



inspiring the journey for
independence together

Anti-Bullying Policy

Reviewed Two-Yearly

Non-Statutory

Signed:

(Chair of the Trust)

Date: 28/3/24

Review Date: March 2026

This policy operates in conjunction with the Rivermead Inclusive Trust E-Safety Policy and the DFE, Keeping Children Safe In Education .

1. Definitions of bullying

DFE Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017):

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

The ABA (Anti-Bullying Alliance):

Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power.

The Rivermead Inclusive Trust.

The Rivermead Inclusive Trust use the useful mnemonic 'STOP' (several times on purpose) to distinguish bullying from the one-off or accidental hurting of a child or children.

2. Definition of cyber-bullying

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like *mobile* phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behaviour (www.stopbullying.gov).

Unlike physical bullying, cyber-bullying can often be difficult to track as the cyber-bully (the person responsible for the acts of cyber-bullying) can remain anonymous when threatening others online, encouraging them to behave more aggressively than they might face-to-face.

The most common places where cyberbullying occurs are:

- Social Media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Tik Tok
- Text messaging and messaging apps on mobile or tablet devices
- Instant messaging, direct messaging, and online chatting over the internet
- Online forums, chat rooms, and message boards
- Email
- Online gaming communities

3. Types of cyber-bullying

- **Flaming:** Online fights usually through emails, instant messaging or chat rooms where angry and rude comments are exchanged.
- **Denigration:** Putting mean online messages through email, instant messaging, chat rooms, or websites set up to make fun of someone.
- **Exclusion:** Intentionally leaving someone out of a group such as instant messaging, friend sites, or other online group activities.
- **Outing:** Sharing secrets about someone online including private information, pictures, and videos.
- **Trickery:** Tricking someone into revealing personal information then sharing it with others.
- **Impersonation:** Pretending to be someone else when sending or posting mean or false messages online.
- **Harassment:** Repeatedly sending malicious messages to someone online.
- **Cyber-stalking:** Continuously harassing and denigration including threats of physical harm.

Face-to-face bullying and cyberbullying can often happen alongside each other. But cyberbullying leaves a digital footprint – a record that can prove useful and provide evidence to help stop the abuse (www.UNICEF.org).

4. Definition of **Child on Child Abuse**

Child on child abuse occurs when a young person is exploited, bullied and / or harmed by their peers who are the same or similar age and under 18 years of age.

Child on child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to, bullying (including cyber-bullying), physical abuse (such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair-pulling or otherwise causing physical harm), sexual violence and sexual harassment, upskirting, sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. **Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance.**

5. Principles and Values

It is the right of all (adults and pupils) within the Rivermead Inclusive Trust (RIT) to be able to work, learn, interact and study free from bullying, harassment or discrimination. Bullying will not be tolerated and all incidents will be taken seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported. The schools will seek ways to

counter the effects of bullying that may occur within school or in the local community. The ethos of our schools foster high expectations of outstanding behaviour and we will challenge any behaviour that falls below this.

Bullying or harassment can look like this:

- Verbal harassment – name calling, insults, taunts, offensive language, constant criticism
- Written harassment – insults, taunts, letters, emails, texts, social media posts, direct messages, gaming forums.
- Graffiti – on walls, books, desks, school bags, obscene gestures
- Vandalism of property
- Repeated unfounded complaints, distorting and misrepresenting actions
- Literature being brought into school which contain defamatory materials
- Refuse to co-operate or work with particular pupils – excluding pupils from the social group
- Unprovoked physical assault or threat of it
- Causing physical or psychological distress individually or with a group of others

Bullying can be:	
Verbal harassment	Name calling, insults, taunts, offensive language, constant criticism Repeated unfounded complaints, distorting and misrepresenting actions
Written harassment	Insults, taunts, letters/notes, texts, emails and graffiti
Emotional	Tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures) Refusal to co-operate or work with particular pupils – excluding pupils from the social group
Physical	Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence, unprovoked physical assault or threat of it Vandalism or stealing of property
Racial	Racial taunts, gestures
Religious	Comments around a person's religious beliefs or practices
Sexual	Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
Homophobic, biphobic, Transphobic	Because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
Direct or indirect	Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
Cyber bullying	All areas of internet, such as email, social media & internet chat room misuse Mobile threats by text messaging & calls Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities, Ipad, games consoles,

Bullying may be related to (but not limited to):

- Race
- Religion
- Culture
- SEN or disability
- Appearance or health condition
- Home circumstances
- Sexual orientation, sexism, or sexual bullying
- Gender, including transphobic bullying

In determining whether an incident constitutes towards harassment or bullying, the context in which the incident occurs will need to be considered as well as the victim's understanding of the perpetrator's motives. Particularly vulnerable groups – refugees, newly arrived pupils, 'looked after' children are frequently the target of bullying behaviours.

