



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



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Newcastle upon Tyne Royal Grammar School

Anti-bullying advice for students is provided in the student digital handbook, in the Student Team, on notices or posters and in lessons, assemblies etc. and follows the tenor of this policy, but in language appropriate to their age and situation.

Royal Grammar School Newcastle (RGS) adopts a strategic approach to preventing and tackling all forms of bullying and child-on-child abuse through open and varied communication with students, parents and staff, including frequent reminders that the school will not tolerate any form of bullying.

Bullying behaviour is different to a child being rude or being mean:

Rude behaviour	• inadvertently saying or doing something that hurts someone else • spontaneous, unplanned, thoughtless, inconsiderate
Mean behaviour	• purposefully saying or doing something to hurt someone once (or twice)
Bullying behaviour	• intentional behavior repeated over time, that involves an imbalance of power • intent to harm, lack of remorse, knowledge of impact

When the harmful activity is online (e.g. social media), a single action can have a repeated impact, so harmful and/or offensive behaviour online does not need to be repeated over time to constitute bullying.

Bullies usually intend harm to their victims, but an unintentionally harmful action can constitute bullying if its effects are sufficiently severe, and/or if the action is contrary to *common sense* and/or if it would have been reasonable to predict that the action would be likely to cause harm/offence.

Bullying has serious consequences that can be physical, emotional or psychological.

Bullying of any form **will not** be tolerated between anyone in our community. It is bullying to write notes, make phone calls, knowingly exclude and ostracize people, send electronic messages and pictures or create/post them on websites or social media if they might offend, hurt, annoy or worry anyone, intend to physically hurt someone, or use mean verbal comments, whether it is a student, teacher or someone else. From home, from school, from anywhere, it is still bullying. Digitally sending or posting a picture or video that hurts someone else or humiliates is bullying.

If the bullying occurs outside of school, be it online or out of school time, but the effects spill into our community and has an impact on our students during school time then we can regard this as a school matter and deal with it accordingly. Bullying can occur between two people who are in a personal relationship. This is a form of child on child abuse and will not be tolerated.

Any form of prejudiced-based and discriminatory bullying will not be tolerated, and will not be passed off as “banter” or “just having a laugh”.

The school works to promote the positive qualities of altruism, inclusivity, tolerance, respect and community spirit by means of consistent school-wide consideration of those values in assemblies, forms, tutor sets, PSHE, voluntary service, fundraising activities, and through our approach in and out of the classroom. The promotion of British values also has an important part to play in developing students' sense of tolerance and respect for diversity. The informal peer mentoring within tutor sets provides an especially positive environment in which to promote the community values of the school. In addition, school prefects, peer-supporters, anti-bullying ambassadors, sports captains and house captains all provide further opportunities to reinforce the RGS Ethos and to be a point of support for fellow students.

Staff are regularly reminded through staff training and weekly briefings about the principles and specifics of this policy. Staff are also supported by providing specialist advice to Heads of Year, teachers and students when dealing with bullying associated with special educational needs, psychological or mental disability, or in circumstances where individuals feel *out of their depth* (e.g. if uncomfortable when called to deal with bullying associated with LGBTQ+ students). Staff are encouraged to raise concerns regarding student relationships at the earliest opportunity and where possible before bullying has begun. They should inform a Head of Year (in the Senior School) or a member of the Leadership Team in the Junior School of their concerns. Information regarding past friendship and relationship issues are shared sensitively with staff in order to help develop a proactive culture to prevent bullying.

The school has a commitment to the emotional wellbeing of its students and staff and therefore openly acknowledges the physical and emotional seriousness of bullying which can lead to psychological damage. Assemblies, form and tutor time as well as PSHE lessons and wellbeing days all contribute to an approach which seeks to talk openly about bullying and therefore prevent it becoming a hidden problem. When bullying is discussed, students are reminded of the role of the bystander (including online) in bullying incidents and given strategies to help stop and to report bullying when they know of it.

