



Anti-Bullying Policy

September 2019 – September 2021

Riverbank Academy is an outstanding broad-spectrum special school for students aged 11-19 within the Sidney Stringer Multi-Academy Trust. Our safeguarding ethos is “beyond compliance”.

There is an absolute commitment at Riverbank to educate and safeguard all our students particularly in e-safety. We offer a fully inclusive environment and ensure everyone feels safe and happy irrespective of gender, disability, ethnicity and social, cultural or religious background. This is particularly relevant for our students with ASC where the school’s environment, staffing structure, assessment model and curriculum is tailored to meet individual needs.

With this in mind, we do not have one curriculum model, we have 164 curriculums that are designed around each individual. Through our policies and practice we aim to help all Riverbank students uphold the schools core values of being Motivated, Creative and Caring.

Rationale

Riverbank Academy is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our Academy, whether it is in the Academy or on off-site activities. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a **TELLING** Academy. This means that **anyone** who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

All members of the Academy - staff, students and parents - should have an understanding of what bullying is and what the Academy's procedures are for responding to bullying.

As an Academy we take bullying seriously. Students and parents should be assured that we do not tolerate bullying and that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

1. What Is Bullying?

1.1 Bullying is the use of deliberate aggression with the intention of hurting another person either physically and/or emotionally in a variety of ways. Bullying is persistent and results in pain and distress to the affected person.

1.2 Bullying can be:

- **emotional** - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures);
- **interference** with possessions;
- **physical** - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence;
- **racist** - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures;
- **sexual** - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments;
- **sexist** – controlling and/or demanding behaviour towards someone because of their sex;
- **homophobic** - because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality;
- **verbal** - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing because of appearance etc.;
- **cyber** - all areas of internet use, such as e-mail and internet chat room /social media misuse;
- **Mobile Phone** threats by text messaging & calls, misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities.

2. Why is it important to respond to bullying?

2.1 Bullying hurts. No one deserves to suffer from bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect.

2.2 We all have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

3. Signs and Symptoms

3.1 A Student may indicate by signs, words or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. To those who know the student this may simply be a feeling that 'things aren't quite right'. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a student:

- does not want to walk to and from the Academy;
- does not want to use public transport or the Academy bus;
- insists that they are driven to and from the Academy;
- changes their normal routine;
- begins to truant for no apparent reason;
- becomes withdrawn or displays a sudden lack of confidence;
- is reticent to speak to other peers or teachers;
- self-harms e.g. cutting or scratching;
- attempts or threatens to commit suicide;
- runs away from home;
- is upset at night and has displayed a disruptive sleep pattern, possibly linked with increased nightmares;
- is continuously complaining of feeling unwell in the morning and at school;
- displays a downturn in their academic standards;
- has possessions and clothes which are torn or damaged or go missing;
- asks for money or steals money (to pay bully);
- loses dinner money on a regular basis;
- has a sudden increase in bruises or cuts which the pupil finds difficult or is unwilling to explain;
- comes home hungry (money or lunch has been stolen);
- stops eating;
- suddenly displays unusual aggressive and disruptive behavior;
- starts to bully other peers or family siblings;
- is reticent or unwilling to talk about what is going wrong;
- displays a sudden reduction in their use of the mobile phone or internet chat rooms.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 The Principal/ Head Teacher

The Principal has a legal duty under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to draw up procedures to prevent bullying among students.

The Principal /Head Teacher will:

- ensure that all staff have an opportunity to discussing strategies and review them;
- determine the strategies and procedures;
- discuss development of the strategies with the Academy Leadership Team;
- ensure appropriate training is available;
- ensure that the procedures are brought to the attention of all staff, parents and students;
- report annually to the Academy Council.

4.2 Deputy Head teacher (Inclusion), supported by Assistant Head (Behaviour) will:

- be responsible for the day-to-day management of the policy and systems;
- ensure that there are positive strategies and procedures in place to help both those being bullied and the bullies;
- keep the Principal/HT teacher informed of incidents as appropriate
- arrange relevant staff training;
- determine how best to involve parents in the solution of individual problems;
- Report data to Headteacher/Principal and Governors termly.

4.3 Form Tutors will:

- be responsible for liaising with senior leaders over all incidents involving students in their form;
- be involved in any agreed strategy to achieve a solution.