The school will:

- Take all bullying problems seriously both of pupils and adults
- Investigate all incidents thoroughly
- Ensure that bullies and victims are interviewed
- Obtain witness information

6. Preventing, Identifying and Responding to Bullying

The school community will ensure staff are aware of strategies to reduce the incidents of bullying through:

- the consistent promotion of the school's code of behaviour which requires all learners to respect the rights of others
- the reinforcement of the clear message that violence has no place within the Trust
- consultation with the 'Student Voice' on appropriate action
- take part in initiatives such as Anti-Bullying Week
- provide training for all members of staff on anti-bullying policy and strategy
- the supervision by school staff of all play areas at lunch times and breaks
- a buddy system may be used if deemed appropriate
- providing information to all parents on the symptoms of bullying and the steps to take if the suspect their child is being bullied
- a clear policy of mobile phones not being permitted to be in use during school hours
- the celebration of all student's backgrounds and cultures through assemblies

- the training of a cross section of students as anti-bullying ambassadors (where appropriate)
- during assemblies and PHSE learning sessions discuss and explore bullying issues with the children
- raising awareness of cyber bullying and teaching children to safely use technology (including mobile phones, email, internet)
- all websites accessed in school are screened. This software screens the language used in all documents, emails and websites. Rude or offensive emails, websites, incidents are report to the Assistant Headteacher/head of school – Learner Support and logged by the IT manager. Action will be taken and recorded
- contact the parents of both the child being bullied and the bully
- challenge sexual content within verbal abuse especially challenging the word such as 'gay' and other homophobic language.
- create and support an inclusive environment which promotes a culture of mutual respect, consideration and care for others which will be upheld by all.
- actively provide systematic opportunities to develop pupils' social and emotional skills, including their resilience.
- provide a range of approaches for pupils, staff and parents/carers to access support and report concerns.
- challenge practice, which does not uphold the values of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect towards others.
- consider all opportunities for addressing bullying in all forms throughout the curriculum and supported with a range of approaches such as through displays, assemblies, peer support and the school/student council.
- regularly update and evaluate our approaches to take into account the developments of technology and provide up-to-date advice and education to all members of the community regarding positive online behaviour.
- inform staff about the incident where a pupil is involved
- Have a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, and it should never be passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up".
- Challenge signs of **child on child** abuse even if it appears 'consensual'.
- inform appropriate staff where a member of staff is involved
- proactively gather and record in writing concerns and intelligence about bullying incidents and issues, to effectively develop strategies to prevent bullying from occurring.
- actively create "safe spaces" for vulnerable children and young people.
- use a variety of techniques to resolve the issues between those who bully and those who have been bullied.
- work with other agencies and the wider school community to prevent and tackle concerns.
- celebrate success and achievements to promote and build a positive school ethos.
- ensure that action is taken to prevent further incidents

Such action may include:

- Imposition of sanctions
- Obtaining an apology
- Provide appropriate training
- Provide mentor support for both victim and bully

Identifying the problem:

7. The Effects of Bullying

Children who are being bullied at school will not always be prepared to tell those in authority. All forms of bullying cause psychological, emotional and physical stress. Each child's response to being bullied is unique, however some signs that may point to a bullying problem are:

- unwillingness to come to school
- withdrawn isolated behaviour
- complaining about missing possessions
- refusal to talk about the problem
- being easily distressed
- damaged or incomplete work
- depression and anxiety
- increased feelings of sadness, helplessness, decreased self-esteem and loneliness
- loss of interest in activities they used to enjoy
- unexplainable injuries
- lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewellery
- frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness
- changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating.
- Children may come home from school hungry because they did not eat lunch
- difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
- sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- self-destructive behaviours such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide.

