

Anti-Bullying Policy

Approved By	Chief Executive Officer	Date:	21/11/2025
Author	Director of Safeguarding and Attendance	Date:	01/11/2025
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1. Statement of Intent

1.1 Respect Collaboration Trust believes that all pupils are entitled to learn in a safe and supportive environment, free from all forms of bullying behaviour. Our commitment to Respect means treating every member of our community with dignity and fairness. We never give up on any child or young person, demonstrating Perseverance in our support. We promote Inclusivity by celebrating diversity and fostering positive learning environments. Safeguarding is central to our ethos, ensuring equal rights and protection for every pupil. Through Support, we create caring, stimulating spaces that nurture wellbeing and moral development. Collaboration across our schools ensures best practice is shared, and Accountability ensures all stakeholders uphold these values to maintain a culture of respect and safety. This policy outlines how instances of bullying are dealt with, including the procedures to prevent occurrences of bullying.

1.2 The Education and Inspections Act 2006 outlines several legal obligations regarding the school's response to bullying. Under section 89, schools must have measures in place to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures are part of the school's Behaviour Policy, which is communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents.

2. Legal framework

2.1 This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Communications Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Education Act 2011
- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education 2025'
- DCMS, DSIT, and UK Council for Internet Safety (2020) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'

2.2 This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- School Level Safeguarding Policy
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy
- Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy

3. Definitions

3.1 For the purpose of this policy, “bullying” is defined as persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group.

3.2 Bullying is generally characterised by:

- Repetition: Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over an extended period of time.
- Intent: The perpetrator means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
- Targeting: Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- Power imbalance: Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

3.3 Vulnerable pupils are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves.

3.4 Vulnerable pupils may include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils who are adopted.
- Pupils suffering from a health problem.
- Pupils with caring responsibilities.
- Pupils from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Pupils with certain characteristics are also more likely to be targets of bullying, including, but not limited to:
 - Pupils who are LGBTQ+ or perceived to be LGBTQ+.
 - Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) pupils.
 - Pupils with SEND.

3.5 Types of bullying

3.5.1 Many kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying, and bullying can be related to almost anything. Teasing another pupil because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, home life, culture, or SEND are some of the types of bullying that can occur.

3.5.2 Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:

- Verbal
- Physical
- Emotional
- Online (cyberbullying)
- Racist bullying: Bullying another person based on their ethnic background or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.
- Homophobic and biphobic bullying: Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

- Transphobic bullying: Bullying based on another person’s gender identity or gender presentation, or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.
- Sexist bullying: Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.
- Sexual bullying: Bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal or non-verbal sexual dimension or dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.
- Ableist bullying: Bullying behaviour that focusses on another person’s disability or support needs; this can include mocking the individual’s disability or their needs, using derogatory words or slurs in relation to an individual’s disability, or deliberately excluding an individual because of their disability.
- Prejudicial bullying: Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics or experiences, e.g. religion or mental health issues.
- Relational bullying: Bullying that primarily constitutes of excluding, isolating and ostracising someone – usually through verbal and emotional bullying.
- Socioeconomic bullying: Bullying based on prejudices against the perceived social status of the victim, including, but not limited to, their economic status, their parents’ occupations, their health or nutrition level, or the perceived “quality” of their clothing or belongings.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

At Respect Collaboration Trust and its schools, fostering a culture where bullying is not tolerated is a shared commitment. Every member of our communities contributes to an environment built on respect, inclusivity, and support. Our Headteachers champion these values, ensuring safe and welcoming spaces for all. Staff nurture perseverance and celebrate diversity in daily interactions, while pupils are empowered to speak up and work together, confident that their wellbeing is protected and their voices are heard.

4.1 Executive Leaders

Executive leaders within Respect Collaboration Trust play a pivotal role in shaping a culture where bullying is never tolerated. They set the strategic direction for safeguarding and wellbeing by:

- Set the strategic direction for safeguarding, wellbeing, and anti-bullying across the Trust.
- Embed the Trust’s values into every school’s ethos and practice.
- Oversee the consistent implementation of anti-bullying policies in all Trust schools.
- Monitor trends, outcomes, and the effectiveness of anti-bullying measures Trust-wide.
- Ensure staff are empowered and equipped to prevent and address bullying through training and support.
- Champion safe, positive environments where every pupil can thrive.

- Lead by example, promoting collaboration and visible leadership in the prevention of bullying.