The senior school encourages students to use the *Tootoot app*, where they can anonymously report concerns about themselves or others and begin a conversation to find support via a school-based mentor. In Junior School, students can use worry boxes positioned around school to report concerns about themselves or others. If these comments are anonymous, form teachers or the Assistant Head Pastoral monitor the situation and, where necessary, have a discrete conversation with students named to assess concerns in the notes.

Students in both junior and senior school are frequently reminded that they can turn to any trusted adult in school to share a concern about themselves or their peers. There is advice in the Student Team, and on displays around the school reminding students about who they can turn to and how they can contact someone. Advice about support within school and by agencies outside of school are available on the senior school Student Teams; in Junior School this information is provided through displays around school, in registrations, assemblies and PSHE lessons.

Regular wellbeing surveys are carried out in both junior and senior school. In senior school, this allows the student to share concerns about themselves or others in a discrete way.

Student Voice surveys are carried out regularly by surveying the students and/or through the School Council, to ascertain their views on bullying behaviour and psychological safety in the school community.

PEER SUPPORT:

We have a cohort of Sixth Formers designated as our Peer Supporters team, who serve as a point of support for students and visit forms at regular intervals to discuss a range of issues, bullying being one such issue.

Each form in Y7-11 has a form prefect who receives peer-support training, giving them basic listening skills and safeguarding knowledge to assist them in supporting members of their allocated form, and signposting them to further support if needed.

REPORTING BULLYING

It is the duty of everyone who sees an instance of bullying or potential bullying to act to stop it. This duty applies to all students, teachers and other members of staff. Staff and students are regularly reminded of the need to be vigilant for signs of bullying and of the requirement to report instances of bullying to the Form teacher, Heads of Year, Junior School Headmaster and the Assistant Head Pastoral (for incidences in the Junior School) and the Deputy Head Pastoral (for the

Senior School) who log the incidents on CPOMS. This is true for bullying in school, cyberbullying and bullying outside of school. The School strives to be proactive in identifying situations and occasions where bullying may occur and taking appropriate preventive action. Bullying can also be reported via the Tootoot app in senior school and worry boxes in junior school.

Bullying incidences are recorded/tagged centrally in the Junior and Senior Schools on CPOMS so that patterns of behaviour can be recognised and acted upon. Weekly pastoral briefings are used to share any contemporary concerns relating to bullying. Bullying incidences are reviewed termly and reported to governors in the termly safeguarding report.

Parents are encouraged to contact the school as soon as they are concerned, and the school provides advice to parents to help them identify and discuss bullying with their child.

The school takes all allegations of bullying seriously and will investigate each one as thoroughly as possible. The school will take the firmest action against any bullying, teasing, harassment or other form of behaviour that hurts or denigrates others for their appearance, maturity, immaturity, race, religion, culture, gender, sexual orientation, difference, particular needs or disability. Though in most cases of bullying, the school will seek ways of reconciling the bully and victim and help both to move forward, in severe and persistent cases it will not shrink from expulsion of the bully if necessary.

Governors are reported to on a termly basis as part of their termly safeguarding reports. The report includes a breakdown and analysis of all forms of child-on-child abuse, including incidents of sexual harassment and abuse, and any forms of prejudicial behaviour.

SUPPORT FOR THE STUDENT BEING BULLIED

The school will offer emotional support and reassure students that they have done the right thing in telling. The student will be asked for as much detail as possible about the incidences of bullying and if there were any witnesses. In some cases, students might be asked to keep a discreet log of events over the next few days to help pinpoint exactly what is happening to them. The student will be asked if they have told their parents and also if they want to talk to anyone else (e.g. school nurse or counsellor) about what is happening to them.

