

Anti-Bullying Policy

Date Agreed by the Governing Body	November 2026
Date to be reviewed	November 2027
Date of last review	November 2025
Governors Committee accountable for review	Education
Senior Leadership Team member accountable for review	DPD

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1. Statement of Principles & Values

At The Royal Grammar School, we believe that everyone has the right to feel safe, valued, and respected. Our anti-bullying policy is central to our vision of maintaining high standards and fostering an environment where students can achieve their full potential without fear or harassment.

Our commitment to tackling bullying is rooted in our core school values of Respect, Integrity, and Aspiration.

- **Respect:** Bullying is a fundamental violation of respect. We expect every member of our community to treat others with kindness and consideration, celebrating our differences and promoting a culture of tolerance
- **Integrity:** We encourage our students to do the right thing by standing up against bullying. Having integrity means being an "upstander," not a bystander, and reporting concerns to ensure the safety and well-being of all
- **Aspiration:** Bullying creates an environment of fear and anxiety that can severely limit a student's ability to learn and flourish. We believe that only in a safe and supportive community can every student aspire to be their best self and achieve their full academic and personal potential.

This policy has been developed in consultation with students, staff, and parents and operates in line with our statutory duties under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Equality Act 2010, and the guidance outlined in **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026** and **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**.

2. Definition of Terms

What is Bullying?

Bullying is hurtful, threatening, or harmful behaviour, repeated over time, which involves an imbalance of power, making it difficult for the person being bullied to defend themselves. It can be carried out by an individual or a group and can take many forms:

- **Physical:** Hitting, kicking, pushing, or damaging belongings.
- **Verbal:** Name-calling, taunting, spreading rumours, or making offensive comments.
- **Emotional/Social:** Deliberately excluding someone, intimidation, or humiliation.
- **Cyber:** Using technology to harass, threaten, or target an individual

Bullying as Child-on-Child Abuse

We recognise that bullying is a form of child-on-child abuse. We will never dismiss incidents as ‘banter’ or ‘part of growing up’. Any situation where there is a concern that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm will be treated as a safeguarding issue and handled in line with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. This includes bullying that involves sexual harassment, sexual violence, or so-called "honour-based" abuse.

Prejudice-Based and Discriminatory Bullying

Bullying motivated by prejudice is unacceptable and will be challenged robustly. This includes bullying related to the **protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010**:

- Race, colour, or ethnic origin
- Religion or belief
- **Sex and Gender**
- **Sexual orientation (Homophobic, Biphobic)**
- **Gender reassignment (Transphobic)**
- **Disability** or Special Educational Needs (SEN)

All racist incidents will be recorded as such and addressed in line with our policies. We do not tolerate racial "banter" and aim to ensure all students understand that comments based on negative stereotypes are unacceptable.

Cyberbullying (Updated with Online Safety Act 2023)

Cyberbullying is the use of technology to bully an individual or group. This includes harassment via email, text messages, gaming sites, and social media platforms.

It is a criminal offence to send messages that are grossly offensive, indecent, or menacing under the **Malicious Communications Act 1988** and the **Communications Act 2003**. Furthermore, the **Online Safety Act 2023** places a greater duty of care on technology companies and reinforces the seriousness of harmful online communication. We educate all students on their responsibilities as digital citizens.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body

The Governors will support the Headmaster and staff in implementing this policy and will be kept fully informed on its effectiveness and any significant incidents.

The Headmaster & Senior Leadership Team

The Headmaster and SLT are responsible for the implementation and consistent application of this policy. The **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** holds ultimate responsibility for handling incidents that meet the threshold for a safeguarding concern, ensuring that correct procedures are followed.

Staff

All staff have a duty to be alert to signs of bullying and to act to prevent it. They are expected to:

- Promote a culture of respect and challenge prejudice-based language.
- Take all reports of bullying seriously and follow the procedures outlined in this policy.
- **Understand their safeguarding responsibilities and know when to escalate a concern to the DSL.**
- Model positive and respectful behaviour.

Parents & Carers

We ask parents and carers to work in partnership with us by:

- Watching for signs of bullying, such as a child becoming withdrawn, anxious, or refusing to go to school.
- Contacting their child's Form Tutor or Head of Year immediately if they suspect bullying.
- Reassuring their child that reporting bullying is the right thing to do and not to retaliate.
- Supporting the school's actions to resolve the issue.
- Work with School to set up devices with appropriate restrictions.

Students

Students are expected to:

- Respect each other and accept differences.
- **Never be a bystander.** Report any bullying they experience or witness to a trusted adult, such as a Form Tutor, Head of Year, Prefect, or via our confidential reporting system.
- Understand that reporting is not ‘snitching’ but an act of community responsibility that keeps everyone safe.