Staff will be able to use their knowledge of the pupils to identify changes in their behaviour that might indicate bullying. Pupils should be encouraged to be open with their parents who can pass on concerns to the school.

Pupils have these responsibilities:

- To not become involved in bullying incidents

- To be aware of the school's way of dealing with incidents and of the kinds of support available
- To always tell a member of staff if they think bullying is happening
- To always talk to parents/carers about any worries
- To support pupils who may be subjected to bullying
- To be prepared to speak up if they see or hear something they think is unfair

If a child feels that they are being bullied then there are several procedures that they are encouraged to follow: (not hierarchical)

- Tell a friend who can support them to tell an adult
- Tell your School Council rep, Buddy or Ambassador
- Tell a teacher or adult whom they feel they can trust
- Use the bubble time or **STOP** box in class
- Fill in a Place2Talk slip (where the facility is offered)
- Tell a parent or adult at home whom you feel you can trust
- Discuss it as part of PSHE time
- Ring Childline and follow the advice given

Victims of bullying may end up believing that they deserve to be bullied. They feel powerless and vulnerable. Self-esteem can be badly damaged and self-confidence needs to be re-established.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

8.1 The Role of the Headteacher / Head of School

It is the **Headteacher / Head of School** who has the pivotal role in ensuring that the school fulfils its legal obligations and that anti-bullying and anti-harassment procedures are developed and followed within the school.

The Education Act 2002, Education and Inspections Act and Equalities Act 2006 all make reference to a school's legal responsibility to prevent and tackle bullying. By law, all state schools must have a behaviour policy in place and displayed on their website and must also follow anti-discrimination law. This means staff must act to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation within the school. Additionally, Rivermead Inclusive Trust have developed this anti-bullying policy - a copy of which is available from the school office and on the school website for parents, staff and learners to access when and as they wish.

Schools have the legal power to make sure learners behave and do not bully outside of school premises, for example on public transport or in nearby public communal areas. If seen as appropriate the headteacher/head of school or staff can choose to report bullying to the police or local council. During school hours, including while learners are taking part in

school visits and in after school clubs the school has direct responsibility to ensure children feel safe and secure.

Responsibilities of the Headteacher / Head of School are to:

- Ensure the school has a policy covering equal opportunities and anti-bullying encompassing harassment
- Ensure that the policies are known to all staff and Governors
- Ensure procedures are carried out consistently and fairly by all staff
- Ensure monitoring systems are in place
- Report to Governors annually about the situation with regard to bullying and harassment
- Ensure all school staff have opportunity to receive training on appropriate methods of dealing with incidents of bullying and harassment
- Establish systems which are perceived as supportive by pupils who are involved in incidents
- Ensure that the ethos within the school allows pupils to feel that it is 'safe' to tell and where they have the confidence to believe that the school will deal effectively with incidents brought to their attention

8.2 The Role of the Teacher

The role of the teacher is crucial in implementing the school's anti-bullying policy. The classroom ethos, which they establish, will ensure that equality of opportunity and anti-discrimination works in practice.

Teachers have the responsibility to:

- Ensure that they know the content of the equal opportunities and anti-bullying policy
- Ensure that training opportunities are taken up
- Be sensitive to the possibility of bullying and harassment in a consistent manner, including the logging and reporting procedures used in school (Parent contact forms for example)
- Ensure that the beliefs and values underpinning anti-bullying and equal opportunities are reflected within the classroom environment and the curriculum
- Be aware of the cultural and social diversity and the beliefs of students in the class in order to be aware of the comments and or behaviour, which could be offensive to particular individuals or specific groups of people
- Manage behaviour in a way that is seen by the pupils as fair and which models respect for the individual

Strategies:

- Involve students in drawing up ground rules for class behaviour
- Display agreed codes of conduct prominently within the class

- Have regular opportunities for whole class and/or group discussion where the topic of bullying and harassment is raised and all pupils are encouraged and supported to give their views and express their feelings, including SEAL curriculum. It is important to create a climate where it is safe and acceptable to 'tell'. Circle time is one established way where this may be accomplished
- Consider at the planning stage of any topic how equal opportunity issues can be promoted. Become aware of which resources available within school can support this. Where appropriate deal with instances of bullying and harassment explicitly through the curriculum
- Use display materials within the classroom and around school that help to promote positive values
- Use discussion and curriculum opportunities to discuss the role of the 'bystander' in supporting bullying and harassment
- Intervene when incidents are observed outside the classroom so that pupils do not feel unprotected during particular parts of the day

8.3 The Role of Support Staff

Support staff includes teaching assistants, clerical staff, midday meal supervisors and the site staff.