The school recognises that being a victim of bullying can have effects on a child long after the bullying has stopped, in particular in terms of low self-esteem and will continue to provide appropriate support when needed. Victims of bullying are brought to the attention of the School Doctor, Nurses and Counsellor so that they can support the student appropriately. In the Senior School, where there are separate Heads of Year, the background of students, particularly those who have been bullied or were themselves bullies is part of the transition handover discussions between Heads of Year and Form Supervisors. In Junior School, this information is part of the transition meeting between form teachers.

The school will also give advice to parents to help them support their child and discuss the issues at home. The school recognises that parents can be significantly affected by their child being bullied. Due to privacy requirements, the parents of the victim are unable to be told of the sanctions imposed on the child who bullied their child, and this has the potential to leave those parents with a sense that “justice” hasn’t been served. The Head of Year will check in with the parent at timely periods during and after the bullying incident to ensure the matter has been resolved and the parents feel they and their child have been supported.

INVESTIGATION

Usually the Form teacher (Junior School) or the Head of Year (Senior School) will lead an investigation into bullying behaviour by seeking confirmation of evidence from witnesses, CCTV (in accordance with the school’s *CCTV POLICY*) or other means. The evidence will then be presented to the alleged bully who will be asked to comment on the allegations. The victim’s parents will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation and the Deputy Head Pastoral of the Junior or Senior School will be informed. In most cases, the parents of the alleged bully will also be contacted as early as possible so that a full picture of the situation and possible issues surrounding it can be understood. DfE guidelines (2017) also reminds schools that misbehaviour which is criminal, or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, should be reported to the police.



PLEASE NOTE: any allegations of bullying raised against staff will be handled in the same way as any other allegations made against staff, following guidance in KCSIE and the school's Managing Allegations Policy and complaints procedures.

WORKING WITH THE BULLY AND APPLYING SANCTIONS

The aims of the sanctions are:

- To help the person harmed to feel safe again and be assured that the bullying will stop.
- To hold the perpetrator to account, getting them to recognise the harm caused and understand the impact of their actions.
- To educate the perpetrator to protect them from repeating the behaviour and risk exposing themselves to more serious consequences in the future.
- To demonstrate to the school community that bullying is unacceptable and that the School has effective ways of dealing with it, so deterring others from behaving similarly.

In applying sanctions, consideration will be given to the type and impact of bullying and the possibility that it was unintentional or was in retaliation. The specific circumstances of students with additional needs, for example ADHD or autism, will also be considered. The outcome will include helping the bully to recognise the consequence of their actions and providing support to enable the attitude and behaviour of the bully to change. Parents of the bully will be informed about sanctions imposed. The sanctions available are set out in the **BEHAVIOUR, REWARDS & SANCTIONS POLICY**.

Students who have bullied are also supported to help them to genuinely recognise their bullying behaviour and to integrate more positively into the school community. This might include some specific one to one help from a peer supporter, teacher, counsellor or safeguarding advisor. Work may also be undertaken to address issues within a friendship or year group.

Parents who are worried about bullying issues are always welcome to contact the Headmaster, the Head of the Junior School, Assistant Head Pastoral Junior School, Deputy Head Pastoral or any other member of staff about their concerns. Parents are given guidance about reporting and acting on bullying as part of their plenary sessions at parents' conferences and other pastoral parent events.

APPENDIX – BULLYING: DEFINITIONS

BULLYING MAY:

- Be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, spitting)
- Be verbal (e.g. teasing, spreading rumours)
- Be indirect (e.g. excluding someone by not talking to them or leaving them out of a group)
- Be manipulative or coercive (e.g. getting someone else to tease or hit someone)
- Involve complicity in someone else's action (e.g. as a bystander who looks the other way)
- Take place in cyberspace, on social network sites, gaming forums, use of AI generated content, or by sending text/voicemail messages.

Bullying is often hidden. It may involve actions or comments that are prejudiced or discriminatory, for example, racist, sexist, homophobic, or which focus on disabilities. It can focus on someone's gender, religion or culture, make fun of someone because they have special educational needs, or because someone's family circumstances appear unusual, for example they are a carer. It can happen anywhere and at any time.

