Anti-Bullying Policy

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		Applicable Services:	Education
Contributors	Rob Arrowsmith		
Mandatory Policy	Yes		
Note	This policy must not be amended without prior approval of the Education Director		

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1. Supporting Documents

- Behaviour Policy (EDU.POL.027)
- Safeguarding Policy (EDE.POL.002)
- Mobile Phone Policy (EDU.POL.040) and Online Safety Policy (EDU.POL.009)
- Curriculum, SMSC and Fundamental British Values Policy (EDU.POL.008), and PSHE & RSHE Policy (EDE.POL.003)
- SEND Policy (EDU.POL.022)

Related policies are held within RADAR in the School's policy folder.

2. Introduction

At Rivacre Brook School, every pupil has the right to learn and grow in a safe place, free from bullying. Many of our pupils have experienced trauma, exclusion or instability, and bullying can deepen those wounds. We are committed to challenging bullying in all its forms and to building a culture of respect, empathy and inclusion.

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This policy sets out how we prevent bullying, how we respond when it happens, and how we support everyone involved. It is part of how we keep pupils safe and how we promote mutual respect and tolerance across the school.

3. Aim & Scope

This policy applies to all staff, governors, pupils, parents and carers, and visitors at Rivacre Brook. It aims to:

- Prevent bullying and build a culture of respect and inclusion.
- Make sure everyone can recognise bullying and knows how to report it.
- Respond quickly, fairly and supportively when bullying happens.
- Support the pupil who has been bullied and help the pupil who has bullied to change their behaviour.
- Record, monitor and learn from bullying so our prevention keeps improving.

4. Abbreviations and Definitions

Bullying. Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another person physically or emotionally. It often involves a misuse of power. A one-off incident can also be serious and is dealt with under this policy.

Bullying can take many forms, including:

- Physical, for example hitting, kicking or taking belongings.
- Verbal, for example name-calling, insults or threats.
- Emotional or social, for example leaving someone out, humiliating them or spreading rumours.
- Prejudice-based, targeting race, religion, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or another characteristic.
- Cyberbullying, for example abuse, threats or exclusion through phones, messaging, social media, games or other online platforms.

Child-on-child abuse. Some bullying is also child-on-child abuse and is dealt with through our safeguarding procedures. This includes sexual violence and sexual harassment, sexualised language, the sharing of nude or semi-nude images, misogyny and other prejudice, and the creation or sharing of AI-generated or faked sexual images, sometimes called deepfakes.

5. Policy Content

5.1 Principles and Approach

Our approach rests on the following principles:

<u>Every pupil safe</u>

No pupil should have to put up with bullying, and every report is taken seriously.

<u>Relational and trauma-informed</u>

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We understand behaviour as communication and respond in line with the Keys Connect model, using restorative approaches.

Address behaviour, not labels

We are clear that bullying is wrong, while supporting the pupil who has bullied to understand the harm and change, rather than labelling the child.

Positive norms

We use language that does not normalise harmful behaviour or stigmatise any group, and we model the respect we expect.

Partnership

We work with pupils, families and other agencies to keep pupils safe.

5.2 Anti-Bullying in Practice

Preventing bullying

- We build a culture of respect, inclusion and positive relationships.
- We teach empathy, difference and online safety through PSHE, relationships education and tutor time.
- We identify and supervise the times and places where bullying is more likely.
- We encourage pupils and staff to speak out, and we act when they do.

Recognising bullying

Staff stay alert to possible signs of bullying, for example a pupil becoming withdrawn or anxious, a change in mood or behaviour, unexplained injuries, a drop in attendance or progress, self-harm, or a pupil starting to bully others. Signs can be subtle in pupils with complex needs, so staff notice and ask.

Reporting bullying

Pupils can report bullying to any trusted adult, and we provide safe and accessible ways to report, including confidential reporting channels and, where appropriate, anonymous reporting mechanisms. We make sure pupils know how to report and that they will be listened to.

Responding to bullying

- We take every report seriously and act quickly.
- We support the pupil who has been bullied with reassurance and practical help.
- We address the behaviour of the pupil who has bullied through restorative conversations and, where needed, proportionate consequences.
- We keep in contact with parents and carers, and we follow up to check the bullying has stopped.

Support and consequences

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Consequences are proportionate and aim to change behaviour. They may include restorative meetings, loss of privileges, increased supervision and parental involvement, and as a last resort suspension in line with the Behaviour Policy (EDU.POL.027). We also provide support to both pupils, and we make a safeguarding referral or seek multi-agency help where it is needed.

Cyberbullying and online bullying

We treat bullying through phones and online with the same seriousness as any other bullying. We work with pupils and families to prevent it, respond to it, and keep evidence. Staff conduct relating to mobile phones and pupils' use of devices is addressed within the Mobile Phone and Online Safety policies (EDU.POL.009).

Bullying off-site and online

Bullying that happens away from school, including online and on the way to and from school, is treated with the same seriousness. We investigate and take appropriate action so far as is reasonable, and we work with parents, carers and other agencies where needed.

Bullying as a safeguarding concern

Where bullying raises a safeguarding concern, including any child-on-child abuse, staff report it to the designated safeguarding lead immediately. It is recorded on CPOMS, risk assessments are reviewed, and we follow our Safeguarding policy (EDE.POL.002). Child-on-child abuse is never dismissed as banter or part of growing up.

5.3 Recording, Monitoring and Reporting

Bullying incidents are recorded on CPOMS, and the reporting form, restorative template and parent letter are held on Tutorshare. Leaders analyse bullying data, including by pupil group such as pupils with SEND, to spot trends and target prevention, and report to the proprietor and governors.

