The Royal Grammar School

Anti-Bullying Policy – Guidance

What is Bullying?

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms:

- **Verbal:** Name-calling, teasing, threats, offensive comments
- **Physical:** Pushing, hitting, or any unwanted physical contact, and damaging belongings
- **Social/Emotional:** Spreading rumours, deliberate exclusion, or humiliation
- **Cyberbullying:** Using technology to harass, threaten, or embarrass someone
- **Prejudice-Based:** Bullying that targets someone's race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or other personal characteristics.

Your Role in Our Community

Every member of our community has a part to play in keeping our school a positive and safe environment.

For Students

Speak Up, Stand Together

If you are experiencing or witnessing bullying, reporting it is a vital community responsibility that protects everyone. The most important thing you can do is **tell someone or use our reporting tools**.

- **Talk to an Adult You Trust:** This could be your Form Tutor, Head of Year, or any member of staff you feel comfortable with. You can bring a friend with you for support. We will listen, take you seriously, and keep your report confidential from the person doing the bullying
- **Use Tootoot:** You can use our confidential online reporting system, Tootoot, to report concerns discreetly at any time.
- **Don't Ignore It:** Trying to ignore bullying rarely makes it stop; it often just allows it to continue
- **Avoid Retaliation:** Hitting back or getting friends to retaliate can make the situation much worse and harder to resolve. Let us help you handle it effectively
- **Stay With Friends:** While we investigate, it can help to stick with a group of friends.

Being an Upstander, Not a Bystander

Bystanders see bullying happen but do nothing. An **upstander** takes positive action to help. If you see someone being bullied, you can:

- **Report It:** Tell a teacher, member of Support Staff, Prefect, or someone at home
- **Offer Support:** Invite the person being targeted to join your group or simply tell them you're going to report it on their behalf
- **Don't Join In:** Never support bullying by watching, laughing, or encouraging it. Your silence can look like agreement.

For Staff

Be Vigilant, Be There

Throughout the school day staff should be alert to bullying behaviour and be proactive in stopping it. Staff should:

- Expect positive behaviour in all lessons
- Use prompt, positive correction for low level disruption that targets individuals by reprimanding and correction of verbal put downs, taking of possessions, pushing and shoving etc.
- Always “separate the behaviour from the child” by making it clear that the school does not accept bullying behaviour (see definition in policy)
  A calm request to stop the bullying behaviour and a warning that should the behaviour continue a sanction will be imposed is often sufficient
- If the bullying behaviour is repeated, or it is possible that what you have witnessed may be part of a wider picture, or the initial incident is at a serious level, then the incident should be reported to the Form Tutor and the Head of Year as soon as possible. It is also helpful to inform Matron, the SEND Manager and boarding tutors if this is applicable
- In lessons forward planning should aim to achieve social inclusion of all students by careful seating plans and management of groups.

Form Tutor and Head of Year

If bullying is reported, the following guidelines should be followed:

- All reports of bullying should be taken seriously
- If a student is making the report they should be told they have made the right decision
- Adopt an unprejudiced approach and be prepared to listen carefully to all students involved. They should ideally be interviewed individually

- Ask all those directly involved in the bullying incident, and if appropriate selected witnesses indicated by both “sides”, to complete an Incident Report
- Discuss with the victim the possible actions that could be taken
- Empower the students who have been bullied by involving them in the choice of how the incident will be dealt with
- Offer the support of a safe room/area if it is necessary
- Ensure that parents of those directly involved are notified that an investigation is being carried out – arrange to keep them informed of the outcomes and if necessary invite them into school for a meeting
- Once the investigation has been completed the action that is required will be determined, this may need discussion with an Assistant Head or the Deputy Headmaster. The agreed action should be communicated to all the appropriate people
- Check with the student, who has suffered from the bullying behaviour, at regular intervals (every couple of days and then weekly) that the bullying has stopped
- Finally, the Head of Year must complete a Serious Incident Form and forward it to the Deputy Headmaster’s EA. All bullying incidents should be recorded in the Master Log.