PHYSICAL BULLYING MAY INVOLVE:

- Hitting or kicking someone
- Jostling, bumping, pushing someone
- Spitting at someone
- Invading someone's body space
- Physically humiliating someone (e.g. by *de-bagging* them)
- Taking, damaging or hiding someone's property
- Invading someone's work space or locker.
- Threats of violence

VERBAL BULLYING MAY INVOLVE:

- Spoken comments
- Written notes
- Emails or text messages
- Improper use of Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook and similar social media
- Phone calls
- The defacing of notices
- Name-calling, spreading rumours, publicly blaming someone for something they haven't done
- Circulating unflattering drawings or photographic images of someone, or AI generated content.

INDIRECT OR MANIPULATIVE BULLYING MAY INVOLVE:

- Ostracising a fellow student by refusing to sit alongside him/her in class, in the dining hall, etc. (or by moving away when he/she comes and sits down).
- The manipulation of social networks to exclude, marginalise or intimidate individuals.
- Publishing photographs or images of someone that are intended to invite mockery or gossip.
- Encouraging others to become the agents of physical or verbal bullying against one's intended victim.

PREJUDICIAL BULLYING, SUCH AS CHARACTERISED BY RACISM, SEXISM, HOMOPHOBIA AND THE EXPLOITATION OF DISABILITY MAY INVOLVE:

- Spoken comments, phone calls, electronic messages or written notes about someone (their friends or a member of their family), or about some group of students.
 - Emails, web postings or text messages about someone (their friends or a member of their family), or about some group of students.
 - The defacing of notices with snide remarks about someone (their friends or a member of their family), or about some group of students.
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SEXUAL BULLYING MAY INVOLVE:

- Bullying that seeks to hurt people by drawing attention to their body shape, hair colour, manner of dress, alleged sexual attractiveness (or lack of it), close friendships (or the absence of intimate relationships in an individual's life). This is a form of sexual harassment.
- Physical action of a sexually intimidating nature (by the invasion of body space, inappropriate touching). This is a form of sexual harassment or sexual assault.
- Spreading rumours about an individual's lifestyle (or the lifestyle of a close friend or relative). This is a form of sexual harassment.
- Spoken comments, written notes, emails, web postings, text messages, phone calls about someone (their friends or a member of their family), or about some group of students. This is a form of sexual harassment.

MISOGYNY AND HARMFUL SEXUALISED BEHAVIOUR

- Whilst misogynistic attitudes and behaviours may not always meet the threshold for bullying behaviour, it is non-the-less intolerable and is treated very seriously in our community. As a school we recognize the link between misogynistic behaviour and attitudes, and harmful sexualised behaviour, and will adopt a professionally curious approach to any form of misogynistic behaviour with this in mind. See Appendix H and I of the Safeguarding Policy for our Child on Child Abuse Policy, and the Harmful Sexual Behaviours procedure, accordingly.
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BULLYING FOCUSED ON RELIGION, CULTURE OR FAMILY BACKGROUND MAY INVOLVE:

- Spoken comments, written notes, emails, web postings or text messages that highlight an individual's religion or culture with the purpose of mocking them for cultural or religious difference.
 - Pejorative religious or cultural descriptors.
 - Gossip about an individual's family circumstances, spreading stories about (for example) his/her being adopted, a parent in a same-sex relationship, a relation in the news for negative reasons.
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ELECTRONIC OR CYBERBULLYING MAY INVOLVE:

- Sending abusive, insulting or malicious text messages or emails
- Posting abusive or malicious messages on websites, using blogs, online or personal polling sites, etc.
- Posting on a social network site facts or photographs/images of someone with the intention to embarrass or belittle them in the eyes of others. This includes content that has used artificial intelligence.
- Malicious use of AI to generate, adapt and / or alter images or video of an individual, with the intention to cause upset and harm

- Indulging in malicious or spiteful conversations in chat-rooms
- Spreading abuse, malice or scurrilous gossip by other electronic means
- Hacking into social networking sites and removing personal material
- Filming fights or assaults (e.g. *happy slapping* clips) using mobile phone networks or other networks
- Making repeated silent calls to a mobile phone or leaving abusive messages on voicemail
- Using a pseudonym or someone else's telephone or email account for anonymity when indulging in bullying.

