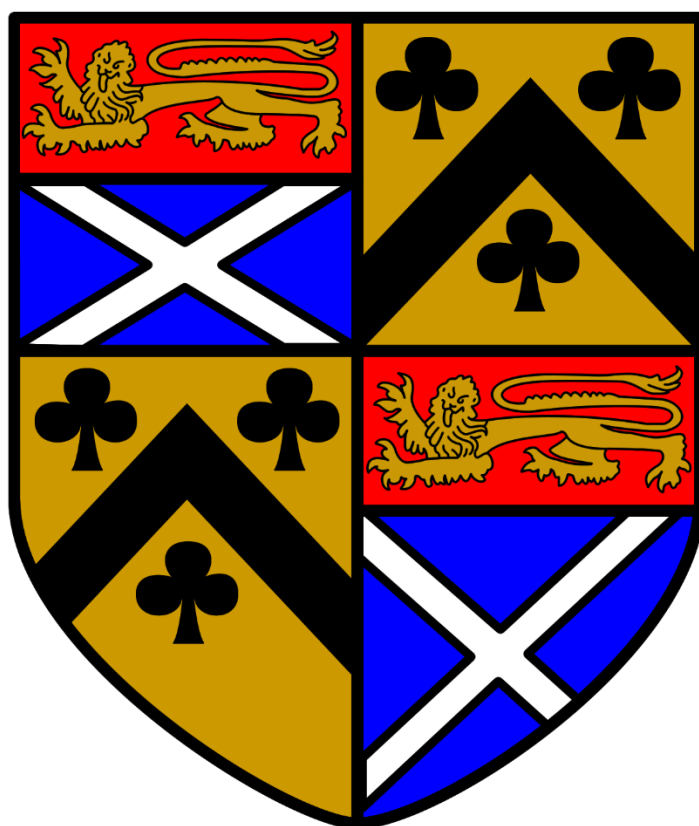


The Rochester Grammar School

Anti-Bullying Policy



This policy was adopted on	September 2025
The policy is to be reviewed on	September 2028

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Ethos

The anti-bullying policy at Rochester Grammar School is a statement of good practice. Alongside the Behaviour for Learning Policy, it provides an atmosphere that enables fulfilment of the school mission statement and provides an atmosphere conducive to learning. All members of the school are expected to help maintain this positive atmosphere by treating all others with respect and courtesy. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at RGS. If bullying does occur, students should feel able to discuss this with a member of staff and feel confident that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Aims

- To ensure all stakeholders have an understanding of bullying in all its forms and can differentiate between bullying and conflicts.
- To help students understand how their actions may be perceived as bullying by others.
- To provide students with models for assertive behaviour and resilience as a means to reduce the likelihood of a student being a victim of bullying.
- To ensure all students are clear about the actions they should take if they are bullied or observe bullying.
- To ensure all students have an understanding of actions that will be taken if they experience or are involved in a bullying incident.
- To provide clear procedures for staff to follow if they become aware of any bullying incident.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The Governing Body will establish, in consultation with the Principal, staff and parents, the policy for the prevention of bullying and keep it under review. It will ensure that it is communicated to parents and students, is non-discriminatory and that the expectations are clear. Governors will support the school in its prevention of bullying.
- All staff will be responsible for ensuring that the policy and procedures are followed and fairly and consistently applied.
- The Pastoral team is responsible for ensuring students know the types of bullying, can differentiate between bullying and conflicts and what to do if students are victims of bullying or observe incidents of bullying.
- All students are responsible for their own behaviour and by following the school Code of Conduct will ensure that bullying does not occur or, if they observe any incident, they will report it immediately to a member of staff.
- Sixth Form students can take on the role, after training, of a “Mentor” as a means of supporting students who have been bullied. They will also lead the schools Anti-Bullying group and report concerns to Assistant Head of House.
- Parents and carers are expected to take responsibility for the behaviour of their child both inside and outside the school. Parents must be aware of the use of mobile

phones, social media usage and AI as a means of bullying and hence the need to monitor the use of these.

