River Bank
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Anti-Bullying Policy

River Bank Primary School

November 2026

Introduction & Rationale

At River Bank Primary School, we are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful environment in which all members of the school community can thrive. We are opposed to bullying of any kind and will take necessary steps to prevent, challenge and address bullying involving pupils, staff and the wider community.

We aim to foster an ethos where children can learn without fear, feel valued and respected, develop positive relationships, and achieve their full potential. Our approach is both preventative and proactive, promoting a culture of kindness, acceptance and mutual respect. We believe that all children have the right to learn in an environment free from bullying, discrimination and harassment, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender identity, appearance or culture.

At River Bank; we believe 'Kindness is King'.

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, there is an increased emphasis on recognising and addressing child-on-child abuse. All staff should understand that children are capable of abusing their peers and that such behaviour should never be tolerated or dismissed as "banter", "harmless fun" or "part of growing up". Abuse is abuse and must be treated seriously. It is essential that clear procedures are in place to identify, respond and support victims of child-on-child abuse.

This policy should be read in conjunction with and with reference to: Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Child on Child Abuse Policy and Attendance and Punctuality Policy.

The Nature of Bullying

We recognise that many children will experience conflict ion their relationships with other children and as a school we are committed to developing empathy and the skills to manage relationships in a peaceful way that does not harm others.

Bullying behaviour can take many forms and as a result it can be very difficult to identify. The Anti-Bullying Alliance defines it as being:

"The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face to face or online."

Types of bullying behaviour:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, threatening behaviour
- Verbal - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, use of derogatory language
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Extortion - demanding money/goods with threats
- Online – use of social media, messaging and calls. Misuse of associated technology e.g

photos and videos.
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact, sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic or biphobic - bullying because of sexuality or perceived sexuality
- Transphobic – because of gender identity or perceived gender identity

Bullying is unacceptable. Our school will respond promptly and effectively to reported incidents of bully.

Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

As many victims of bullying are reluctant to speak to an adult about their situation, it is important that all adults in school watch for signs which may indicate that problems exist.

We recognise that some children may show no obvious signs of bullying. Staff should sensitively explore concerns and consider other explanations, including safeguarding needs. The type of behaviour that might be an indication of bullying includes:

- a reluctance to attend school and are often absent.
- being more anxious and insecure than others.
- becoming withdrawn.
- having fewer friends or withdrawn from friendships
- often feeling unhappy and lonely.
- suffering a drop in standards of school work/not working to potential.
- suffering from low self-esteem and negative self-image, looking upon themselves as failures
- changes in eating habits, including a loss of appetite
- having nightmares.
- having unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts/physical injuries.
- starting to steal or "losing" money and possessions.
- a reluctance to go out at playtimes, asking for jobs or feigning illness.
- asking to be sent home early or hanging around school in order to leave late.
- easily upset.
- displaying detrimental behaviours

Reporting bullying

In our school, pupils are encouraged to talk to staff when they are unhappy or have concerns. Pupils understand that they have a right to feel safe and be safe and a responsibility to support others to feel and be safe. Pupils are encouraged to report bullying to:
- a trusted adult
- their class teacher/TA
- peer mentors, buddies or anti-bullying leaders

Pupils have access to worry boxes in all classrooms and an online 'worry box', where they can share their concerns if they do not feel confident speaking directly to an adult.

Parents are also encouraged to report concerns and bullying to the class teacher in the first instance.

Dealing with a Bullying Incident

In dealing with a bullying incident, we are aiming to help both the victim and perpetrator fully understand the situation that has developed. We strive to help them both consider ways of avoiding or resolving the difficulties they are experiencing or are responsible for. Staff dealing with incidents will have to make a judgement about whether they are dealing with a bullying incident or a fall out or dispute between pupils.

If an allegation of bullying is made to a member of staff, they are required to take immediate action and follow up with advice from the year lead or a member of senior staff.

The headteacher must be informed of all reported bullying incidents and how they are to be dealt with and recorded on CPOMS.

Procedures for dealing with a Bullying Incident.

1. A clear account of the incident will be recorded by the class teacher/member of staff to whom the allegation has been made and recorded on CPOMS.
2. The teacher / year lead will then interview all parties and carefully record, on CPOMS, the outcomes and actions taken.
3. Preventative and restorative measures will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties.
4. Relevant colleagues will be kept clearly informed.
5. Parents of both the victim and the perpetrator will be informed.
6. A review meeting will be held two weeks later.
7. The success of any strategies used will be evaluated.

