

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY
(Including Cyberbullying, Prejudice-based and Discriminatory Bullying

ISI Code:	10a Bullying Policy
Policy Author:	Senior Deputy Head
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RGS Worcester
Anti-Bullying Policy (Including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)

Aim of this policy

Our aim is for every pupil to be able to attend school in safety and free from humiliation, oppression and abuse so they can learn in a relaxed, supportive, caring and secure environment.

This Policy applies to all four RGS Schools (RGS Worcester, RGS The Grange, RGS Dodderhill and RGS Springfield) and underpins specific Anti-Bullying Policies in place at those Schools.

The school's duty is to ensure that safeguarding permeates all activity and functions. This policy therefore complements and supports many other policies including, but not limited to the School's Safeguarding Children Policy, Child on Child Abuse Policy, Rewards, Behaviour and Sanctions Policy, Exclusions Policy, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy, Relationships and Sex Education Policy, Images Policy, Online Safety & Acceptable Use of Smart Devices Policy and adheres to the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (Department for Education, September 2026). It is accepted that when undertaking development or planning of any kind the school will consider safeguarding matters as part of this process. This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004; the Education Act 2002; The Education and Inspections Act 2006; The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, The Equality Act 2010 and in line with government publications the Teachers' Standards 2012, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (December 2023), 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2026) and the Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales (2023).

There is ONE Appendix that forms part of this policy, and it can be found at the end of the policy.

Objectives of this policy

- To ensure that all Governors, members of staff and volunteers, pupils and parents understand what bullying is, what the school policy on bullying is and follow it when a suspected case of bullying is reported.
- To ensure that every allegation of bullying is taken seriously for it can cause physical and psychological damage, even leading to suicide.
- To ensure that members of the school support each other by reporting all instances of bullying.
- To ensure that all members of the school are aware that we take bullying seriously and that it will not be tolerated.

Definition

The School uses the Department for Education definition: bullying is 'behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally' (Preventing and tackling bullying, July 2017). It often involves an imbalance of power. It includes encouraging or manipulating others to bully, and may be open or hidden, in person or online (including messaging apps, social media, gaming platforms and AI-generated or altered images). A single serious incident, or any incident involving sexual, violent or abusive behaviour, is

reported to the DSL and dealt with under the Child-on-Child Abuse Policy, whether or not it is repeated.

The making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes, including AI-generated or altered images, is always a safeguarding matter and is reported straight to the DSL. Staff must never view, copy, print, share or forward such images. The DSL follows the UKCIS advice 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people' (March 2024) and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

The School will not tolerate the use of the term 'banter' to in any way excuse what it deems to be inappropriate references to any person or persons. Please be aware that our Safeguarding Policy addresses Child on Child abuse and this should be read in conjunction with this Anti-Bullying Policy.

Bullying can be and includes for the purpose of this Policy:

- Emotional: Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures).
- Physical: Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence, threatening or obscene gestures.
- Racial: Using racial taunts, graffiti, gestures because of someone's colour and/or origin.
- Sexual/Sexist: Unwanted physical contact, sexual comments, jokes or gestures, or misogynistic or misandrist language or content. Any sexual behaviour is reported straight to the DSL as child-on-child abuse.
- Verbal: Insults, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing and name-calling including comments made against particular groups for example because of disability, Special Educational Needs or on grounds of religion, cultural background, gender, sexual orientation or transgender status.
- Cyber: All areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse, social network sites, threats by text messaging & telephone calls, and misuse of photographic technology, e.g. cameras and videos. This includes pressuring, threatening or blackmailing a person to make or share nudes or semi-nudes, creating or sharing AI-generated or altered images of them, and impersonating them online. Any such incident is reported straight to the DSL.
- Religious: Unkind words or actions because of someone's religion.
- SEND: Unkindness because of physical or mental disabilities or having Special Educational Needs.
- Homophobic: Treating someone unkindly because people think that they are or might be homosexual.
- Transphobic: Unkindness due to someone's gender identity, their perceived gender identity or because they do not conform to culturally conventional gender roles.
- Family related: Unkindness because a child is adopted or is a carer, or the like.