4.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for shaping the culture and climate of their schools. Through leadership they set the tone for a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment where bullying is not tolerated and every pupil feels supported by:

- Reviewing and amending this policy, accounting for new legislation and government guidance, and using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in previous years to improve procedures.
- Keeping clear records of all reported incidents, including which type of bullying has occurred, to allow for proper analysis of the data collected.
- Analysing the data in the bullying record at termly intervals to identify trends, so that appropriate measures to tackle them can be implemented.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff members.
- Providing a point of contact for pupils and parents when more serious bullying incidents occur.

4.3 Teachers

Teachers are responsible for:

- Being alert to social dynamics in their class.
- Being available for pupils who wish to report bullying.
- Providing follow-up support after bullying incidents.
- Being alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and informing the pupil's heads of year of such observations.
- Refraining from stereotyping when dealing with bullying.
- Understanding the composition of pupil groups, showing sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying.
- Reporting any instances of bullying once they have been approached by a pupil for support.

4.4 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Informing their child's school if they have any concerns that their child is the victim of bullying or involving in bullying in anyway.
- Being watchful of their child's behaviour, attitude and characteristics and informing the relevant staff members of any changes.

4.5 Pupils

Pupils are responsible for:

- Informing a member of staff if they witness bullying or are a victim of bullying.
- Not making counter threats if they are victims of bullying.

- Walking away from dangerous situations and avoiding involving other pupils in incidents.
- Keeping evidence of cyberbullying and informing a member of staff should they fall victim to cyberbullying.

5. Statutory requirements

5.1 Trust Schools understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, it has a responsibility to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

5.2 The school understands that, under the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, it could have charges brought against it if it allows the rights of pupils to be breached by failing to take bullying seriously.

5.3 The Headteacher will ensure that this policy complies with the HRA; the Headteacher understands that they cannot do this without fully involving their teaching staff.

5.4 Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications may be considered criminal offences:

- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or in a way which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or contains information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.
- Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to the police include violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation, and hate crimes.

6. Prevention

6.1 At Respect Collaboration Trust, prevention is rooted in our core values. We promote Respect and Inclusivity through a whole-school commitment to addressing bullying. Staff receive training to uphold Safeguarding and Support, ensuring pupils feel safe and valued. Collaboration across our schools strengthens our approach, and accountability ensures consistent implementation of anti-bullying strategies.

6.2 The school will clearly communicate a whole-school commitment to addressing bullying and have a clear set of values and standards which will be regularly promoted across the whole school.

6.3 All members of the school will be made aware of this policy and their responsibilities in relation to it. All staff members will receive training on identifying and dealing with the different types of bullying.

6.4 The curriculum will explore and discuss issues at age-appropriate stages such as:

- Healthy and respectful relationships.
- Boundaries and consent.
- Stereotyping, prejudice and equality.
- Body confidence and self-esteem.
- How to recognise abusive relationships and coercive control.
- Harmful sexual behaviour, the concepts involved and why they are always unacceptable, and the laws relating to it.

6.5 Staff will encourage pupil cooperation and the development of interpersonal skills. Diversity, difference and respect for others will be promoted and celebrated through various lessons. Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills will be provided through participation in group activities.

6.6 The school will ensure potential perpetrators are given support as required, so their educational, emotional and social development is not negatively influenced by outside factors, e.g. mental health issues.

7. Signs of bullying

7.1 Staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil is a victim of bullying:

- Being frightened to travel to or from school
- Unwillingness to attend school
- Repeated or persistent absence from school
- Becoming anxious or lacking confidence
- Saying that they feel ill repeatedly
- Decreased involvement in school work
- Leaving school with torn clothes or damaged possessions
- Missing possessions
- Missing dinner money
- Asking for extra money or stealing
- Cuts or bruises
- Lack of appetite
- Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices
- Lack of eye contact
- Becoming short tempered
- Change in behaviour and attitude at home

7.2 Staff will be aware of the potential factors that may indicate a pupil is likely to exhibit bullying behaviours, including, but not limited to, the following:

- They have experienced mental health problems, which have led to them becoming more easily aggravated
- They have been the victim of abuse
- Responding to peer pressure or group dynamics
- Experiencing difficulties at home or in their personal life
- Struggling with low self-esteem or insecurity
- Wanting to fit in or avoid being bullied
- Misunderstanding differences or lacking empathy
- Acting out due to emotional or behavioural issues
- Influenced by negative role models or media

8. Staff principles

8.1 The school will ensure that prevention is a prominent aspect of its anti-bullying vision.

8.2 Staff will treat reports of bullying seriously and will not ignore signs of suspected bullying. Staff will act immediately when they become aware of a bullying incident. Unpleasantness from one pupil towards another will always be challenged and will never be ignored.

