



Rye College Policy

Policy Title:	Anti-Bullying Policy
Leadership Responsibility:	Deputy Headteacher
Review Body:	Head Teacher
Date:	November 2023
Review:	November 2024

Context

At Rye College [the Academy] our mission is to 'create bright futures for all'. With this in mind, we work hard to ensure that every child is happy and well supported on their educational journey with us. We want every child to grow and flourish in our care. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our college. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to tell an adult and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a telling College. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a colleague.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Communications Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Education Act 2011
- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2021) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DCMS, DSIT, and UK Council for Internet Safety (2020) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following Academy policies:

- Behaviour Management Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy
- RSHE Curriculum



Statutory Implications

The Academy understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, it has a responsibility to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, including sexual 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.

Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications may be considered criminal offences:

- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or in a way which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or contains information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.
- Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to the police include violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation, and hate crimes.

Objectives

- All AAC members, teachers, associates, students, parents and families should understand what bullying is.
- All AAC members, teachers and associates, should know what the Academy's policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All students and parents should know what the Academy's policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As an Academy we take bullying seriously. Students and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.
- The College draws on the latest guidance from NSPCC and other agencies in developing the most effective approaches.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at the Academy, at home or online. It is usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally.



Definitions

Bullying is generally characterised by:

- **Repetition:** Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over an extended period of time.
- **Intent:** The perpetrator means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
- **Targeting:** Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- **Power imbalance:** Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

In most incidents reported as bullying, the root of the behaviour is a breakdown in the dynamics of a friendship group, so we have defined bullying as deliberately hurtful behaviour repeated over a period of time, which may be verbal (including racism), physical, social, cyber or psychological. We use a simple definition: S.T.O.P. = Several - Times - On - Purpose.

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Students who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

All types of bullying will be discussed as part of the RSE and health education curriculum, in line with the RHSE policy.

This curriculum will explore and discuss issues at age-appropriate stages such as:

- Healthy and respectful relationships.
- Boundaries and consent.
- Stereotyping, prejudice and equality.
- Body confidence and self-esteem.
- How to recognise abusive relationships and coercive control.
- Harmful sexual behaviour, the concepts involved and why they are always unacceptable, and the laws relating to it.

Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Types of Bullying

Bullying can take different forms. It could include:

- Physical bullying, such as hitting, slapping or pushing someone.
- Verbal bullying, such as name calling, gossiping or threatening someone.
- Non-verbal abuse, such as hand signs or text messages.
- Emotional abuse, such as threatening, intimidating or humiliating someone.
- Exclusion, such as ignoring or isolating someone.
- Undermining, by constant criticism or spreading rumours.
- Controlling or manipulating someone.
- Making silent, hoax or abusive calls.



- Racial, sexual or homophobic bullying/discrimination.
- Bullying someone because they have a disability.
- Child-on-child abuse: any kind of physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse or coercive control exercised between children. This includes harmful sexual behaviours including but not limited to; sexual violence and harassment.

Rye College will not accept any form of **discriminatory abuse**. This may include:

- Verbal abuse, derogatory remarks or inappropriate use of language related to a protected characteristic.
- Deliberate exclusion on the grounds of a protected characteristic.
- Harassment, slurs, or similar treatment based on a difference or perceived difference.
- Misogynistic/Misandrist behaviour or comments.

What is Cyber-bullying?

Cyber-bullying is bullying that takes place online. Unlike bullying in the real world, online bullying can follow the child or group wherever they go, via social networks, gaming and mobile phone. It can also take place across age groups and target pupils, staff and others, and may take place inside school, within the wider community, at home or when travelling. It can sometimes draw bystanders into being accessories.

Types of Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying can include:

- Threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages.
- Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips.
- Disclosure of private sexual photographs or videos with the intent to cause distress.
- Silent or abuse phone calls.
- Using the victim's phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible.
- Threatening or bullying emails, possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else's name.
- Menacing or upsetting responses to someone in a chatroom.
- Unpleasant messages sent via instant messaging.
- Unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites, e.g., Facebook.

NB: The above list is not exhaustive, and cyberbullying may take other forms.

Colleagues will be aware that a cyberbullying incident might include features different to other forms of bullying, prompting a particular response. Significant differences may include the following:

- **Possible extensive scale and scope** – students may be bullied on multiple platforms and using multiple different methods that are made possible by virtue of the bullying taking place online.
- **The anytime and anywhere nature of cyberbullying** – students may not have an escape from the torment when they are at home due to the bullying continuing through technology at all times.