Impact of bullying

Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. Bullying is serious as it can make the lives of its victims a misery. It undermines their confidence and self-esteem and can destroy their sense of security. Bullying impacts upon its victims' attendance and attainment at school, marginalises those groups who may be targeted and can have life-long psychological damage. At worst, bullying can be a factor in pupil suicide.

It is acknowledged that bullies have complex reasons for their behaviour and may need help. The consequences of the bullies being allowed 'to get away with it' can be detrimental to them as well as to their victim. All pupils deserve the right to be helped to understand what acceptable behaviour is.

Bullying and the law

- Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from, significant harm'. The normal procedures should then be followed in this matter. This applies to all forms of bullying, including racist incidents and a single serious incident or repeated incident may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. A log of incidents of bullying and of racist incidents is maintained in school.
- The Equality Act 2010 protects pupils from discrimination, harassment and victimisation because of disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. The public sector Equality Duty does not apply to independent schools, but the School has regard to its aims: to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups.
    - Part 6 of the Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to admissions, the way it provides education for pupils, provision of pupil access to any benefit, facility or service, or by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment. In England and Wales Part 6 of the Act applies to maintained schools and Academies and to other independent schools.
    - The School's Rewards, Behaviour and Sanctions Policy and the Parent Contract allow the Head to sanction pupils for bullying that takes place off the premises or online where it affects the welfare of pupils or the good order of the School.
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 provide that the proprietor of an Academy or other independent school ensures that bullying at the school is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy
- Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour or communications could be considered a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003 and the Public Order Act 1986 (updated – Criminal Justice & Public Order Act 1994). For example, under the Malicious Communication Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender. The Online Safety Act 2023 also created offences including sending threatening communications, sending false communications intended to cause harm, encouraging or assisting serious self-harm, cyberflashing, and sharing or threatening to share intimate images (including deepfakes) without consent.
- There are also criminal laws which apply to assault.

Procedure for dealing with an incident of bullying

What to look for

Pupils who are bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy or nervous, feigning illness, becoming aggressive, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work and concentration patterns.

All members of the community must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it, in accordance with school policy.

Surveys have shown that in most bullying incidents, most people knew that what was going on was wrong.

What to do

All staff should ensure that the DSL or a Deputy DSL at the School is aware.
The DSL or Deputy will ensure that an appropriate member of the Safeguarding and/or Pastoral Team is informed, and a named member of staff is assigned to give guidance as to further action and ensure that all members of staff that need to be aware are informed, including the School's Senior/Deputy Head and Head, as appropriate.

If you are the victim:

Tell someone you trust as soon as you can. You do not have to deal with it on your own, and you should not put yourself at risk by confronting the person.

- Share your feelings with someone else.
- If possible talk to a member of staff, your Class Teacher, your Tutor, the School Nurse (if you are at RGS Springfield you can tell a teacher that you need to speak to the School Nurse) or, if at RGS Senior School, you can speak to an Assistant Head of Year, Head of Year, Head of Section or Assistant Head (DSL). ~~or Deputy Head (Pastoral)~~. If you would rather not go straight to a member of staff, talk to your friends or to senior pupils. They may well be able to advise on an appropriate course of action, or will be able to involve other people who can. RGSW pupils can also use Tootoot to seek help from staff in the first instance. There are also people outside the School who would be willing to help, for example Childline: 0800 1111 and Samaritans: 116 123.

If you are a pupil who witnesses bullying behaviour:

- Support the victim by offering your friendship and make it clear that in your opinion what is happening to them is wrong.
- Encourage them to tell a member of staff, or tell a member of staff yourself. Do not confront the person doing the bullying.
- Accompany the victim to a trusted adult, or suggest that you see their Class Teacher, their Tutor, the School Nurse or, if at RGS Senior School, their Head of Section, their Head of Year or Assistant Head of Year, Assistant Head (DSL).
- If you are at RGSW, you can report your concerns using Tootoot.

If you are a member of Staff who witnesses bullying behaviour or it is reported to you:

- Sometimes people, either through lethargy, peer group pressure, or tacit support for what was going on, fail to take action. This must not happen.
- Reassure and support the pupils involved.
- Advise them that you are required to pass details on to the relevant members of staff (see

below).