The Context

Bullying does not occur on a large scale at RGS but the school recognises that it does occur from time to time.

During the school's most recent Ofsted inspection in January 2023, students reported that they felt safe in school and knew how to get help if they had any worries.

The school takes the prevention of bullying seriously. The PSHE programmes of study include sections on the types of bullying, assertive behaviour and how to respond to incidents of bullying.

The Definition of Bullying

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

Emotional	being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures etc.)
Physical	pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
Racist	racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, assumptions
Sexual	unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
Homophobic/transphobic	because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality/gender identity
Verbal	name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

Bullying is often carried out by a group rather than a single person.

Bullying is not the one-off, or thoughtless, comments or actions that can often occur. It is also not the conflicts that arise between students, especially during the break up of friendships. However, where these become repetitive or targeted – this would be deemed to be of a 'bullying' nature.

Signs and Symptoms

- A student may show signs or behaviour which indicate that she/he is being bullied. Staff, parents and students should be aware of these possible signs:
- The student
- Is frightened of travelling to or from school
- Changes her usual routine
- Is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- Regularly feels ill in the mornings
- Begins truanting
- Becomes more anxious or more withdrawn or more lacking in confidence
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Begins to do poorly in school work
- Comes home with torn clothing or damaged books
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Has possessions go “missing”
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- Has dinner money or other monies continually “lost”
- Comes home starving (money/lunch has been stolen)
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what is wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above.
- These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems but bullying should be considered as a possibility and should be investigated.

Procedures

Students and Students

If you are a victim of bullying:

- Tell a member of staff who you feel comfortable talking to or
- Use the Report It button on the school website
- Report through one of the worry QR codes
- The member of staff will report it to your Form Tutor or Head of Year.
- Your Form Tutor or Head of Year will talk to you and get all the details.
- Your Form Tutor or Head of Year will then talk to the accused person(s).
- Your Form Tutor or Head of Year **may** wish to talk to you and the girls accused of bullying together. Your wishes will be taken into consideration.

If you witness bullying:

- Report the incident as soon as possible to a teacher, member of the support staff or the school’s Designated Safeguarding Lead – Mr Lloyd.
- Students sometimes feel reluctant to pass on the information in case they are seen to be “snitching” but stopping bullying is the **right thing to do**.

- You will be asked for the details by your form teacher or Head of Year and these will be written down for reference.

If you take part in bullying:

- You will be caught and you will have to take the consequences of your actions.
- You will be interviewed by a teacher and the information could be passed on to your Head of Year or the Assistant Principal with responsibility for student behaviour.
- The consequences will depend on the severity of the bullying and length of time the bullying has been carried out for but you could lose the privilege of free time.
- You could do community service during lunchtime and break time; you could be kept in isolation; if the bullying has been severe you could receive an alternative provision or suspension from school. There will be a record of the incidents kept on your school file. Persistent bullying may lead to a permanent exclusion from school.
- You may be placed on an anti-bullying contract which will set out very clear expectations of you, and be monitored for an agreed period of time.

Mid-day supervisors and staff on Lunchtime Duty

- You need to be vigilant in the parts of school that have been highlighted as areas where bullying occurs i.e. in the school grounds followed by (in decreasing order) the corridors, the cloakrooms, dining hall and the toilets.
- You should be vigilant in the school grounds, particularly those areas that are not readily visible from the school building e.g. behind the gym, on the far side of the astroturf etc.
- If there are large groups of students blocking a corridor or cloakroom area you should use assertive discipline to move them outside of the school building.
- When students sit in the hall at lunchtime, do not allow them to bully others into moving although they may negotiate so that they are sitting with friends.
- Check the toilets frequently as you patrol.
- Check all empty classrooms as you patrol to ensure these are not being used.

