

RIVERS ACADEMY ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGY

Rivers Academy Anti-Bullying Policy	<p>Reviewed and updated in accordance with the current systems and government guidance</p> <p>The policy version supersedes all previous issues</p>
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Date of last review:	May 2023	Review Period:	1 Year
Date of next review:	May 2024	Owner:	Tim Wormald
Type of Policy:	Strategy / Recommended		

Overview

This strategy has been developed in collaboration with students, parents/carers and staff at Rivers Academy

This strategy is based on DfE guidance [“Preventing and Tackling Bullying” July 2017](#). It also takes into account:

- [DfE statutory guidance on “Keeping Children Safe in Education” 2021](#)
- [DfE guidance on ‘Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges’](#)
- [Childnet’s “Cyberbullying: Understand, Prevent and Respond: Guidance for Schools”](#) ·

DfE research into Approaches to preventing and tackling bullying: case studies · [DfE guidance on Cyber bullying: advice for headteachers and school staff](#) · [DfE guidance on Cyber bullying: Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying](#)

[DfE Research Report on the Effectiveness of antibullying strategies in schools](#)

Related policies

This strategy should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour Policy and the Safeguarding Policy.

Statement of Intent

Rivers Academy is committed to providing a caring and safe environment for all students so that they can learn in a secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in our Academy. If bullying does occur, all students should feel able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to take appropriate action to tackle it as outlined in this strategy.

Bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals. It can be a barrier to their learning and have serious consequences for their mental health. Bullying which takes place at school does not only affect an individual during childhood but can have a lasting effect on their lives well into adulthood.

What is bullying?

“Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally”. DfE guidance “Preventing and Tackling Bullying” July 2017

What behaviours do Rivers’ students define as bullying?

This section was written by our students based on the following part of the DfE guidance:

“Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.”

Students came up with the following list of specific actions that they agree amount to bullying:

‘We think that bullying is continuous or repeated behaviour and can include: name calling making threats, making physical threats, physical violence, using the internet (social media / gaming) to make mean comments, insult, threaten or intimidate. It can be comments about a person’s appearance, the way people act, or things people like. It can involve saying nasty or hurtful things about someone’s race, culture, gender, sexuality or who someone is.

Bullying causes sadness and emotional and physical hurt, it makes people feel intimidated, and often they don’t know what they are doing wrong or why someone is bullying them.

We are proud to be part of Rivers Academy and think that we all have a responsibility to be kind to each other and make sure that everyone feels safe and valued.’

Stopping physical bullying is obviously a first priority, but bullying can also seriously damage a young person’s confidence and sense of self-worth. Emotional bullying and the impact on the victim’s mental health can often be worse. It can lead to serious and prolonged emotional damage for an individual, those who conduct the bullying or witness the bullying, and the impact on parents and school staff can be significant.

Students are bullied for a variety of reasons. Specific types of bullying include:

- Bullying related to race, religion, gender or culture.
- Bullying related to special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities.
- Bullying related to appearance or health conditions.
- Bullying related to sexual orientation.
- Bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances
- Sexist or sexual Bullying
- Cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video

Academy Anti-Bullying Charter

We work continuously with our staff, students and parents to create an Academy community where bullying is not tolerated.

Our Academy Community:

- Listens to all students, parents and staff concerns about bullying and takes them seriously
- Respects everyone - all school staff and students are role models to others within the

academy and should demonstrate this at all times

- Challenges all forms of discriminatory language – including racist, HBT and disablist language
- Reports bullying - all pupils within the academy and their parents and carers understand how to report incidents of bullying.
- Takes action - we respond quickly to all incidents of bullying.
- Monitors and reviews bullying incidents regularly
- Has clear policies - our school's anti-bullying policy reflects these principles and is embedded within other school policies
- Reports back quickly to parents/carers regarding their concerns on bullying.
- Seeks to learn from anti-bullying good practice elsewhere

What to do if you are concerned about bullying

Reporting bullying

· All staff and students have a responsibility to challenge bullying and support children that are identified as being subject to bullying.

· Students can report bullying either directly to any member of staff or online using the SHARPS system whether they are a victim or a bystander. Bystanders have an important responsibility to act as bullying involves an imbalance of power and the victim may be nervous to act.

· Parents can report concerns about bullying to any member of staff

· If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be taken seriously and dealt with as quickly as possible by the member of staff who has been approached.

Recording bullying

Staff should get a complete written account of the incident or incidents from the student(s).

This statement should be recorded on the Student Witness Statement sheets available from the Learning Zone.

If the student is unable or unwilling to write the statement, the staff member may need to do this for them. If the disclosure involves an urgent safeguarding matter then on call should be pressed and the incident reported on MyConcern.

The witness statement should be passed to the Learning Zone Leader as soon as possible.

The Learning Zone Leader will then gather statements from all students involved including witnesses

Once collected the statements will be passed to the student's Subject Coordinator who will begin the investigation completing the Allegation of Bullying Form. All actions and stages in the investigation should be recorded on this form.