Children may attempt to justify much of this type of behaviour as a practical joke rather than as bullying. This misconception of such activity is not acceptable. In circumstances where bullying actions involve hacking into the computer of another person or some other action by which the bully adopts a different identity online, that act of deception will be judged to compound the significance of the bullying activity. Similarly, online bullying activity that is done anonymously will be judged with greater severity.

CONSENSUAL AND NON-CONSENSUAL SHARING OF SELF-GENERATED INTIMATE IMAGES & VIDEOS, and AI-GENERATED IMAGES & VIDEOS (YOUTH PRODUCED SEXUAL IMAGERY OR SEXTING)

This term is given to the practice of sharing sexually explicit images or text. It is increasingly regarded as commonplace in our culture by many people and perceived by many young people as a natural part of how they communicate with their peers. However, **WHERE SCHOOL STUDENTS UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE ARE INVOLVED THIS PRACTICE IS ILLEGAL AS IT IS THE GENERATION OF INDECENT IMAGES OF CHILDREN.**

The School's response to incidences of sexting is based on UKCCIS Guidance 2017 and explained in the **ANTI-CYBERBULLYING POLICY** and in the **SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY, APPENDIX H: APPROACH TO CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE.**

Students are also taught that:

- Sending someone your sexualised image when unsolicited, when you are under 18 and regardless of the intent, is a form of sexual harassment and regarded as bullying – it is an action with threatening character because the recipient did not request it, the action could cause anxiety and upset, and the recipient could face severe legal consequences.
- Passing on a sexualised image of any other person under 18 a form of sexual harassment and regarded as bullying – it is an action that threatens the recipient and one that demeans the person pictured. It is an illegal act, and an action that can cause high levels of upset and anxiety.

The consequences of sexting can be serious for the student(s) involved. It is illegal in the UK to publish, download or forward on a sexual image of someone under 18 even when it is the child (themselves) who created and posted the material online.

CHILD PROTECTION

Bullying that is so extreme that a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm is a Child Protection concern and will be reported as such.

SIGNS OF BULLYING

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. Parents and staff should be aware of these possible signs and they should investigate if a child:

- Is unwilling to come to school
- Becomes withdrawn or anxious as a weekend or holiday draws to a close
- Expresses anxiety about their appearance (hair colour, body shape, clothing etc.)
- Changes established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons or support of a local football team, changing their accent or vocabulary)
- Has possessions which go missing or returns home with clothes or books damaged
- Asks for significant increases in pocket money they have been given
- Begins to do poorly in school work
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Becomes excessively eager to please
- Is bullying siblings or other children
- Exhibits diminishing levels of self-confidence
- Chooses the company of adults in preference to that of peers
- Displays repressed body language and poor eye-contact
- Begins stammering or truanting
- Shows reduced interest in personal hygiene or grooming
- Complains of headaches or stomach cramps
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Has difficulty sleeping or experiences nightmares
- Runs away or talks of suicide.

This policy summarises the RGS approach and should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- The RGS Ethos
- Safeguarding policy (& appendix H: Child On child abuse policy, & Appendix I: Harmful Sexualised Behaviours)
- Anti-cyberbullying policy
- Behaviour, rewards and sanctions policy
- Equal opportunities and race equality policy
- Complaints policy
- PSHE scheme of work
- Mobile Phone Policy

And has regard to the following:

- Public Order Act 1986
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Children Act 1989
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Communications Act 2003
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (DFE guidance 2017)
- Supporting Children and Young People who are bullied, advice for schools (DFE guidance 2014)
- Part Five: Keeping Children Safe in Education



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