8.3 Staff will always respect pupils' privacy, and information about specific instances of bullying is not discussed with others, unless the pupil has given consent, or there is a safeguarding concern. If a member of staff believes a pupil is in danger, e.g. of being hurt, they will inform the DSL immediately.

8.4 Follow-up support will be given to both the victim and perpetrator in the months following an incident to ensure all bullying has stopped.

9. Child-on-child abuse

9.1 The school has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

9.2 At Respect Collaboration Trust, prevention is rooted in our core values. We promote Respect and Inclusivity through a whole school commitment to addressing bullying.

9.3 Staff receive training to uphold Safeguarding and Support, ensuring pupils feel safe and valued. Collaboration across our schools strengthens our approach, and Accountability ensures consistent implementation of anti-bullying strategies.

9.4 All staff will:

- Be aware that pupils of any age and gender are capable of abusing their peers.
- Be aware that abuse can occur inside and outside of school settings.

- Be aware of the scale of harassment or abuse, and that just because it is not being reported does not mean it is not happening.
- Take all instances of child-on-child abuse equally seriously regardless of the characteristics of the perpetrators or victims.
- Never tolerate abuse as “banter” or “part of growing up”, and will never justify sexual harassment, e.g. as “boys being boys”, as this can foster a culture of unacceptable behaviours and one that risks normalising abuse.
- Be aware that child-on-child abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting, sexual harassment and assault, and hazing or initiation-type violence.
- Always challenge any harmful physical behaviour that is sexual in nature, such as inappropriate touching. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.
- Sexual harassment in particular can take many forms, including but not limited to:
 - Telling sexual stories, making sexual remarks, or calling someone sexualised names.
 - Sexual “jokes” or taunting.
 - Deliberately brushing against someone.
 - Displaying images or video of a sexual nature.
 - Upskirting (this is a criminal offence).
 - Online sexual harassment, e.g. creating or sharing sexual imagery, sexual comments on social media, or sexual coercion or threats.

9.5 Pupils will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled, this includes the process for reporting concerns about friends or peers.

9.6 If a pupil has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral may be made to children’s social care services (CSCS) and potentially the police, where the DSL deems this appropriate in the circumstances.

9.7 All staff will be aware and sensitive towards the fact that pupils may not be ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused. Pupils being abused may feel embarrassed, humiliated, scared, or threatened.

10. Cyberbullying

10.1 Cyberbullying can take many forms and can go even further than face-to-face bullying by invading personal space and home life, and can target more than one person.

10.2 It can also take place across age groups and target pupils, staff and others, and may take place inside school, within the wider community, at home or when travelling. It can sometimes draw bystanders into being accessories.

10.3 Cyberbullying can include the following:

- Threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages
- Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips

- Disclosure of private sexual photographs or videos with the intent to cause distress
- Silent or abusive phone calls
- Using the victim's phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible
- Threatening or bullying emails, possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else's name
- Menacing or upsetting responses to someone in a chatroom
- Unpleasant messages sent via instant messaging
- Unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites, e.g. Facebook

NB. The above list is not exhaustive, and cyberbullying may take other forms.

10.4 The school has a zero-tolerance approach to cyberbullying. The school views cyberbullying with the same severity as any other form of bullying and will follow the sanctions set out in this policy if they become aware of any incidents.

10.5 All members of staff will understand the signs of cyberbullying, in order to identify pupils who may be experiencing issues and intervene effectively.

10.6 Many of the signs of cyberbullying will be similar to those found in the 'Signs of bullying' section of this policy; however, staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil is being cyberbullied:

- Avoiding use of the computer
- Being on their phone routinely
- Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages
- Staff will also be alert to the following signs which may indicate that a pupil is cyberbullying others:
 - Avoiding using the computer or turning off the screen when someone is near
 - Acting in a secretive manner when using the computer or mobile phone
 - Spending excessive amounts of time on the computer or mobile phone
 - Becoming upset or angry when the computer or mobile phone is taken away

10.7 During periods of remote education, all online learning will follow the procedures set out in the Remote Education Policy. The school will maintain regular contact with parents to reinforce online safety and explain filtering and monitoring processes.

10.8 Staff recognise that cyberbullying can differ from other forms of bullying, including its potential scale, anonymity, and persistence.

10.9 Pupils and staff are advised not to respond or retaliate to cyberbullying. Instead, incidents should be recorded (e.g. screenshots) and reported promptly to a trusted member of staff or the Headteacher for investigation and support.

10.10 Where offensive content is posted online, the targeted individual will be encouraged to use platform reporting mechanisms, and the school may request removal directly if appropriate.

