THE ROWANS SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

As laid out in the DfE 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' non-statutory guidance (2017):
"bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers in schools have to make their own judgments about each specific case."

The School has referred to the DfE 'Prevent and Tackling Bullying' non-statutory guidance (July 2017) when developing this policy. The policy also reflects the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2026)* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2023)*.

Policy statement
At The Rowans School we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our children so they can learn and play in a relaxed and secure environment.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in our school. We take all incidents of bullying seriously. Bullying hurts and no-one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect and pupils who are bullying others need to learn different ways of behaving.

At The Rowans School, we acknowledge that bullying does happen from time to time and it would be unrealistic to claim that it does not. When bullying does occur, everyone should be able to tell somebody about it and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively in accordance with our anti-bullying policy.

This policy applies to all children in the school including those in EYFS.

Aims and objectives
The aim of this policy is to try and prevent and deal with any behaviour that is deemed as bullying. The implementation of this policy will create an ethos where bullying is regarded as unacceptable so that a safe and secure environment is created for everyone to learn and work in. All members of the school have a responsibility to recognise bullying when it occurs and to take appropriate action in accordance with the school policy. This will happen in the following ways:

- The school will meet the legal requirement for all schools to have an anti-bullying policy in place.
- The school will work closely with other professional agencies to ensure that children stay safe as stated in The Children Act 1989, The SEN and Disability Act 2001, The Government Green Paper 'Every Child Matters' 2003 (outcome 2) and The Children Act 2004.

- All teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents will have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All teaching and non-teaching staff will know what the school policy is on bullying and will consistently and swiftly follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents will know what the school policy is on bullying and what they can do if bullying occurs.
- Pupils and parents will be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Whole-school initiatives (staff training, celebration assemblies, etc) and pro-active teaching strategies (PSHEE lessons, circle time, etc) will be used throughout the school to reduce the likelihood of bullying to occur.
- A positive, caring ethos will be created within the school environment where everyone can work, play and express themselves, free from the fear of being bullied.
- Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable.

What bullying is not:
It is important to understand that bullying is not the odd occasion of falling out with friends, name calling, arguments or when the occasional trick or joke is played on someone. It is bullying if it is done several times on purpose or repeatedly. Children sometimes fall out or say things because they are upset. When occasional problems of this kind arise it is not classed as bullying. It is an important part of children's development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns, the odd name-calling or childish prank. We all have to learn how to deal with these situations and develop social skills to repair relationships, 'forgive, forget and move on'.

What bullying is:
Bullying can be described as being a 'deliberate act done to cause distress solely in order to give a feeling of power, status or gratification to the bully'. It can range from ostracising, name-calling, emotional including spreading malicious rumours, teasing, threats and extortion through to physical (including sexual) assault on persons and/or their property. It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying can often be hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory. It can be an unresolved single frightening incident which casts a shadow over a child's life or a series of such incidents and can cause serious psychological damage to children and adults.

Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, homophobic, which focus on disabilities and special educational needs or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). It can be motivated by prejudice on religious, cultural or gender grounds. In particular, cyber bullying can take place through the use of social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email.

Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time. 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.

At The Rowans School, staff, parents and children work together to create a safe, happy and caring learning environment. Bullying, whether verbal, physical or indirect, will not be tolerated. It is everyone's responsibility to aim to prevent occurrences of bullying and to deal with any incidents quickly and effectively.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures), ridicule, humiliation;
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, throwing stones, biting, spitting, punching or any other forms of violence; taking someone's possession;
- Racial - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, making fun of culture/religion;
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or using sexually abusive or sexist language;
- Homophobic - because of, or focusing on, the issue of sexuality;
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, threats;
- Cyber bullying – setting up 'hate websites', sending offensive emails or text messages;
- Special needs target - any unfavourable or negative comments, gestures or actions made to someone relating to their disability or special educational needs;
- Disability - related to appearance or health conditions.
- Family – because a child is adopted or is a carer.

There is no 'hierarchy' of bullying – all forms of bullying should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately.

Who can be bullied?
Bullying can take place between pupils, between pupils and staff, or between staff, or between parents and staff; by individuals or groups; face to face, indirectly or using a range of cyber bullying methods.

Where does bullying happen?
It can happen anywhere – in the classroom, in the corridor, in the toilets, in the dining hall, in the playground. Bullying may also happen on the way to and from school. In such cases, the Head is empowered by law to deal with such incidents but must do so in accordance with the school's policy.

At The Rowans School, we are concerned with our children's conduct and welfare outside as well as inside school and we will do what we can to address any bullying issues that occur off the school premises.

