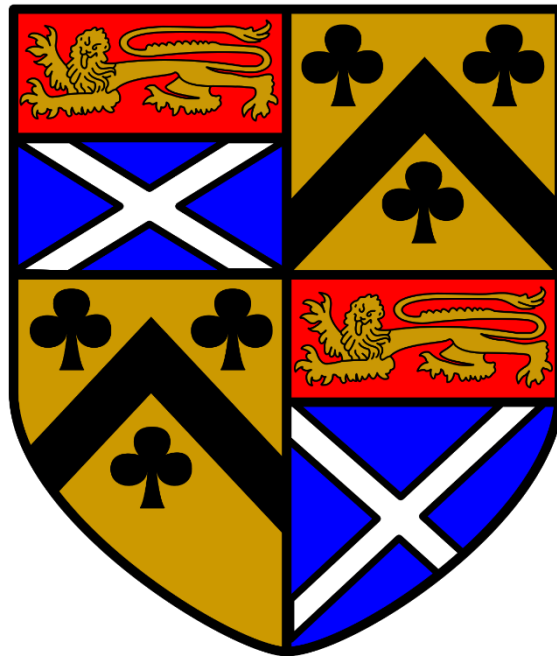


The Rochester Grammar School

Anti-Bullying Policy



This policy was adopted on	February 2024
The policy is to be reviewed on	February 2028

1. 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, pupils should feel able to discuss this with a member of staff and feel confident that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

2. Aims

- To ensure all stakeholders have an understanding of bullying in all its forms and can differentiate between bullying and conflicts.
- To help pupils understand how their actions may be perceived as bullying by others.
- To provide pupils with models for assertive behaviour and resilience as a means to reduce the likelihood of a pupil being a victim of bullying.
- To ensure all pupils are clear about the actions they should take if they are bullied or observe bullying.
- To ensure all pupils 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.

3. 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 pupils, 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 pupils know the types of bullying, can differentiate between bullying and conflicts and what to do if pupils are victims of bullying or observe incidents of bullying.
- All pupils 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 pupils 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 and social media usage as a means of bullying and hence the need to monitor the use of these.

4. 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 programme of study includes lessons on the types of bullying, assertive behaviour and how to respond to incidents of bullying.

5. 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 not the conflicts that arise between pupils, especially during the break up of friendships.

6. Signs and Symptoms

A pupil may show signs or behaviour which indicate that they are being bullied. Staff, parents and pupils should be aware of these possible signs.

The pupil could

- be frightened of travelling to or from school
- change their usual routine
- be unwilling to go to school
- regularly feel ill in the mornings

- begin truanting
- become more anxious, or more withdrawn, or lacking in confidence
- Attempt or threaten suicide, or run away
- begin to do poorly in school work
- come home with torn clothing or damaged books
- have unexplained cuts or bruises
- have possessions go “missing”
- ask for money, or start stealing money (to pay the bully)
- have dinner money or other monies continually “lost”
- come home hungry (money/lunch has been stolen)
- become aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- be bullying other children or siblings
- stop eating
- be frightened to say what is wrong
- give 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.

7. Procedures

Pupils and Students

If you are a victim of bullying:

- tell a member of staff who you feel comfortable talking to or
- report it using one of the worry boxes located around the school building or
- report it through one of the worry QR codes

The member of staff will report it to your Form Tutor/Head of Year.

Your Form Tutor/Head of Year will talk to you and get all the details.

Your Form Tutor/Head of Year will then talk to the accused person(s).

Your Form Tutor/Head of Year **may** wish to talk to you and the students 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 support staff or a member of the school’s Designated Safeguarding Lead – Mrs Eades.
- 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 Tutor/Head of Year and these will be written down for reference.

If you take part in bullying:

- There will be consequences for 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 pupil behaviour.
- The consequences will depend on the severity of the bullying and length of time the bullying. All sanctions will be issued in line with the school's Behaviour for Learning policy.
- 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 expectation of you , and will 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 may occur – 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, ensure a calm atmosphere in the dining hall.
- Check the toilets frequently.
- Check all empty classrooms to ensure these are not being used.

Teachers

If bullying is reported to you:

- If the pupil 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 pupil could be subjected to a great deal of bullying before we realise and take action.

Head of Year

If bullying is reported to you:

- You should investigate by talking to both the alleged bully and the victim with an open mind and take careful notes of the conversations.
- The conversations should be summarised and recorded in either Class Charts 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 pupils, rather than bullying of one pupil by another, you should aim to use a restorative justice or circle time approach with the Head of Year 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 them avoid the trigger behaviours if appropriate.
- You should try to make it clear to the bully why their behaviour was inappropriate and that they must accept the consequences of their actions. Sanctions will be issued in line with the school Behaviour for Learning policy. The bully must be clear that it is their behaviour that is not liked, and not them as a person.
- **If the bullying has been severe it should be reported to the Principal**, this degree of bullying could lead to Suspension or Permanent Exclusion.
- The bully may also need support in order to alter their behaviour pattern.
- If the bullying has been about a particular issue e.g. disfigurement, sexuality, the PSHE programme should be adjusted to cover the issue. This may be with a group of students, 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.

8. 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 students 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.

Restorative Justice 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 their 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.

Restorative Justice 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 them for their contribution and tell them you will come back to them when the group has heard how their 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 happened?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?

The person who caused the incident should give a response to what they have 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 clear to everyone present 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 to Restorative Justice 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

Pupils 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 them feel empowered without having to resort to aggression.