- **The person being bullied might not know who the perpetrator is** – it is easy for individuals to remain anonymous online and on social media, and students may be bullied by someone who is concealing their own identity.
- **The perpetrator might not realise that their actions are bullying** – sometimes, the culture of social media, and the inability to see the impact that words are having on someone, may lead to students crossing boundaries without realising.
- **The victim of the bullying may have evidence of what has happened** – students may have taken screenshots of bullying, or there may be a digital footprint that can identify the perpetrator.

The Academy has a zero-tolerance approach to cyberbullying, this does not mean it does not happen but it does mean we will act on all reports following our investigation processes. Please be aware the Academy has limited ability to deal with online bullying with regards to tracking accounts and proving ownership of accounts.

The Academy will support students, who have been victims of cyberbullying / bullying, through formal and informal discussions with the student about their feelings and whether the bullying has stopped.

The Academy will address any mental health and wellbeing issues amongst students, as these can be a cause, or a result, of bullying behaviour via the Student Hub.

In all cases, we advise the victim to block and report the person and/or account to the social media platform being used. In cases of sexual images or explicit messages, we assist students in reporting the contents to CEOP (Child Exploitation Online Protection). Families involved in such cases can always contact the Academy for advice.

Colleagues and students will be instructed not to respond or retaliate to cyberbullying incidents. Evidence of the incident should be recorded, e.g., taking screenshots. These will be investigated and support will be provided.

Where offensive content is posted online targeting a staff member or student, the person targeted will be encouraged to use the reporting mechanism on the website or social media platform to request its removal. Where the person who has posted, it is known to the school, it will request they remove it directly.

In accordance with the Education Act 2011, the Academy has the right to examine and delete files from students' personal devices, e.g., mobile phones, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone. In these cases, the school's Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy will be followed.

Child-on-Child – Harmful Sexual Behaviours

The Academy has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.



To prevent child-on-child abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the Academy will educate students about abuse, its forms, and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum, assemblies and Life Education lessons.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour refers to developmentally inappropriate **sexual behaviour** which is displayed by children and young people and which may be **harmful** or abusive. It can be displayed towards younger children, peers, older children or adults.

In the event of an allegation and/or disclosure of harmful sexual behaviour, including but not limited to:

- **Sexual Violence** refers to offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.
- **Sexual Harassment** refers to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which violates the dignity of the student, degrades, humiliates them and/or creates a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.
- Sexual harassment can include:
 - Sexual comments, jokes and taunting.
 - Physical acts such as brushing past them, interfering with clothes, and displaying images of a sexual nature.
 - Online sexual harassment such as sharing of sexual images, unwanted sexualised comments, sexual exploitation, and sexualised bullying.

Coercive control refers to forcing a person to do something that they would not normally do by making threats against their safety or well-being, or that of their relatives or property.

A referral will be made to the Designated Safeguarding Lead will fully investigate the allegation and/or disclosure in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

All colleagues will:

- Be aware that students of any age and gender are capable of abusing their peers.
- Be aware that abuse can occur inside and outside of school settings.
- Be aware of the scale of harassment or abuse, and that just because it is not being reported does not mean it is not happening.
- Take all instances of child-on-child abuse equally seriously regardless of the characteristics of the perpetrators or victims.
- Never tolerate abuse as 'banter' or 'part of growing up', and will never justify sexual harassment, e.g., as 'boys being boys', as this can foster a culture of unacceptable behaviours and one that risks normalising abuse.
- Be aware that child-on-child abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting, sexual harassment and assault, and hazing or initiation-type violence.
- Always challenge any harmful physical behaviour that is sexual in nature, such as inappropriate touching. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

Students will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled.



All colleagues will be aware and sensitive towards the fact that students may not be ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused. Students being abused may feel embarrassed, humiliated, scared, or threatened.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Trust Safeguarding Policy and Academy Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the Academy Behaviour Management Policy.

What are the Signs of Bullying?

No single sign will indicate for certain that a child is being bullied, but watch out for:

- Belongings getting 'lost' or damaged.
- Physical injuries, such as unexplained bruises.
- Being reluctant to go to the Academy, being mysteriously 'ill' each morning, or trying to avoid the Academy.
- Not doing as well at the Academy or a change in character.
- Asking for, or stealing, money (to give to whoever's bullying them).
- Being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn.
- Problems with eating or sleeping.
- Bullying others.