Teachers

If bullying is reported to you:

- If the student is distressed try to calm them down and reassure them that the incident will be investigated.
- Listen to the information given.
- If the incident is minor i.e. a one-off or thoughtless, rather than deliberate or cruel comment or action and all parties are present it should be resolved there and then.
- Remember to listen to both sides.
- Make a note of the information given to you and the actions taken and pass this on to the Head of Year.
- This recording of incidents is vital, without this a student could be subjected to a great deal of bullying before we realise and take action.

Head of Year

- You should investigate by talking to both the “bully” and the “victim” with an open mind and take careful notes of the conversations.
- The conversations should be summarised and recorded either in Classcharts or through Safeguard (if behaviour is an example of child-on-child abuse).
- Professional judgement will need to be used to decide the next course of action.
- If the situation is arising from conflict between students rather than bullying of one student by another, you should aim to use a restorative justice or circle time approach with the HoY acting as facilitator.
- If bullying has taken place the bully must apologise to the victim.
- During the conversations try to notice what the triggers to the bullying were.
- You will need to arrange support for the victim and try to help her avoid the trigger behaviours if appropriate.
- You should try to make it clear to the bully why her/his behaviour was inappropriate and that she/he must take the consequences of her/his actions. This will need to be some sort of loss of free time e.g. community service during lunchtime and break time; isolation during break or lunchtime. The bully must be clear that it is her behaviour that is not liked and not her as a person.
- **If the bullying has been severe it should be reported to the Principal**, this degree of bullying could lead to suspension
- The bully may also need support in order to alter her behaviour pattern.
- If the bullying has been about a particular issue e.g. disfigurement, sexuality, the EXEL programme should be adjusted to cover the issue. This may be with a group of girls/boys, one form group or a year group.
- Explore whether the use of an anti-bullying contract for the perpetrator may be required. This will involve a very clear list of expectations and monitoring period.

Approaches to Conflict Resolution

Restorative Justice

This is a process whereby all those with a stake in the particular offence come together to resolve collectively how to deal with the aftermath of the offence and the implications for the future.

The aim is to get closure on the event so that the girls/boys can move forward.

The process seeks to include all those affected by the incident with their informed consent. It encourages effective and inclusive dialogue and seeks to achieve mutually acceptable outcomes. All parties are treated with respect which facilitates the participants to suggest and negotiate a satisfactory outcome.

Ground Rules

- The details of the discussion are confidential between the participants and should not be discussed outside the meeting. A record will be kept by the school.
- Language will be respectful

- Everyone will get a chance to have his/her say.
- While one person is talking the others will listen carefully and not interrupt.
- All will aim to understand the viewpoints of others; this does not mean everyone has to agree with that viewpoint.
- The participants are not there to judge people.
- Everyone present must aim to resolve the situation.

The Framework

- Arrange the seating so that everyone feels equal.
- Welcome everyone and thank them for agreeing to participate.
- Go through the ground rules with them.
- Make it clear that the aim of the meeting is not to judge anyone but to find a resolution to the situation that the incident has left.
- Give a summary of the incident that is the focus of the meeting, say that the meeting will provide an opportunity for each person to say how they were affected by the incident and ways to move forward from this incident to prevent other incidents from occurring.

The following questions can be put to the person who instigated the incident:

- Can you tell us in your own words what happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- How did you feel?
- What have been your thoughts since then?
- How have you felt since?
- How do you think others have been affected by what you did?
- Thank her for her contribution and tell her you will come back to her when the group has heard how her actions have affected others.

The following questions can be put to the others in the group, starting with the person who was harmed:

- What happened / how did you find out what happened?
- What did you think at the time?
- How did you feel at the time?
- What have been your thoughts since then?
- How have you felt since?
- Who else, do you think, has been affected by what you did?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?

The person who caused the incident should give a response to what she has heard by answering the following questions:

- You have listened to what everyone has said and heard how they have been affected by what you did and the harm that has been caused. Is there anything you want to say at this point? *(If an apology is offered it is essential that you as facilitator acknowledge that. If it was offered at an earlier point it should also be acknowledged here)*
- Do you see that the choice you made and what you did has caused harm?

