



## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

Riverside Primary School is part of the Rainham Mark Education Trust. As such, we adhere to the Behaviour Policy of the Trust, which includes a section on bullying and can be found on the RMET website. This policy details the approaches that are specific to Riverside.

### **Aims**

Bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Our ethos is one of inclusion and equality, with one of our core school values being 'Respect', and bullying of any kind is regarded as a serious breach of our Safeguarding policy, in respect of peer-on-peer abuse, and our Behaviour policy. The aim of this policy is to ensure that all members of the Riverside community understand what bullying is, are aware of how to help prevent bullying of any sort and know what to do should it occur. By promoting a non-bullying, positive ethos, we are helping both children and staff to feel safe. We are encouraging our children to behave well while they are at school, reducing the likelihood of them displaying anti-social behaviour or going on to misuse their power in adulthood.

### **Definition of bullying**

We define bullying as any behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally causes harm to another individual or a group, either physically or emotionally. It links to the definition of peer-on-peer abuse in the DfE publication 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.

Bullying can include:

- name calling, teasing or making offensive comments about a person or their family
- threatening or intimidating
- physical assaults eg. hitting, kicking, hair pulling
- sexual harassment, assault or abuse
- taking, damaging or destruction of property
- social exclusion
- coercing a person to do things they don't want to do
- spreading hurtful rumours
- sending nasty or threatening text messages or electronic messages, including via social networking sites and instant messaging (known as Cyberbullying).

It is important to recognise that one-off incidents of behaviours such as these, or those resulting from behavioural needs, do not amount to bullying. Bullying, as recognised in the definition above, involves deliberate and repeated incidents over time. These incidents may be varied and could involve any or all of the behaviours listed. Most bullying is not physical, and children identify emotional and social forms of bullying as the most hurtful. However, it is normal for children to fall out with friends at times, and it can be the case that they are

upset with, anxious or scared of someone one day and back to being friends the next. Their perception of “bullying” can differ and therefore adults need to be aware of the distinction between what is bullying and what might be “messaging around”, “rough play” or simply an argument or disagreement between children.

### **Impact of bullying**

Bullying can make the lives of victims a misery. It can seriously damage a person’s confidence and happiness, and can impact on their relationships with family, peers and their community. In the short term, the impact to the victim can include feeling unhappy or scared, reluctance to be in the environment where the bullying takes place (leading to poor attendance), impact on self-esteem, and withdrawal from family or friends. If unchallenged, people who bully others are unlikely to stop. However, those who witness bullying often harbour the fear that if they challenge the behaviour, it could happen to them next. If bullying continues, it can lead to serious and prolonged emotional damage to the victim. Whilst, as discussed above, we must be careful to establish that a reported situation does involve true ‘bullying’, we strive to always take allegations of bullying seriously and act appropriately to support the victim and address it.

### **Vulnerable groups**

Evidence suggests that some people are more likely to be bullied than others. Prejudice-based bullying – bullying resulting from ignorance or hostility about the way people are – is particularly common.

While not an exhaustive list, particular groups who may be more likely to experience bullying include:

- people from a minority race, religion or culture
- those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)
- people with visible health conditions or whose appearance is considered different to the norm
- people (or family members of people) of a non-heterosexual orientation (homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying)
- young carers, looked-after children or those with other needs related to home circumstances
- people of the minority gender in situations where one gender dominates (sexist bullying)
- people who are exceptionally intelligent
- those who do not have English as a first language
- individuals who are particularly shy or sensitive.

### **Cyberbullying**

We recognise that Cyberbullying is an increasing area of concern in the modern age. The anonymity that can come with using the internet can sometimes make people feel able to say and do hurtful things that they would not do in person. Please refer to the Online Safety

policy for clarification of the school's approach to educating children about safe and sensible use of technology.

### **Bullying off the school premises**

The school is not directly responsible for resolving issues of bullying that occur off the school premises, although we will be sensitive to any effect it may have and will support parents/carers dealing with such issues where appropriate.

### **Strategies for dealing with bullying**

If an allegation of bullying does come up, the school will:

- take it seriously
- act as quickly as possible to investigate the allegation and establish the facts, including ascertaining whether the allegation does constitute 'bullying' as defined in this policy
- record the allegation and the results of the investigation in writing
- inform the Headteacher and other relevant staff
- provide support and reassurance to the victim(s)
- where there is sufficient evidence that bullying has occurred, identify appropriate sanctions for the bully (see below) and the need for any ongoing action, such as a behaviour plan
- follow up through observations and discussions to ensure the bullying hasn't returned.

### **Sanctions**

It will be made clear to the perpetrator what they have done, the impact of their actions and that this behaviour will not be tolerated. Anyone found to have engaged in bullying behaviour will be sanctioned in accordance with our Behaviour Policy. The sanction used will correlate to the seriousness of the incident and the perpetrator will be told why it is being used. They will be asked to redress their actions where possible, eg. in cases of Cyberbullying, by removing harmful or inappropriate content that has been published. If appropriate they may have their internet access suspended in school. The parents of anyone found to have bullied others will be contacted. If there is a group of people involved, they will be dealt with both individually and as a whole group.

### **What schools should do:**

- Promote an anti-bullying ethos. At Riverside, this is supported by our inclusive values, our focus on safeguarding and our comprehensive PSHE curriculum. We also take part every year in activities related to the national 'Anti-Bullying Week'. We provide activities for children which may include assemblies, visiting speakers and class workshops all focused on promoting respect, inclusivity and zero tolerance of bullying.

- Consult with children about their experiences of bullying in order to identify any particular areas of concern and take action to address these concerns. At Riverside we do this through discussions with our School Council and regular PSHE work and circle time in class, as well as annual pupil surveys.
- Ensure that information is provided about external assistance that is available. At Riverside we have posters around school displaying the contact details for organisations such as Childline and the NSPCC.
- Ensure that clear records are kept in response to all allegations of bullying. At Riverside we record incidents using class Behaviour and Wellbeing logs, the CPOMS system and a separate log of bullying incidents.

### **What children should do:**

- Be mindful of their own behaviour, always aim to be kind and never engage in bullying of any sort.
- Tell someone if they witness bullying behaviour or feel bullied themselves.
- Refuse to join in, encourage or stand by and watch bullying behaviour of others.
- Work with their school, their parents/carers and other professionals to ensure bullying is prevented and that it is stopped when it does happen.

### **What parents and carers should do:**

- Encourage their children to respect others, to contribute to the wider community, to be law-abiding, to have strong moral values and to treat others with compassion and kindness.
- Work co-operatively with the school and other services to ensure that all children are safe and happy.
- Be alert to signs of bullying and inform the school if they think bullying is taking place.
- Be particularly aware of and responsive to Cyberbullying, which can take place 24/7 in any location.
- Take responsibility for their own children's actions and also model good behaviour.
- Be familiar with and supportive of the school's anti-bullying and behaviour policies.
- Refrain from discussing bullying incidents outside the school where it can develop into 'playground gossip'. This includes discussion on social media.

It is the responsibility of everybody working with children to prevent, challenge and respond to bullying wherever it occurs. It is also expected that staff will model behaviour that is supportive and encouraging and no staff will exhibit bullying behaviour in their own working practice.

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