5.4 Equality and Inclusion

At Rivacre Brook, this policy is applied fairly and without discrimination, in line with the Equality Act 2010. We robustly challenge prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying linked to any protected characteristic, and we monitor whether any group is more affected so we can act. Anti-bullying is one of the clearest ways we promote mutual respect and tolerance across the school.

Bullying incidents involving protected characteristics will be recorded and analysed separately to identify patterns, trends and required actions.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Pupils

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Treat others with respect, speak out if they see or experience bullying, and support one another.

6.2 Staff

Model respect, stay alert to the signs of bullying, act on every concern promptly, record incidents, and support both the pupil who has been bullied and the pupil who has bullied.

6.3 Leadership and the designated safeguarding lead

Leadership at Rivacre Brook make sure this policy works in practice, that staff are trained, and that bullying data is analysed and acted on. The designated safeguarding lead leads on any bullying that is also a safeguarding concern.

6.4 Governance

The proprietor and governors at Rivacre Brook hold the school to account for an effective anti-bullying strategy and review the impact of this policy.

6.5 Parents and carers

Tell the school if they are worried about bullying, and work with the school to resolve concerns.

6.6 Named leads

The designated safeguarding lead at Rivacre Brook is Sally Connah.

7. Training Requirements

All staff at Rivacre Brook are trained in recognising and responding to bullying, in trauma-informed and restorative practice, and in child-on-child abuse, with annual refreshers. Training is updated in response to emerging issues, for example cyberbullying, misogyny and AI-generated images.

8. Equality Impact Statement

All policies will be developed and implemented in a manner that promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring fair and equitable treatment for all individuals. Policies must align with relevant equality legislation and reflect the expectations and standards set by our regulatory bodies. They will demonstrate a commitment to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering an inclusive environment that respects and values the diverse needs, backgrounds, and experiences of those we support, as well as our workforce.

9. Sources of Information / References

This policy reflects current statutory guidance and legislation, including:

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, standard 10, which requires an effective strategy to prevent bullying so far as reasonably practicable.

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- Preventing and tackling bullying (DfE, 2017).
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025, and 2026 from 1 September 2026), including child-on-child abuse.
- The Equality Act 2010, including prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying linked to protected characteristics.
- Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, including the power to regulate pupils' conduct beyond the school gate.
- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.
- The Online Safety Act 2023, relevant to online bullying and harms.

10. Version Control

This document can also be found in Radar. This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or statutory guidance changes. The next review date and version history are recorded in the control table above. The named owner for review at Rivacre Brook is the headteacher.

11. Appendices

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11.1 Appendix A: School-Specific Annex

At Rivacre Brook, the following local arrangements apply:

Designated safeguarding lead and deputy:
Designated Safeguarding Lead: Sally Connah
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Pio Villar Sevillano
Please Note- All School Leaders are Level 3 Safeguarding trained.

Local authority safeguarding team and other key contacts:

- Cheshire West and Chester:
  -Integrated Access and Referral Team (iART): 0300 123 7047
  -Emergency Duty Team (Out of Hours): 01244 977277
  -Cheshire Police: 101 (non-emergency) / 999 (emergency)
  - Rivacre Brook's Police Liaison Office: Jamie Hodgkinson (email: Jamie.Hodgkinson@cheshire.police.uk)

- Wirral:
  -Integrated Front Door (IFD): 0151 606 2008
  -Emergency Duty Team (Out of Hours): 0151 677 6557
  -Merseyside Police: 101 (non-emergency) / 999 (emergency)

- Halton:
  -Integrated Contact and Referral Team (iCART): 0303 333 4302
  -Emergency Duty Team (Out of Hours): 0345 050 0148

- Other Support for Children and Families
  NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000
  Childline: 0800 1111

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will liaise with relevant agencies where bullying incidents present safeguarding concerns or where additional support and intervention are required to protect a child or young person. Staff should report all bullying concerns in accordance with the school's safeguarding and behaviour procedures.

- **How pupils report bullying at this school, including any anonymous route:**
- Pupils are encouraged to report any bullying concerns as soon as possible. Reports can be made to any trusted member of staff, including a class teacher, teaching assistants, headteacher, pastoral lead, SENCo or the designated safeguarding lead.
- Pupils may also ask a friend, parent or carer to report concerns on their behalf if they do not feel comfortable speaking to staff directly. Pupils can also report bullying indirectly by accessing their school email address and contacting staff this way if they wish to do so.

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- All reports of bullying will be taken seriously. Staff will listen carefully, reassure the pupil that they have done the right thing by speaking up, and record the concern in accordance with the school's procedures. Incidents will be investigated promptly, with all parties being given the opportunity to share their account. Appropriate action and support will be put in place for those involved, and parents/carers will be informed where appropriate. The school will monitor the situation and follow up to ensure that the bullying has stopped and that pupils feel safe and supported. Where bullying raises safeguarding concerns, the matter will be referred to the designated safeguarding lead and managed in line with the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures.

- **Local enrichment or peer support that builds a respectful culture:**
- Rivacre Brook is committed to promoting a culture of respect, kindness and inclusion. Bullying prevention is embedded through the curriculum, pastoral sessions, and enrichment activities.
- Pupils participate in SMSC days and themed events which celebrate diversity, different cultures, faiths, backgrounds and communities from around the world. These opportunities encourage pupils to develop an understanding of, and respect for, individual differences and help to challenge stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination.
- Through PSHE lessons, pupil voice activities and wider enrichment opportunities, pupils are taught about respectful relationships, equality, inclusion and the importance of treating others with dignity and respect. Staff actively promote the school's values and challenge any behaviour or language that is discriminatory, unkind or hurtful.
- The school believes that creating a trauma-informed, inclusive environment helps pupils feel safe, valued and respected, and reduces the likelihood of bullying occurring.

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