10.11 Support will be provided to victims in line with this policy.

10.12 The school reserves the right to examine and delete files from pupils' personal devices, following statutory powers and the Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy.

11. Procedures

11.1 Minor incidents will be reported to a senior leader, who will investigate the incident, set appropriate sanctions for the perpetrator.

11.2 When investigating a bullying incident, the following procedures will be adopted:

- The victim, alleged perpetrator and witnesses are all interviewed separately by members of staff ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the pupils being interviewed, including electronic communication
- If a pupil is injured, members of staff take the pupil immediately to the school first aider for a medical opinion on the extent of their injuries
- If appropriate, the alleged perpetrator, the victim and witnesses are asked to write down details of the incident; this may need prompting with questions from the member of staff to obtain the full picture
- The Headteacher will gather evidence of a cyberbullying incident; this may involve text messages, emails, photos, etc. provided by the victim

11.3 Due to the potential for some specific forms of bullying to be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviour, staff members involved in dealing with the incident are required to consider whether there is a need for safeguarding processes to be implemented.

12. Sanctions

12.1 When bullying is confirmed, the Headteacher will apply appropriate consequences to address the behaviour and prevent further incidents. Sanctions may include restorative practices, or other measures suited to the situation. Parents will be informed of both the incident and the actions taken.

12.2 Where possible, reconciliation will be encouraged, with apologies offered if appropriate and only with the victim's consent. Disciplinary action will be balanced with support for all pupils involved, aiming to promote positive behaviour and wellbeing.

12.3 Exclusion will only be considered as a last resort, in accordance with the Suspension and Exclusion Policy. The school will continue to monitor and support pupils following an incident to help prevent recurrence and support rehabilitation.

13. Support

13.1 In the event of bullying, victims will be offered the following support:

- Emotional support and reassurance from the school staff

- Reassurance that it was right to report the incident and that appropriate action will be taken
- Liaison with their parents to ensure a continuous dialogue of support
- Advice not to retaliate or reply, but to keep the evidence and show or give it to their parent or a member of staff
- Advice on aspects of online safety, in the event of cyberbullying, to prevent re-occurrence, including, where appropriate, discussion with their parents to evaluate their online habits and age-appropriate advice on how the perpetrator might be blocked online
- Discussion with their parent on whether police action is required (except in serious cases of child exploitation or abuse where the police may be contacted without discussion with parents)

13.2 The Headteacher will consider whether it is appropriate to separate victims and perpetrators, for example by preventing them from sharing classes or spaces, and will address other harmful group dynamics as needed to prevent further incidents. Victims will be encouraged to broaden their friendship groups through lunchtime or after-school activities.

13.3 Staff, especially the DSL, will support victims in building resilience, such as through emotional therapy. The school recognises that bullying may indicate underlying mental health issues; perpetrators will attend mandatory counselling to address any emotional or wellbeing concerns, with further support provided as needed.

14. Bullying outside of school

14.1 Staff will remain aware that bullying can happen both in and outside of school, and will ensure that they understand how to respond to reports of bullying that occurred outside school in line with the school Safeguarding Policy.

14.2 The Headteacher has a specific statutory power to sanction pupils for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives the Headteacher the power to regulate pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises, and therefore, not under the lawful charge of a school staff member.

14.3 Teachers have the power to sanction pupils for misbehaving outside of the school premises. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, e.g. on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

14.4 Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted upon. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, members of staff can only sanction the pupil on school premises, or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the member of staff, e.g. on a school trip.

14.5 The Headteacher is responsible for determining whether it is appropriate to notify the police of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be of a criminal nature, or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will be informed.

15. Record Keeping

15.1 The DSL will ensure that robust records are kept with regard to all reported or otherwise uncovered incidents of bullying – this includes recording where decisions have been made, e.g. sanctions, support, escalation of a situation and resolutions.

15.2 The Headteacher and DSL will ensure that all decisions and actions recorded are reviewed on a regular basis for the purposes of:

- Identifying patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour on the part of certain pupils that may need to be handled, e.g. with pastoral support.
- Reflecting on whether cases could have been handled better and using these reflections to inform future practice.
- Considering whether there are wider cultural issues at play within the school, e.g. whether school culture facilitates discriminatory bullying by not adequately addressing instances and planning to mitigate this.
- Considering whether prevention strategies could be strengthened based on any patterns in the cases that arise.
- Responding to any complaints about how cases have been handled.

16. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

17. GDPR

Data will be processed to be in line with our requirements and protections set out in the UK General Data Protection Regulation, Data Protection Act as amended by the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.