The following steps may be taken:
- The Head will talk to the local Community Police Officer about a specific problem outside the school premises.
- The Head will talk to the Heads of other schools whose children may be involved in bullying off the school premises.
- Discuss coping strategies with parents.
- The Head will talk to the children about how to handle or avoid bullying outside the school premises.

Cyberbullying – definition
Mr Bill Belsey defined this unpleasant phenomenon in the following terms:
- "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."
- Cyber bullying can involve social networking sites, like Club Penguin, Snapchat and Facebook, emails and mobile phones, used for SMS messages and as cameras.

Cyberbullying – Preventative measures

The Rowans School:

- Expects all pupils and staff to adhere to its policy for the safe use of the Internet. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and pupils' use is monitored.
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the Internet.
- Adheres to the National Online Safety (NOS) guidelines and the Education for a Connected World framework regarding the use of the Internet.
- As standard, children at The Rowans School are not permitted to bring mobile phones into school and permission for this will be granted only under special circumstances.
- Staff must keep their mobile phones out of sight during the school day and they must be switched off during lessons and when on duty. Staff may not use mobile phones to take photos or record the children.
- Only school cameras are to be used when taking photographs of the children. No personal cameras may be used at school. The school cameras may not be taken off-site unless needed for outings.
- All images on school cameras are required to be downloaded (on to the school's network)/deleted prior to the end of each week.
- All staff are required to complete training in Online Safety
- Online safety resources are used during lessons to inform the children about Cyberbullying.
- All parents have access to TooledUp training and resources.

Signs and symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that s/he is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate further if a child:

- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic) or begins to truant;
- is frightened of walking to or from school;
- begs to be driven to school;
- changes their usual routine / route to school;
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence;
- starts stammering;
- attempts or threatens to run away;
- cries him/herself to sleep at night or has nightmares;
- feels ill in the morning;
- begins to underperform in school work;
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged;
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing";
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully);
- comes home hungry (money, snacks, sandwiches have been stolen);
- has unexplained cuts or bruises;
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable;
- is bullying other children or siblings;
- stops eating;
- is frightened to say what's wrong;
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above;
- starts swearing or using aggressive language for no apparent reason;
- starts bed wetting.

Some of these signs and symptoms could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be taken seriously and investigated as soon as possible.

Procedures for reporting and responding to bullying incidents

All staff will respond calmly and consistently to all allegations and incidents of bullying at The Rowans School. They will be taken seriously by all staff and dealt with impartially and promptly. All those involved will have the opportunity to be heard. Staff will protect and support all children involved whilst allegations and incidents are investigated and resolved. The following step-by-step procedure will be used for reporting and responding to bullying allegations or incidents:

- The member of staff to whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the pupils involved.
- All incidents of bullying must be reported to the Head or Deputy Head if the Head is unavailable.
- The victim will be interviewed on their own and an account of the event will be written.
- The alleged bully, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually and an account of the events will be written.
- The incidents will be recorded by staff on Concern Sheets and will be kept.
- In all cases parents, of both the victim/s and the bully/bullies, will be informed and will be invited to come into school for a meeting with the class teacher and to discuss the problem. The Head will be informed of these meetings and will attend if necessary.
- Staff will make sure the victim(s) is and feels safe.
- Appropriate advice will be given to help the victim(s).
- The problem will be identified and possible solutions suggested.
- Staff will attempt to adopt a problem-solving approach which will move children on from them having to justify their behaviour.
- Appropriate action will be taken quickly to end the bullying behaviour or threats of bullying.
- Staff will make it clear to the bully in no uncertain terms that their behaviour is unacceptable.
- The bully (bullies) will be expected to apologise. Other consequences may take place and appropriate sanctions applied. Attempts will be made to reconcile the pupils.
- It will be made clear to the alleged perpetrator why revenge is inappropriate. They will be offered full support to develop a strategy that will help them and, for them to understand the seriousness of their behaviour and that it must change for the better.
- A way forward will be agreed, including possible disciplinary sanctions as well as the support required.
- After the incident has been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.
- Monitoring will continue for at least two weeks and again at the half-term break to ensure that there have been no repeat incidents.
- Bullying incidents will be discussed regularly at staff meetings.
- A bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.
- If necessary and appropriate, Social Services or the Police will be consulted.
- Records will be kept to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted or to enable patterns to be identified.