- What do you think you could do to repair the damage?

You then need to move the group to the idea of reparation. Ask each person in the group apart from the instigator of the incident

- “What would you like to come out of this meeting?”

The instigator should then be asked

- “You have listened to what the others would like to see come out of this meeting (*give a summary of what each participant has said*); what would you like to see come out of this meeting?”
- “What do you think is the right and fair thing to do to repair the harm?”

You need to ensure that what is agreed is SMART. It is important that everyone is clear about what has been agreed and you will need to write out the agreement.

To close the session you should ask each person in turn how they feel about what has been said at the meeting. Everyone should have an opportunity to add anything they want to what has already been said.

The meeting should close with you thanking everyone for their participation and contribution.

Circle Time

This is similar but less formal. All those involved with the incident(s) can attend, each person has their say with the others listening and not interrupting. Everyone has their turn to speak. You will need to establish what each person would like to happen in the future.

Changing Behaviour

Students may need support to change their behaviour patterns to prevent repetition of the incident.

The victim may need Assertiveness Training or advice on how to establish friendships.

The bully may need advice on anger/aggression control and also Assertiveness Training to help her feel empowered without having to resort to aggression.

Incidents involving individuals external to the school setting

Where a student has been subject to unkind or bullying behaviours from an individual outside of the school community, the school in the first instance would aim to support the student and work to identify those involved. Where this is deemed to be another child in another school setting, we would make the decision as to what information may need to be passed on to their relevant school setting to ensure this can be followed up accordingly.

In the event that this involves an individual outside of any school setting, we would advise parents/carers that this should be pursued within either the relevant social media providers (if involving online content), or by contacting the police where any threats of harm or violence have been made/received.

Incidents involving Artificial Intelligence

Our school recognises the growing role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education and is committed to ensuring its use supports a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment. Students are expected to use AI tools appropriately and responsibly, only for educational purposes and in line with teacher guidance. Misuse of AI—such as generating harmful, misleading, or inappropriate content—is strictly prohibited. Using AI to engage in bullying, harassment, or to target others (e.g., creating fake messages, deepfakes, or offensive content) is considered a serious violation of our behaviour policy and will be dealt with accordingly. Any form of AI-assisted bullying will be treated with the same severity as traditional bullying. Students must not use AI to cheat or plagiarise, and all work should reflect their own effort unless collaboration is authorised. We aim to educate students on ethical AI use and promote digital citizenship in a rapidly changing technological world.

Behaviour Expectations:

- Students must not use AI to create or share harmful, offensive, or false content about others.
- Use of AI to impersonate, threaten, humiliate, or harass individuals is strictly forbidden.
- AI must not be used to generate inappropriate images, messages, or content that could cause distress or damage reputations.
- Students are expected to report any suspected misuse of AI for bullying purposes to a trusted adult.

All cases will be handled with sensitivity and fairness, prioritising student wellbeing and safety. Sanctions will be applied in line with our school behaviour policy based on the information we have presented to us regarding the nature of the concerns reported.

Incidents involving anonymously run social media accounts

The school takes all forms of bullying seriously, including cyberbullying through anonymous social media accounts. Creating, contributing to, or promoting anonymous online accounts intended to harass, intimidate, or bully others is a severe breach of our behaviour and safeguarding policies.

Behaviour Expectations:

- Students must not create or engage with anonymous social media accounts that are used to target or harm others.

- Sharing or commenting on posts from such accounts is considered complicity and will be treated accordingly.
- Bystanders are strongly encouraged to report any such accounts or content to a trusted adult or the school's behaviour/safeguarding team immediately.

The school will work with students, families, and (if necessary) external agencies (e.g. police, social media platforms) to identify individuals involved. Any such incidents will be followed up in line with our school behaviour for learning policy.

In cases involving threats, harassment, or defamation, police may be made aware.

All incidents will be logged and managed under the school's behaviour and safeguarding procedures. Support will be provided to those targeted, and all students will be reminded of their responsibility to uphold a kind and respectful online presence.