- Inform the DSL at the School, as soon as possible.
- The member of staff who witnessed bullying behaviour, or to whom bullying behaviour was reported, should record the incident and ensure that the DSL and:
  For RGS Senior School, that the Assistant Head (DSL) and Senior Deputy Head are informed.
  For RGS The Grange, RGS Dodderhill and RGS Springfield, that the Head is also informed.
- The Assistant Head (DSL) will keep a central log of all complaints or incidences of bullying and record the way in which they were dealt with.

<u>What will happen</u>

- The victim will be interviewed by their Class Teacher or, Form Tutor, Head of Year, Assistant Head of Year, Head of Section, or Assistant Head (DSL) on their own and asked to describe and write an immediate account of events. The process for dealing with bullying will be explained clearly to them.
- The pupil will be asked what support they need and what they would like to happen, and their views will be taken into account.
- The alleged perpetrator and any others involved will be spoken to individually, as soon as possible, and asked to write an account of events. The process will be explained clearly to them. Where the incident may involve child-on-child abuse, the DSL decides who speaks to whom, and when, before any interview takes place.
- Support and advice will be given as appropriate to all pupils involved.
- Details of the incident will be recorded on all the pupils' files until they are 25 years old using the Bullying Incident Form, Appendix 1. The Assistant Head (DSL) is copied in so that it can be recorded as a bullying incident.
- Parents of all pupils involved will be contacted and a meeting may be arranged if deemed appropriate by the DSL.
- A review will be undertaken after each incident logged as a bullying incident to determine whether or not a pattern can be identified and to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted.
- If it is decided that it is not to be labelled a bullying incident the matter will be dealt with under the School's Rewards, Behaviour and Sanctions Policy.
- Those involved in supporting the pupil will continue to monitor the situation and speak to the DSL if there are further concerns or if they feel that the victim or bully require further support (e.g. say that they now feel ready to work with the School Counsellor).

<u>Sanctions</u>

A suitable sanction will be given in accordance with the school's Rewards, Behaviour and Sanctions Policy. If there is a disclosure about Child on Child abuse all of the children involved, whether perpetrator or victim, will be treated as being 'at risk' – see the Child-on-Child Abuse Policy. Although these sanctions will vary with the seriousness and the length of the offences, suspension and exclusion will be employed if deemed appropriate in cases of severe and persistent bullying.

- Where a pupil may be at risk of significant harm, or a crime may have been committed, the DSL decides on referral to Children's Social Care and/or the Police in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and the Safeguarding Children Policy. Reports of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault are always passed to the Police. The School never

delays a referral in order to deal with a matter internally.

What can we do to prevent bullying at RGS Worcester?

As a school community we will not allow cases of bullying to go unreported but will speak up, even at risk to ourselves.

This requires staff to:

- be positive role models in word and action at all times
- be observant of signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying
- make efforts to remove occasions for bullying by active patrolling during supervision duty
- take steps to help victims and remove sources of distress without placing the victim at further risk
- not encourage retaliation

This requires pupils to:

- refuse to be involved in any bullying situation.
- if appropriate, take some preventative action if present when bullying occurs OR
- report the incident or suspected incident to any member of staff and thereby help break down the code of secrecy

This requires the school to:

- inform parents that it will not tolerate bullying
- take a positive approach to educating students to combat bullying
- recognise that both the bullied and the perpetrators need appropriate support
- raise the awareness of staff about bullying via training and ensure all members of staff are aware of the policy and procedures, especially with regard to the monitoring of any strategies put in place
- take any action that is reasonable to reduce the risk of bullying at times and places where it is most likely
- use PSHCE lessons, assemblies, drama, stories, literature, historical events, current affairs and so on to explore the nature of bullying, the reasons it might occur and to suggest strategies for dealing with it
- the key points from this policy will be displayed in the school's calendar
- to dovetail the Anti-Bullying Policy with the school's Rewards, Behaviour and Sanctions Policy

The School recommends that parents of anyone being bullied should:

- watch for signs of distress in their child
- take an active interest in their child's social life and acquaintances
- advise their child to tell a member of staff about the incident. Encourage them to report it, and tell the School yourself if you are concerned.
- inform the School if bullying is suspected as soon as they are made aware by their child
- not encourage retaliation
- be willing to attend interviews at the School if their child has been involved in any bullying incidents

The School recommends that parents of children involved in bullying should:

- discuss the issues with their child
- be willing to attend school for discussions
- join with the school in any measures which are taken to resolve the matter

Anonymous Reporting App for Pupils

All pupils have access to Tootoot which allows them to anonymously disclose concerns, including those about bullying.