If the Subject Coordinator decides that the matter is so serious it could require a sanction from the Senior Leadership Team, they will pass it to the Head of Faculty.

The incident of bullying should be recorded on the anti-bullying log including the date of the incident, the students involved and action taken so that incidents can be tracked and any patterns identified to ensure effective follow-up and resolution.

Academic Mentors and subject staff will be kept informed and asked to monitor the behaviour of the students concerned. Effective communication is important in not only tackling the incident but also preventing recurrence

Parents will be kept informed and are discouraged from taking matters into their own hands and should not approach a suspected student but speak to a member of staff.

Actions to resolve incidents of bullying

There is no single uniform response to bullying. Each incident of actual or alleged bullying will be unique in its representation and its level of impact on the individuals concerned. Therefore, it is important that the Subject Coordinator tailors a strategy to address the situation and to support the bullied student according to the particular incident/s.

The bully(ies) should always be spoken to regarding the complaint and be allowed to give their side of the events.

Disciplinary measures will normally be appropriate for pupils who bully in order to show clearly that their behaviour is wrong. However disciplinary sanctions on their own will not be effective if effective follow up and monitoring is not involved.

Ensuring the victim is safe must always be the first priority. Once this has been achieved and the incident has been recorded, the subject coordinator will arrange for appropriate action to be taken. This could involve:

- Asking the Academic Mentor or Deputy Coordinator to speak to the student(s) in question
- Speaking to the students involved individually (possibly in the presence of their Academic Mentor)
- An informal warning
- Contacting parents
- Holding a restorative meeting between the students involved and agreeing a resolution (this could be a written agreement)
- Exclusion from certain areas of the school premises or certain activities
- Academy detentions of 30, 60 or 90 minutes
- Any other appropriate action (upon approval by the Head of Faculty)

The Head of Faculty may approve all of the above and in addition:

- Internal Isolation in the Learning Zone
- Referral to senior staff and/or external agencies e.g. Education Welfare Officer, Police Liaison Officer.
- Any other appropriate action (upon approval by the Vice Principal)

The Principal/Vice Principal may approve all of the above and in addition:

- External fixed term suspension or permanent exclusion

Follow up - Support and Intervention

All students involved in bullying will receive personalised immediate intervention and ongoing support.

The Subject Coordinator will arrange for a member of staff, chosen by the student either being bullied or at risk of being bullied, to offer support on a continual basis until such time as the student and his/her parent are satisfied

Students who have bullied will be helped by; discussing what happened, discovering why the student became involved and establishing a sense of wrong-doing. Parents/carers will be informed to help change the attitude and behaviour of the student.

Preventing Bullying

The Academy recognises that the best way to tackle bullying is through prevention. As a result all staff are encouraged to closely monitor issues between pupils which might lead to conflict and develop strategies together to prevent bullying happening in the first place.

All staff and students are expected to role model appropriate behaviour at all times - Staff and older pupils have a particularly important role to play in setting a good example to others

In addition the Academy has a range of strategies and programmes that tackle bullying either directly or indirectly:

- Effective school leadership that cares to promote restorative approaches and conflict resolution strategies.

- Use of curriculum opportunities across various subject areas, in particular Academic (Transition) Mentoring sessions and PSHE classes where issues of diversity are discussed and anti-bullying messages are drawn out.

- Use of opportunities throughout the school calendar and at certain times of the school day to raise awareness of the negative consequences of bullying e.g. Anti-Bullying Week in November of each year

- Commitment to celebrate diversity and difference as research shows that this is often the cause of bullying

Furthermore, the Academy undertakes the following to support its commitment to a kind and caring community:

- Whole school / year group / Faculty (virtual) assemblies
- Use of outside expert (virtual) visitors
- Student voice
- School council campaigns

- Poster campaigns
- Break time supervision
- Breaktime clubs
- Peer mentoring schemes
- Buddy schemes

Development, Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored, reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis. The academy also commits to:

- Regularly monitor instances of bullying and report on any areas for improvement ·

Support staff to identify and tackle bullying appropriately.

- Ensure that students are aware that all bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively and seek feedback from students via the Student Council and annual student questionnaires.

- To learn from anti-bullying good practice elsewhere and utilise the support of relevant statutory/voluntary organisations when appropriate.

Appendix

What does the law say about bullying? (Adapted from DfE Guidance 2017)

The Education and Inspection Act 2006, 2011 provide that maintained schools must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures should be part of the school's behaviour policy which must be communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents.

The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to have due regard to the need 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 Children Act 1989

When there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer,

significant harm' a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern under the Children Act 1989

Protection from Harassment Act 1997, The Malicious Communications Act 1988, Public Order Act 1986

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, any person who sends an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender, is guilty of an offence if their purpose in sending it was to cause distress or anxiety to the recipient

Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006

School staff members have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises. Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 say that a school's disciplinary powers can be used to address pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff, but only if it would be reasonable for the school to regulate pupils' behaviour in those circumstances.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The school should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.