Support staff have the responsibility to:

- Ensure familiarity with the school's equal opportunities and anti-bullying policies
- Attend training on dealing with incidences of bullying and harassment
- Be sensitive to all instances of bullying and harassment within the class and around school; to deal with every incident in a fair and consistent manner according to the school's policy
- Find out about the diversity of pupils represented within the school and wider community to be alert to comments or behaviour which could be offensive to specific groups of people
- Report incidents of bullying or harassment

Strategies:

- Participate in training to become familiar with the school's equal opportunities and anti-bullying policies
- Ensure familiarity with the school's systems for managing behaviour and then follow them consistently
- Intervene in any incident observed around the school
- Remain calm and avoid getting into confrontations with pupils
- Model ways of talking and behaving which exemplify respect for the individual
- Challenge stereotypic remarks e.g. sexist comments, racist assumptions
- Keep a watch for 'loners' who may be vulnerable to bullying and try to involve them in games with other pupils

- Chat informally to pupils about their interests and their news. Being proactive about building up positive relationships with potentially difficult pupils can be helpful when later trying to modify their behaviour

8.4 The Role of Parents

Parents and carers have a very important role in supporting the school to implement its anti-bullying policy effectively.

Parents have the responsibility to:

- Ask for information on the school's anti-bullying and behaviour policy and any approach used to respond to incidents of bullying or harassment
- Sign the home/school contract and to abide by that contract
- Work in partnership with the school on encouraging positive behaviour, valuing and respecting difference
- Understand that children need to learn to deal with disagreements and conflict in an assertive but non-violent manner
- Be alert to and inform school about significant behaviour changes and signs of distress in their children
- Inform staff of any significant change in circumstances which may affect the ways in which pupils respond in school
- Alert staff to information reported by pupils on incidents or any concerns arising about other pupils' behaviour and attitude
- Communicate to children that they (parents) trust the school and staff to deal appropriately with incidents that arise and which the school are aware of

Strategies:

- Parents need to be aware of opportunities offered for formal and informal consultation with parents
- Discuss school incidents at home and encourage children to share feelings and anxieties. Promote the development of important interpersonal skill such as listening to others, negotiation and communication.
- Provide opportunities to discuss issues relevant to friendships and relationships both in and out of school
- Tell the class teacher about any incidents of bullying or harassment. Ask the teacher to be informed of any action taken
- Be aware that many incidents will occur which are disagreements between pupils and where there is no clear bully or victim. Both parties will have to accept the consequences of their behaviour in line with the school behaviour policy

8.5 The Role of The Local Advisory Board

The Local Advisory Board supports the headteacher/head of school in all attempts to eliminate bullying from the school. The Advisory Board will not condone any bullying at all,

and any incidents of bullying that do occur will be taken very seriously, and dealt with appropriately.

The Advisory Board monitors incidents of bullying that do occur, and reviews the effectiveness of this policy regularly. The Advisory Board require the headteacher/head of school to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying and to report to the Advisory Board on request about the effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying strategies.

A parent/carer who is dissatisfied with the way the school has dealt with a bullying incident can make a complaint to the chair of The Advisory Board. The complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the complaints policy which can be accessed from the school's website.

Governors have an important role in ensuring that the school fulfils its legal obligations with respect to anti-bullying, anti-harassment and anti-racist procedures. The governors have responsibility to ensure that procedures undertaken in school are monitored and effective.