Review

The policy and procedure will be reviewed annually by the Assistant Head (DSL) and Heads of RGS Dodderhill, RGS The Grange and RGS Springfield. A brief report will be given annually to the Governors in the Trinity Term.

References and Sources of Information

Behaviour in schools (DfE, February 2024).

Gov.uk resources:

Bullying at School; Guidance: Preventing Bullying documents:-

- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017);
- Approaches to preventing and tackling bullying: case studies (June 2018);
- Cyber Bullying: advice for Headteachers and school staff (2013, last updated 2017) which includes supplementary advice for parents for tackling on-line bullying https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers/safety-tools-social-networks-and-other-online-services
- Supporting children and young people who are bullied: advice for schools.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026)
- UKCIS: Sharing nudes and semi-nudes (March 2024)

Specialist Organisations:

- The Diana Award: Established by the British Government in 1999, the organisations mission is to foster, develop and inspire positive change in the lives of young people. In February 2020, RGS Senior School hosted the Diana Anti-Bullying Ambassador Training Programme, which saw trainers work with our pupils and those from nine other school across the UK to change attitudes surrounding bullying. We are committed to supporting our Ambassadors in implementing various initiatives to further promote an awareness of the impact of bullying behaviour in our community and engender an ethos of intolerance to all types of bullying behaviour.
- The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA): Founded in 2002 by NSPCC and National Children's Bureau, the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) brings together over 100 organisations into one network to develop and share good practice across the whole range of bullying issues. http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Family Lives: A organisation devoted to transforming the lives of families, supporting parents and making happier relationships, happier families and a stronger society. https://www.familylives.org.uk/
- Kidscape: Charity established to prevent bullying and promote child protection. Advice for young people, professionals and parents about different types of bullying and how to tackle it. They also offer specialist training and support for school staff, and assertiveness training for young people. (www.kidscape.org.uk)

- Restorative Justice Council: Includes best practice guidance for practitioners 2011.
  Cyberbullying:
- ChildNet International: Specialist resources for young people to raise awareness of online safety and how to protect themselves. (www.childnet.com and www.thinkuknow.co.uk)
- LGBT: http://www.bullying.co.uk/general-advice/what-is-homophobic-bullying/EACH: A training agency for employers and organisations seeking to tackle discrimination on the grounds of gender and sexual orientation.
- https://each.education/education-training-consultancy-services
- Schools Out: Offers practical advice, resources (including lesson plans) and training to schools on LGBT equality in education. http://www.schools-out.org.uk/
- SEND: Mencap: The voice of learning disability and represents people with learning disabilities, with specific advice and information for people who work with children and young people. (www.mencap.org.uk)

Sponsor – Assistant Head (Pastoral)
June 2011
Reviewed and Endorsed: September 2012, August 2013, May 2014, August 2015, August 2016, August 2017, October 2017, December 2017, May 2018, August 2018, August 2019 August 2020, September 2021 and July 2022 (DSL), June 2023 (Deputy Head Pastoral), June 2024 (Deputy Head Pastoral), June 2025, May 2026, October 2026 (Senior Deputy Head - additional review)

APPENDIX 1

BULLYING INCIDENT FORM				
1.	Name of person(s) bullied			
2.	Name of person(s) accused			
3.	Date of incident		Time of incident	
4.	Place of incident			
5.	Name of Witnesses			
6.	Nature of incident			
	Type (tick): emotional / physical / racial / sexual or sexist / verbal / online / religious / SEN/D / homophobic / transphobic / family-related / other			
7.	Recommended Action			
8.	Report of discussions with parents			
9.	~~DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead)~~ DSL decision (bullying / child-on-child abuse / behaviour matter) and any referral, with date			

10.	Action taken and outcome	
11.	Support for each pupil, and follow-up review date and result	
12.	DSL signature and date	

Parts 1-8 to be completed by the Class Teacher/Form Tutor and/or Head of Year/Assistant Head of Year and passed to the DSL. The completed form will be placed in the victim's and perpetrator's file(s) until the former is 25 years old. DSL to complete parts 9–12.