What do we do to stop bullying?

- We are a 'telling College' where anyone who sees bullying, or experiences it, tells an adult.
- Inform the parents or family of the bully of what has been happening.
- Make the punishments for bullying known to all the children.
- Show all the children how to walk away from a bully.

What should students do if they think they are being bullied?

Tell someone – it could be their teacher, parent, family member or any other adult in the Academy.
Or email: yourconcern@ryecollege.co.uk

What should the students tell an adult?

- Who has been bullying you?
- How long has this been going on?
- How many times has this happened to you?
- Has anyone seen this happen? If so, who?
- Has anyone else been bullied by the same person?
- Have you told anyone else about this before?
- Was anything done about it?
- Have you done anything unhelpful that has not helped the situation?

What should a student do if they witness bullying?

- Tell an adult in the Academy.
- Email: yourconcern@ryecollege.co.uk



What action will our Academy take?

- The Academy will always make its first priority the immediate physical safety of our students.
- The responsible adult will lead the 'no blame' sessions – following carefully the procedures that are laid down in Appendix 1.
- The Academy will inform parents and families of the facts so far established and what has been done so far when possible.
- Parents will be asked to meet with the Academy separately if the bullying behaviour reaches the level of sanctions and suspensions.
- If any agreed strategy then breaks down, a review of the application of the Behaviour Management Policy will be undertaken including alternative approaches.

All colleagues involved in managing instances of bullying will be aware that sanctions and providing support are not mutually exclusive actions,

The Academy will avoid unnecessarily criminalising students for bullying or abusive behaviour where possible, as young people with criminal records face stigma and discrimination in future aspects of their lives. The Academy's focus when handling perpetrators will be supporting them to develop more positive behaviours and to refrain from abusive and bullying behaviours in the future.

The Academy will remain cognisant of the fact that continued access to school can be important for rehabilitation of harmful behaviour and will not exclude students unless as a last resort – where there have been serious or consistent incidents of bullying, the Academy will act in line with the Suspension and Exclusion Policy.

Support

In the event of bullying, victims will be offered the following support:

- Emotional support and reassurance from the school counsellor/Mental Health Team
- Reassurance that it was right to report the incident and that appropriate action will be planned and taken.
- Liaison with their parents to ensure a continuous dialogue of support
- Advice not to retaliate or reply, but to keep the evidence and show or give it to their parent or a member of staff
- Advice on aspects of online safety, in the event of cyberbullying, to prevent re-occurrence, including, where appropriate, discussion with their parents to evaluate their online habits and age-appropriate advice on how the perpetrator might be blocked online
- Discussion with their parent on whether police action is required (except in serious cases of child exploitation or abuse where the police may be contacted without discussion with parents)



What should parents do about bullying?

Inform our Academy if they think their child is being bullied or is bullying other children. Try to establish the facts and keep an open mind. The symptoms at home of children being bullied or who are bullying can sometimes be very similar. With older children it might be useful to refer to this policy. With all children, parents and families should talk about the problems of bullying with their child.

Prevention

We use a number of methods for helping children to prevent bullying as and when appropriate – many recommended by Kidscape, these may include:

- Assemblies and tutor programmes.
- Signing a Behaviour Contract.
- Life Education sessions focused on diversity.
- Visible presence around the Academy at breaks.
- Welcoming space for students to air their concerns (the Hub).
- yourconcern@ryecollege.co.uk dedicated email address for students to report incidents. This is monitored by the Safeguarding team weekly.
- Circle time sessions with Place 2 Be for Year 7 students with the theme of friendship.

Important information about bullying

- The nature of bullying can change as children grow older, and can become subtler.
- Most bullying is not physical, or direct. Children identify emotional and social forms of bullying as most hurtful.
- Bullying exists in all ages, social, ethnic and gender groups and in both urban and rural settings.
- Most bullying is between children of the same age.
- Those who witness bullying are as deeply affected as those who are directly bullied.
- Children follow examples. If home life does not offer a secure and safe environment and they frequently see aggressive behaviour between adults and towards themselves they will tend to adopt aggressive behaviour patterns themselves.

