



# Policy on Anti-Bullying

November 2020

# ANTI-BULLYING

## **Aims and Objectives**

*At Riverside School, we recognise and act to instil principles which will ensure that each student is valued and respected, each is unique, and each is cared for in a protective, secure, family oriented environment.*

*The aim of Riverside's Anti-Bullying policy is to ensure that each student is able to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. The Anti-Bullying policy is closely linked to Riverside's Code of Conduct policy and Conduct and Discipline policy. Bullying, harassment and victimisation and discrimination are anti-social behaviours and affect everyone; they are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will each student be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available in our school.*

## **Definition of Bullying**

*Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. It can take the form of racial, religious, cultural, sexual, sexist, homophobic and/or disability related bullying. It could involve physical (including sexual) intimidation, verbal, cyber (including chat room, email, e-photos and SMS messages), and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidating.*

*Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, homophobic, which focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time. It can cause serious and lasting psychological damage and even suicide. Harassment and threatening behaviour are criminal offences. We always treat it very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the school's policy on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles.*

## **Signs of Bullying**

*Students who are being bullied may show changes in behavior such as:*

- a. Unwillingness to return to school*
- b. Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet and shy*
- c. Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoiled by others.*
- d. Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged*
- e. Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or*
- f. vocabulary)*
- g. Psychological damage and diminished levels of self confidence*
- h. Frequent visits to the Medical Centre with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches*
- i. Unexplained cuts and bruises*
- j. Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class*
- k. Choosing the company of or clinging to adults*
- l. Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact*
- m. Difficulty in sleeping, experiences nightmares*
- n. Talking of suicide or running away*

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers. Riverside staff will act promptly and firmly against any form of bullying in accordance with school policy.

## **Implementation Procedures**

The following steps may be taken when dealing with incidents:

- **If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached.**
- **A clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to the classroom teacher or tutor teacher and appropriate member of the Senior Management Team.**
- **A member of the Senior Management Team will interview all concerned and will record the incident.**
- **Patterns of bullying will be recorded.**
- **Parents will be kept informed and invited into school to discuss the matter.**
- **Teachers will be informed. In very serious incidents, the Principal should be informed.**
- **Punitive measures will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned.**

Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- **offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their class teacher, form tutor or a member of staff of their choice,**
- **reassuring the student,**
- **offering continuous support, and**
- **restoring self-esteem and confidence.**

Students who have bullied will be helped by:

- **discussing what happened,**
- **discovering why the student became involved,**
- **establishing the wrong doing and need to change, and**
- **informing parents or guardians to help change the attitude of the student.**

The following disciplinary steps outlined in the school's Conduct and Discipline policy may be taken:

- **a reprimand to cease offending**
- **missing an appropriate number of golden time minutes; students are encouraged to gain minutes back for exhibiting positive behaviour (Early Years & Primary Lower School)**
- **establishing a behaviour diary to report to parents (Early Years & Primary Lower School)**
- **official warnings to cease offending**
- **detention**
- **exclusion from certain activities or areas of school premises**
- **minor fixed-term exclusion**
- **major fixed-term exclusion**
- **permanent exclusion (in the case of severe or persistent bullying)**

## Cyberbullying

*“Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.”*

*Bill Belsey, [www.cyberbullying.org](http://www.cyberbullying.org)*

*Cyberbullying can involve Social Networking Sites, like Facebook, Bebo and Myspace, emails and mobile phones, used for SMS messages and as cameras.*

*Riverside School:*

- **Expects all students to adhere to its Acceptable Use Policy for the safe use of the internet. Students and parents must sign this document.**
- **May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.**
- **Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in PSHE lessons, which covers blocking and removing contacts from “buddy lists.”**
- **Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.**

## Awareness Information and Preventative Measures

*The Anti-Bullying Policy is promoted and implemented throughout the school in the following ways:*

- Tutor time and assemblies. Students are made awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. They are specifically told whom they should inform if they are being bullied, or are worried that another pupil is being bullied.*
- Personal and health education (PSHE), and other subject areas such as; Religious Education, English and Drama, highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing social skills.*
- Implementation procedures (as stated above) are followed closely.*
- Students are supervised carefully – particularly in areas where bullying might occur.*
- The school will, when appropriate, investigate incidents that take place outside school hours that involve Riverside students.*
- Students and parents all receive and sign an Acceptable Use Policy for computer and internet use. This policy is included in the Student Planners.*
- The Anti-Bullying Policy is included in the Student Planners for students from Year 4-13.*

*Staff members will also be given training and guidance on identifying and dealing with bullying within the staff meetings schedule. This training will support staff in recognizing where and when bullying is most likely to occur and what signs to look for.*

*Copies of this policy can be found in the Guide to Good Practice, Parent Handbook and Student Planners.*

## Awareness Information and Preventative Measures

*The Senior Management Team will review this policy annually to assess its implementation and effectiveness and ensure that:*

- It remains compliant with evolving ISI Inspection standards.*
- Emerging technologies, which introduce the potential for novel forms of bullying are addressed.*

### Next Review

*This policy is to be reviewed in November 2022.*