be changes in their behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults.

There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school. All school staff will be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with this policy.

8. Reporting

- Minor incidents or disagreements should be addressed by Academic Tutors or subject teachers. However, any suspicions of bullying must always be reported to the appropriate Head of Year as soon as possible
- All allegations of bullying by students must be referred to the Head of Year immediately

- Bullying taking place during the journey to and from school should in the first instance be reported to the trip leader, where applicable, and then reported to the Head of Year as soon as possible
- The Head of Year will investigate the concern or allegation to clarify the facts, taking statements from the alleged bully, victims and independent witnesses
- Careful consideration of all circumstances will be made before sanctions or next actions are decided
- This will in the vast majority of cases involve parents/carers of both the alleged bully and victim being informed at the earliest opportunity.
- All cases will be recorded on the School's MIS.
- A range of approaches will be used to support the victim and help them build resilience.
 - a) Staff may offer coaching and problem-solving strategies to enable the victim to tackle what has happened. This builds their resilience and confidence, nurturing lifelong learning in resolving problems. This approach is suitable for lower level problems and where the victim wants to regain some control.
 - b) Staff may work alongside the victim to resolve the problems actively through a restorative justice model.
 - c) Serious incidents such as safeguarding, violence, threat of weapons or sustained serious bullying will be dealt with swiftly and effectively.
 - d) Repetitive bullying will be addressed through a stepped approach
 - I. A verbal warning
 - II. A contract between 'bully' and the School
 - III. Restorative work, group work, mediation and mentoring
 - IV. Offsite Placement/Direction
 - V. Suspension and permanent exclusion will be used for the most serious, persistent cases of bullying

Students who are bullying others

Students who are bullying others also need support to help them understand and change their behaviour.

Bystanders

Students who are aware of bullying ('bystanders') can be a powerful force in helping to address it and will be encouraged to do so in a safe way.

All Students will be encouraged to report bullying by:

- Talking to a member of staff of their choice
- Encourage to raise any concerns about procedure with School Council
- Contacting local and national support agencies for advice/support

Parents will be encouraged to report concerns about bullying and to support the school in tackling it. Trying to resolve bullying directly with the bully or their families can lead to problems escalating.

Students have a responsibility to ensure that victims of bullying are not isolated and to intervene when someone is being bullied by making it clear to the bully that their actions are disapproved of. Students should inform a member of staff if they suspect bullying is taking place. It is essential that the Bullying Log is kept up to date.

Serious or persistent cases of bullying will be referred to the Deputy Head Teacher and could lead to suspension or ultimately permanent exclusion.

9. Incidents of Staff bullying

Staff who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff of their choice
- Providing reassurance that the bullying will be addressed
- Offering continuous support
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence
- The use of specialist interventions and/or referrals to other agencies e.g. educational psychology, where appropriate
- Help and advice on how to remove online material
- Encouraged to make use of the school’s Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

Bullying – Information for Parents/Carers and Students

What is bullying?

‘A persistent and deliberate attempt to hurt or humiliate someone’

Type	Examples
Physical	Hitting, kicking, taking belongings, being forced to do something.
Verbal	Insulting, teasing, name calling.
Sexual	Use of inappropriate language, sexual touching.
Racial	Name calling, exclusion of particular groups.
Homophobic	Name calling, exclusion, threatening behaviour.
Indirect	Spreading rumours, excluding individuals.

Online Bullying

Online bullying is bullying that takes place using technology. Whether on social media sites, through a mobile phone, or gaming sites, the effects can be devastating for the young person involved. There are ways to help prevent a child from being cyberbullied and to help them cope and stop the bullying if it does happen.

Parents and carers need to be aware that most children have been involved in cyberbullying in some way, either as a victim, perpetrator, or bystander. By its very nature, cyberbullying tends to involve a number of online bystanders and can quickly spiral out of control. Children and young people who bully others online do not need to be physically stronger and their methods can often be hidden and subtle.

Online bullying can also involve adults; even though technology has provided wonderful opportunities for both teaching and learning, it has led to some teachers becoming the victims of internet messaging that undermines or ridicules them. It is important that parents make clear that this is not acceptable behaviour and lead by example. What was once a conversation at the school gate between small groups of parents and carers can now become a conversation with perhaps hundreds of “friends” on social networking sites, permanent, with a large audience, and easily shared. Whilst parents and carers have the right to be critical of decisions made by schools, or even individual staff members, they should raise concerns in an appropriate way and not become abusive, or libellous.

Open conversations on social networking sites are not private and can easily be reported to school staff, even if it was not the intention to share their views directly.

Remember, once an image or comment is posted online, you can delete it but it will not be permanently removed.

Students’ Rights

- You have the right to feel safe
- Nobody has the right to bully another
- All cases will be judged on their individual circumstances
- Everyone is responsible for the prevention of bullying

We believe that all students have the right to be educated in an environment where there is mutual respect and cooperation. Bullying is contrary to this approach and we will do everything in our power to discourage it.

How we support students

- Firstly, there is no avoiding it, you must tell someone. We all have a responsibility to protect and support each other
- Counsel - We believe that good advice and support can change the behaviour of bullies and their victims
- Be consistent – We always aim to give students the opportunity to be heard
- Punishment – Bullying does not meet with the RTS way and the school values
- Persistent bullying will be sanctioned
- Inform – Parents/carers must know if their child is involved in persistent bullying