The following sanctions may be used:

- Apologise to the victim(s) verbally or in writing;
- Lose privileges;
- Spend playtimes and lunchtimes with an adult;
- Go on a self-improvement report;
- Report to the Head or Deputy Head;
- Be withdrawn from participation in school visit, clubs and events not essential to the curriculum;
- Fixed term exclusion;
- Permanent exclusion.

Record Keeping, Record Retention and Information Sharing

Records of any investigations into alleged incidents of bullying are retained by the Head, in line with the School's Data Protection & Data Retention Policy and the Pupil Privacy Notices. Please do refer to the Pupil Privacy Notices in the 'About Us' Section of the School Website:

https://www.rowans.org.uk/

The Head ensures that all records relating to any matters concerning alleged incidents of bullying are securely stored.

- These records are routinely kept for a minimum of 7 years after the pupil (s) they relate to has/have left the School.
- Subject to the circumstances around the investigations, it is possible for the records to be retained for longer, e.g. for 25 years from the date of birth of any pupils involved.
- If there are any safeguarding considerations in relation to any investigations around pupil conduct, it is possible that these records will be retained for longer in accordance with the School's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.
- In line with the School's Pupil Privacy Notice, details of any investigations into potential incidents of bullying are shared with the Independent Schools Inspectorate, when they inspect the School.

Strategies for the prevention and reduction of bullying

In order to raise awareness staff are involved in training, so that the principles of the school policy are understood, legal responsibilities are known, action is defined to resolve and prevent problems, and sources of support are available. Where appropriate, the school will invest in specialised skills to understand the needs of their pupils, including those with special educational needs/disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) pupils.

Whole-school initiatives and proactive teaching strategies will be used throughout the school to develop a positive learning environment, for staff, pupils and parents alike, with the aim of reducing the opportunities for bullying to occur. Staff are expected to be positive role models promoting good behaviour and respect amongst themselves and pupils.

These can include:

- Each class agreeing on their own set of class rules at the start of each academic year. These rules must be displayed in the classroom. It is also important to discuss rewards and sanctions to celebrate and reinforce positive behaviour and deter unacceptable behaviour.
- PSHEE (Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education) scheme of work supports this policy.
- Circle time and assemblies on bullying issues.
- Year 2 children who display positive behaviours and show good citizenship are chosen to become 'Monitors'.
- Star awards are given in weekly assemblies, celebrating acts of kindness, tolerance, helpfulness, caring and generally positive role model behaviour.
- Constant and regular focus on being The Rowans School representatives.
- Appropriate staffing levels will be maintained during play time.
- Setting up of a circle of friends support network where a small group of children volunteer to help and support an individual who is experiencing difficulties – 'buddy system' or 'playtime groups'.
- Children writing stories and poems and drawing pictures about bullying.
- Children being read stories about bullying.
- Using drama activities and role-plays to help children be more assertive and teach them strategies to help them deal with bullying situations.
- Prominently displaying anti-bullying posters produced by the children around the school.
- Using praise and rewards to reinforce good behaviour.
- Encouraging the whole school community to model appropriate behaviour towards one another.

- Organising anti-bullying training for all staff.
- The contact details for Child Line will be clearly available to the children.

Monitoring and evaluation of the policy
To ensure this policy is effective, it will be monitored and evaluated annually by the Head and staff. This will enable patterns to be identified and the effectiveness of the approach adopted will be evaluated. Following an annual review, any amendments will be made to the policy and all teaching and non-teaching staff will be informed.

The following advice is communicated to pupils through PSHEE and assembly times, as well as at other times when appropriate. Pupils are actively involved in the prevention of bullying.

Advice to children:
What to do if you are being bullied:
1. Do not retaliate in any physical or verbal way.
2. Walk calmly away from the situation.
3. Tell an adult member of staff what has been happening. This will often be your class teacher or teaching assistant, but you can talk to any member of staff. If you cannot tell an adult, tell one of your friends.

What to do if you see someone being bullied:
1. Find a member of staff and explain what you have seen and heard.
2. Do not ignore bullying. Think how you would feel in the victim's position.

Some advice on how to avoid being bullied:
1. Believe in yourself and be confident.
2. Be friendly. If you are with friends you are less likely to be bullied.
3. Remember, bullies are often people with their own problems who need help to change their behaviour.

Advice to parents:
Understand that the school does not tolerate bullying in any form.
Know the procedures to follow, as outlined in this policy, should you believe that your, or any, child is being bullied.
Know that the school will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child/ren.
Parents are asked to reinforce the value of good behaviour at home.

This document will be reviewed annually
Policy Owner: TR Head, DH
Approved: TR Head
Date of last review: July 2026
Next review: July 2027