Further information

Further information, advice and guidance can be sought independently of the Academy at:

- www.kidscape.org.uk/advice/advice-for-parents-and-carers
- www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying-and-cyberbullying
- <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Academy views bullying as a very serious impairment to our educational community even though incidents are small in number. We will therefore review the number of incidents on a regular basis and ensure provision and prevention planning is proportionate and timely.



Reviewing

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

February 2019 BBL

May 2020 BBL

May 2021 BBL

June 2022 BBL

December 2022 DDo – SB

November 2023 - DDo

EQUALITIES

We recognise that our students bring with them a wide variety of behaviours influenced by life experiences outside college. We aim to respond to each case professionally, objectively and compassionately. We are sensitive when working with children and families with specific needs and experiences and we continuously seek ways to promote successful partnerships. The basis of differentiation will vary dependant on the needs of each case but we will take into account the views of parents and families, colleagues and external agencies together with any Statement of Special Educational Need or Education, Health and Care Plan. We will also ensure compliance with the Trust's Equality Policy taking into account students with protected characteristics and making reasonable adjustments for students with a disability within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010. Both the college and Trust respects the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) that requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. By following the Trust's Equality Policy, the college seeks to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by such legislation.

DATA PROTECTION

Rye College [The Academy] processes personal data in accordance with the data protection principles embodied in the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. The Academy complies with the requirements of the data protection legislation as detailed in the Trust Data Protection Policy.

All colleagues are aware of the principles of data protection and will not process personal data unless necessary. The Academy safeguards the personal data it collects through the operation of the Trust's data protection policy and processes and the IT policy. In addition, the Academy has taken steps to ensure that all its contracts that process data have the GDPR compliant provisions.



Appendix 1

Process for dealing with bullying

A member of the Hub will **discuss the situation with the student reporting the bullying** to clarify the information and decided upon a course of action that the student is comfortable with.

The actions available to the member of staff and student, form a tiered response which is dependent on any discussion / investigation outcome, the course of action requested by the student and any previously reported incidents relating to the bullying student(s).

They can include but are not limited to:

Mediation – the ‘no blame approach’

In most cases reported as bullying, the root of the behaviour is a breakdown in the dynamics of a friendship group. This approach is used as a method of dealing with the breakdown of friendships that can lead to bullying behaviour. Using this method, the bullying is the focus not the student(s). The no-blame approach adopts a seven-step response to incidents of bullying:

- The teacher talks to the student who has been bullied.
- The teacher convenes a meeting with the students involved, the reporting student and a friend.
- The teacher ensures that there is no power imbalance with numbers of students and then explains the problem.
- The group shares the responsibility. The teacher asks the group for their ideas and records their decisions on a joint agreement plan
- The teacher leaves it up to them to implement.
- The teacher meets with the group, after a few days, to review the progress made.
- The teacher will decide who, at this stage, needs to be informed.

Warnings / Restricted areas

This approach is used as a method of dealing re-occurring incidences of bullying. The parents of student and the student who is bullying are informed that further action will be taken if it does not stop. Access to certain areas of the Academy during social time may be restricted with sanction put in place if these restrictions are broken. This allows the Academy and home to work together to address the re-occurring bullying behaviour.

Sanctions – detentions, solo study etc.

This approach is used as a method of dealing re-occurring incidences of bullying. The parents of student and the student who is bullying are informed that further incidents may result in suspension from the Academy. The restricted areas may be increased or the student may be required to remain with a member of staff on duty during social time. If the incidents are occurring during lessons the student may be required to move groups.

Suspension (dependant on evidence)

This is only used as a final resort – the bully is suspended for bullying and this phrase appears on their school suspension record.



In more serious cases the Police may be informed i.e., significant physical bullying where a legal threshold may have been reached.

In all cases support will be offered to both parties. (Please note this is not an exhaustive list).

Possible support for student reporting

- Place-to-Talk appointment.
- Safe space.
- Nominated adult.
- Peer mentoring.
- Communication with staff to be vigilant.
- Advice not to retaliate or reply, but to keep the evidence and show or give it to their parent or a member of staff.
- Advice on aspects of online safety, in the event of cyberbullying, to prevent re-occurrence, including, where appropriate, discussion with their parents to evaluate their online habits and age-appropriate advice on how the perpetrator might be blocked online.

Possible support to change bullying behaviour

- Place-to-Talk appointment.
- Communication with staff to be vigilant.
- EDI Champion if identified as linked to a protected characteristic.