Governors have the responsibility to:

- Ensure that the school's equal opportunities and behaviour policy make reference to the different forms of bullying and harassment
- Ensure that the curriculum provides planned opportunities for pupils to discuss issues relevant to anti-bullying and equality of opportunities generally
- Ensure that staff receive appropriate relevant training to enable policies to be effectively implemented
- Ensure that they are aware of any patterns of bullying and persistent parental complaints
- Ensure that incidents are monitored and if appropriate policies and procedures are reviewed
- Ensure that parents are informed of the school's anti-bullying policy and where appropriate are consulted with any review process
- Support the Headteacher in implementing school policy

Strategies:

- Become familiar with and clear about the school's current position on anti-bullying, anti-harassment and equal opportunities
- Attend training opportunities for Governors on these issues
- Clarify the PUPIL'S position in implementing the policy
- Where necessary to help establish an action plan to review policy and procedures
- Support the Headteacher in establishing appropriate mechanisms for monitoring incidents
- Help the Headteacher identify ways of disseminating the policy to pupils and to parents
- Establish a clearly communicated mechanism by which parents can communicate concerns with the school and to Governors



Help organisations and contact details

Anti-Bullying Alliance – www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Resources and information for parents and schools to help address bullying of children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Beatbullying – www.beatbullying.org

Offers online information and practical advice on dealing with bullying for children, young people, parents and professionals. Also train CyberMentors and MiniMentors to provide peer support to children and young people.

Bullying UK – www.bullying.co.uk / Helpline: **0808 800 2222**

Offers information for parents, young people and professionals who are concerned about bullying.

Changing Faces – Tel: **0845 4500 275** / www.changingfaces.org.uk

Supports people with differences in facial features, hands or body.

Childline – Helpline: **0800 1111** (24 hours) / www.childline.org.uk

Offer a helpline and online support for children on any issue, including bullying.

Childnet International – www.childnet-int.org

Works with organisations to help make the Internet a safe place for children. Has online information for parents, children and young people.

Coram Children's Legal Centre – Helpline: **0808 8020 008** / www.childrenslegalcentre.com

Provides free information and advice and to children, young people, their families in England.

Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS) – Helpline: **0808 800 0082** / www.equalityadvisoryservice.com

Provides information, advice and support on discrimination and human rights issues to individuals in England, Scotland and Wales.

Equality and Human Rights Commission – www.equalityhumanrights.com

Provides information and guidance on human rights, including disability discrimination.

Just Like Us - <https://www.justlikeus.org>

Just Like Us is a LGBT+ young people's charity. Their ambassadors are aged 18–25 and take part in a wide range of activities from school and workplace talks, creating content, writing about their

Kidscape – Helpline: **08451 205 204** / www.kidscape.org.uk

Provides a helpline for parents of children who are being bullied and offers confidence-building sessions for children who are being bullied.

Mencap – Helpline: **0808 808 1111** / www.mencap.org.uk

Provides advice and support and works with people with a learning disability and their parent carers to change laws and services, and challenge prejudice.

Mermaids UK- <https://mermaidsuk.org.uk>

Mermaids supports transgender, nonbinary and gender-diverse children, young people, and their families.

National Autistic Society – Helpline: **0845 070 4004** / www.nas.org.uk

Supports people with autism and their families and has resources for parent carers, school staff and young people on preventing bullying. There is also information on 'Circle of Friends' to promote inclusion in mainstream schools.

National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF) – www.nnpf.org.uk

Parent carer forums aim to improve local services for disabled children and their families in England by supporting and developing parent participation. Call **Contact a Family's** freephone helpline on **0808 808 3555** to find out if there is a forum in your area.

National Parent Partnership Network – www.parentpartnership.org.uk / **020 7843 6058**

Local Parent Partnership Services (PPS) offer advice and support to parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs. They are statutory services which means there must be one in every local authority.

Proud Trust -www.theproudtrust.org/young-people

The Proud Trust is an LGBT+ organisation that supports LGBT+ young people through youth groups, peer support, mentoring programs and the Proud Connections chat service.

Stop Hate UK – www.stophateuk.org / Helpline: **0800 138 1625**

Stop Hate UK work with young people and communities, and deliver training and consultancy across the UK. They provide 24 hour support to people who have been affected by hate crime.

Thinkuknow – www.thinkuknow.co.uk

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) online safety site has advice and tips for children, adults and professionals with information in English and Welsh.

UK Safer Internet Centre – Helpline: **0844 381 4772** / www.saferinternet.org.uk