4.5 What the Academy will do to prevent Bullying

We will ensure that everyone understands what bullying is and how to deal with it through:

- communication of this policy to parents, students, staff and governors;
- lessons, assemblies and PSHCE;
- induction programme for new students;
- regular reminders about kind, courteous and respectful behaviour in normal lessons and everyday activities within the Academy grounded in the Academy Values of Caring, Creativity and Motivation;
- publication of advice through Student Voice
- one to one counselling of victims and perpetrators

6. Anti-Bullying Procedures: Parents

6.1 If parents/carers suspect their child is being bullied they should contact the school. Parents should be prepared to talk about the signs and symptoms and any suspicions they have regarding those carrying out the bullying.

6.2 Parents must leave the initial investigation to the school. Any attempt to resolve the issue themselves could, potentially, make the matter worse.

6.3 Parents should encourage their child to talk to their tutor/LSA or another member of staff in the first instance.

7. Students

7.1 If a student thinks they are being bullied they must tell an adult, parent, form tutor or another member of staff and be prepared to explain what form the bullying is taking and how it affects them.

7.2 Students who witness bullying or strongly suspect bullying must tell an adult, parent or any member of staff.

8. Staff

In cases of reported or suspected bullying staff will:

- make it clear to students that bullying is unacceptable;
- teach students how to co-operate in controlling bullying e.g. posters, newsletters etc.;
- respond immediately if a student reports an incident of bullying by referring it to the student's tutor;
- **report on SIMS**
- discuss the incident with the victim and the bully together to resolve the situation if possible
- inform parents of the victim and the bully of the incident and the actions taken;
- meet with the parents of the victim and bully if necessary;
- exclude the bully if appropriate;
- refer the bully to the Governors if appropriate;
- involve the Police if appropriate;
- involve Social Care, if appropriate
- record all actions on **the schools individual bullying log**

- record on SIMS Behaviour Record of perpetrator
- try to make sure that the bullying is prevented by being vigilant and proactive on duty before and after school, at break and lunch time and during lesson changeovers;
- deploy strategies for improving the self-esteem of and offering care for the victim e.g. inter-agency work (Education Welfare Service), resolution meetings, rewards, listening and valuing what the victim says, giving direct access to Tutors,, providing opportunities for confidential conversations with the inclusion team;
- deploy strategies for changing the behaviour of the bully e.g. inter-agency work, resolution meetings, behaviour support plans, mentoring etc.;
- follow the normal procedures of the behaviour referral system unless there is a need for 'fast-track' action to help the victim or the bully.
- reassurance;
- the offer of continuous support with a designated member of staff;
- restoring self-esteem and self-confidence;
- referral to a Peer Mentor if appropriate;
- referral to a counsellor;
- the offer to parents of continuous support and advice;
- the provision of information about the outcome of the investigation into their concerns.

10. Students who have bullied will be helped by:

- discussing/communicating what happened;
- discovering why the student became involved;
- establishing the wrong-doing and the need for change;
- informing parents to help change the attitude of the student;
- referral to a counsellor.

Changing the attitude and behaviour of bullies will be part of the positive strategies used by the school. However, the school recognises that sanctions will also have to be used against bullies.

11. Sanctions

Students who have bullied will be punished appropriately according to their behaviour, in accordance with the Academy's 'Behaviour for learning' policy. For persistent offences or incidents considered as gross acts of aggression, a student may be permanently excluded and or reported to the police.

12. Complaints

If a parent or guardian is dissatisfied with the nature or swiftness of a response made by the Academy following a reported incident of bullying, he/she may wish to make a complaint. The complaints procedure for a case of bullying follows the guidance of the Academy's Complaints Policy. The underlying principle of the policy is that any concerns raised should be handled, if at all possible, without the need for formal procedures. If however the informal procedures are unsuccessful and the complainant wishes to take the matter further, formal measures will have to be taken.

13. Equal Opportunities

In implementing this policy all members of staff must take into account the Academy's Equal Opportunities policy. Staff must ensure that no student involved in any incident of bullying, is disadvantaged on the grounds of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief.

14. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Riverbank Multi Academy Trust will review this policy at least every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness.

Date for review – Sept 2021