4. Procedures for Reporting and Responding

Reporting an Incident

Students are encouraged to report bullying to any member of staff they trust. This can be done in person (with a friend for support if needed) or through our online confidential reporting portal.

Investigation

1. **Listen & Reassure:** All reports will be taken seriously. The staff member will listen carefully and reassure the student that they have done the right thing.
2. **Record & Inform:** The incident will be reported to the relevant Head of Year, who will lead the investigation.
3. **Gather Information:** The Head of Year will interview everyone involved individually, including any witnesses, to establish a clear picture of events.
4. **Involve Parents:** The parents of all students directly involved will be informed that an investigation is underway and will be updated on the outcome.

Safeguarding Procedures

If at any point an allegation suggests that a child is suffering or is at risk of significant harm, the matter will be immediately referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The school’s child protection procedures will be followed, which may involve a referral to external agencies such as Children's Social Care or the police.

Confidentiality

We understand that students who report bullying may fear retaliation. We will make every effort to keep their report confidential from the person displaying the bullying behaviour.

5. Actions, Sanctions, and Support

Our response aims to stop the bullying, repair harm, and prevent recurrence. Actions will be tailored to each unique incident.

Sanctions

Sanctions will depend on the severity and persistence of the behaviour. They are aligned with our Behaviour Policy and a full list of sanctions can be found in the Behaviour Policy on the school website. In accordance

with the updated DfE Suspension and Exclusion Reason Codes (effective August 2026), specific category codes are utilised when recording suspensions or permanent exclusions related to bullying and misbehaviour.

Support for All Parties

- **For the person targeted:** We will offer immediate and ongoing support to restore their confidence and sense of safety. This includes regular check-ins to ensure the bullying has stopped.
- **For the person displaying bullying behaviour:** Our goal is to help them understand the impact of their actions and develop more positive behaviours. We will explore the underlying reasons for their behaviour (e.g., a desire for power, coping with anger, or having been bullied themselves) and offer strategies for change.

Restorative Approaches

Where appropriate, and with the agreement of all parties, we may use restorative approaches to repair relationships. This can range from a facilitated apology to a formal Restorative Justice meeting led by a trained member of staff.

6. Bullying Outside School Premises

While the school is not directly responsible for bullying that occurs off-site, we encourage students to report any incidents involving RGS students. Where appropriate, we will investigate and act as if it had happened in school, as our duty of care extends to ensuring students feel safe on their journey to and from school.

7. Training, Prevention, and Awareness

We are committed to proactively preventing bullying through:

- **Curriculum:** PSHE lessons, assemblies, and form time activities address bullying, online safety, and the importance of healthy relationships.
- **Staff Training:** All staff receive regular training on this policy, **the latest KCSIE 2026 and Working Together 2026 guidance, child-on-child abuse, and identifying different forms of bullying**.
- **Student Awareness:** We actively engage students through annual surveys, student voice groups, and participation in national Anti-Bullying Week.
- **Student Leadership:** Prefects are trained to be vigilant, to intervene where appropriate, and to report any concerns.

8. Monitoring and Review

The Assistant Headmaster (Pastoral) and DSL are responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy. Bullying incidents are logged and analysed to identify patterns or trends, which inform our preventative strategies. This policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier if necessitated by changes in legislation or guidance.

9. Appendix I:

Anti-Bullying Charter

Our Commitment to a Community Free from Bullying

Together we are building a school where everyone feels safe, valued and respected. Bullying, in any form, has no place here. This charter outlines our shared commitment to creating a positive and supportive environment for all.

Students:

- **Embrace Individuality:** We will respect and celebrate the differences that make each of us unique
- **Stand for Safety:** We all have the right to learn and grow in an environment free from fear and intimidation
- **Speak Up, Reach Out:** If we are being bullied or see it happening to someone else, we will confidently tell a trusted adult
- **Be an Ally:** We will act quickly and responsibly if we witness bullying, by informing a staff member and offering support to those affected
- **Expect Support:** We will trust that our peers and school staff will help us prevent and stop bullying.

Staff:

- **Vigilant & Approachable:** We will be attentive to signs of bullying and ensure students feel comfortable reporting concerns
- **Listen & Believe:** We will take every report of bullying seriously, treating each concern with respect and an open mind
- **Thorough & Fair Investigation:** We will investigate all reported incidents impartially and with sensitivity.
- **Swift & Effective Action:** We will act promptly to resolve bullying situations, utilizing proven strategies outlined in our Anti-Bullying Policy
- **Ongoing Support & Monitoring:** We will continue to monitor situations after they have been addressed to ensure lasting positive change.

Everyone: Our Shared Responsibility

- **United Against Bullying:** We will all take responsibility for reporting bullying and will work together constructively and fairly to resolve any incidents that occur.

Reporting Concerns:

Your voice matters. You can report bullying, or any other concern, through Tootoot. You can find this link in the Form Time Notices each day.