For Parents & Carers

Our Partners in Well-being

You know your child best. If you notice any uncharacteristic changes, it could be a sign that something is wrong.

Signs to watch for include:

- Becoming withdrawn, anxious, or unusually moody
- Reluctance to go to school or to specific lessons
- Unexplained damage to clothes or belongings.

What to do:

1. **Talk Calmly:** Listen to your child and make notes about what happened, who was involved, and where it occurred. Reassure them they did the right thing by telling you
2. **Contact Us Immediately:** Please phone or email your child's Form Tutor or Head of Year. It's crucial we know about the situation so we can act. Problems are much easier to solve when we tackle them early and together
3. **Work With Us:** We will investigate promptly and thoroughly. Please remember that we need to gather all perspectives to get a full picture before taking action.

How We Respond & Restore

Our goal is not just to punish, but to repair harm and foster understanding. Every situation is unique, and our response will be tailored accordingly.

Investigation and Action

- **Listening:** All reports are taken seriously. We interview everyone involved individually to get a clear and unbiased picture of what happened
- **Empowering Students:** We involve the student who has been bullied in deciding the next steps, ensuring they feel safe and in control
- **Parental Communication:** We will always inform the parents of students involved that an investigation is underway and keep them updated on the outcome.

Sanctions & Learning Opportunities

Sanctions depend on factors like intent, duration, and the impact of the behaviour. Not all conflict is bullying; some are "relational conflicts" that are better solved through mediation.

When bullying is confirmed, responses may include:

- **A formal warning** and a clear explanation of why the behaviour is unacceptable
- **Detentions** (lunchtime, after school, or Senior Team)
- **A meeting with parents** to discuss the behaviour and create a plan for change
- In serious or repeated cases, **suspension** or **permanent exclusion** may be necessary.

Support for everyone Involved

- **For those who have been targeted:** We provide ongoing support to help students regain confidence. We'll remind them it's not their fault and check in regularly to ensure the bullying has stopped completely
- **For those displaying bullying behaviour:** Our aim is to help students understand the impact of their actions and develop more positive ways of interacting. Bullying behaviour can stem from a desire to feel powerful, to fit in, or from personal struggles. We offer strategies to help them change, often involving parents in this supportive process.

Restorative practices we use include:

- **Restorative Conversations:** Facilitated meetings where both parties agree to meet to discuss the impact of the behaviour and find a way forward
- **Acceptable Behaviour Agreements (ABAs):** A formal agreement co-signed by the student and a parent, outlining specific behaviours that must stop and the consequences if they don't
- **Pastoral Support Plans (PSPs):** An intensive support plan involving parents and senior

staff to prevent exclusion and promote significant behavioural change.

Flourishing in a Digital World: Online Safety

Cyberbullying can feel inescapable, whether it happens on social media, messaging apps, online gaming platforms, or through AI-generated content and harassment. All principles of our anti-bullying policy apply strictly to digital spaces.

- **Report It:** If you experience or see online bullying, tell a trusted adult or use our confidential reporting system
- **Save the Evidence:** Keep a record of any hurtful messages, images, or posts
- **Digital Citizenship:** We teach students about online safety, gaming interactions, and emerging digital risks like AI-generated harassment through PSHE, form time, and special presentations. Every student signs our Acceptable Use of ICT Policy, committing to responsible and respectful online behaviour. This includes understanding that sending offensive or menacing messages is a serious offence under UK law.

Celebrating Diversity & Challenging Prejudice

Our school maintains a strict zero-tolerance stance against prejudice-based bullying. Bullying motivated by prejudice (including racism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, sexism, or ableism) will be challenged robustly and immediately.

So-called "banter" that relies on negative stereotypes is never a joke. It is hurtful and against our school's values. We actively promote equality and good relations through lessons, assemblies, and student groups. All prejudice-based incidents are recorded and addressed with the seriousness they deserve.

Our Community Extends Beyond the School Gates

Our responsibility to student well-being doesn't end at the school gate. If an incident of bullying occurs between our students outside of school, we encourage you to report it. Where appropriate, we will respond with the same procedures as if it happened on school premises.