Dealing with the victim of bullying

Our primary concern is to protect the victim. It is vital that we support the victim by:

- offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with an adult of the victim's choice.
- reassuring the pupil that something can and will be done to stop the bullying.
- explaining how the incident will be dealt with.
- offering continuous support over a period of time as appropriate.
- restoring confidence and self-esteem.
- exploring the causes and effects of the incident.

It is critical that once a victim has spoken out, they have immediate access to a named member of staff to discuss any future incidents or concerns.

Dealing with the perpetrator

Responses will follow the behaviour policy and include proportionate consequences and teaching to prevent recurrence. Staff will consider SEND, reasonable adjustments and any safeguarding or unmet needs of the pupil displaying bullying behaviour. Support for that pupil does not reduce the duty to protect others.

We will:

- ensure that the perpetrator is dealt with fairly.
- describe the reasons for the discussion.
- remain calm and non-judgemental.
- ensure that the pupil has a chance to explain their view of the incident.
- assure the pupil that all incidents of bullying are taken seriously.
- explain that, regardless of reasons, the school disapproves of all acts of bullying.
- explain how the incident will be dealt with.
- explore the causes and effects of the incident.
- explore how the incident could have been avoided.

Investigating incidents of bullying is time consuming and must be carried out in private. Poor management of incidents is likely to lead to an even greater reluctance of victims to speak out.

The headteacher must be made aware of all bullying incidents. A chronology of all incidents is kept electronically on CPOMS.

Preventative Responses to Bullying

At River Bank Primary we use a range of strategies to prevent bullying. These include:

Curriculum: As a school we give children opportunities to analyse bullying situations within well-resourced PSHE lessons that have been carefully planned. In all year groups, we teach children strategies to deal with situations they may find themselves in as well as teaching them what healthy relationships look like and feel like. There is a whole school focus on bullying during National Anti-Bullying week, which takes place in November where children participate in activities that provide them with the information and vocabulary necessary to better understand what bullying is and how it impacts those being bullied. Assemblies linked to Anti-bullying take place throughout the year.

Mediation: This measure will only be used at the request of and with agreement from the victim. This involves collaborative problem solving by the victim and the perpetrator in the presence of a teacher. It concentrates on the future rather than dwelling on the past and apportioning blame. It acknowledges feelings as well as facts. Perpetrators often take out their negative feelings on others which may be exacerbated by the reaction of others. Mediation can enable all parties to move on in a positive supportive way.

Restorative Justice: Restorative justice brings victims and perpetrators together to decide on a resolution to a particular incident. It is about putting victims' needs at the centre of the school's actions and finding positive solutions to bullying by encouraging the perpetrator to face up to their actions. A Senior Teacher will be present during this consultation.

Anti-Bullying Leaders: Research has shown that victims may feel more comfortable sharing concerns about bullying with their peers. To support this, one child from each class in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is selected as an Anti-Bullying Leader. These pupils offer peer support and encourage children to share concerns with a trusted adult.

Circle of Friends: The class meets with the class teacher who explains that it is unusual to talk about a pupil who is not present but that the pupil and their parents are supporting this. Following ground rules the class presents ways that they might help the pupil and a 'circle of friends' is set up to give support, working with the class teacher.

Befriending, or the buddy system: This is when a volunteer is selected to befriend a pupil who is having difficulties.

Involving Parents

Parental support is often a key to success or failure in anti-bullying initiatives. Consultation is important, helping create an ethos in which positive behaviour is encouraged, and bullying considered unacceptable. Our policy is to involve parents constructively at an early stage using a problem-solving approach in the first instance.

Strategies for Reducing Playground Bullying

The school's playground environment is carefully organised, to offer space for educational, social, physical and creative activities, reducing boredom and therefore bullying.

This is achieved by providing:

- A stimulating range of playground equipment, playground leaders to organise games, and activity markings painted onto the playgrounds.
- Zoned areas for different activities.
- A buddy bench.
- Staff wearing high-visibility jackets, positioned strategically around the playground to supervise pupils and support positive interactions.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be annually reviewed by the Board of Trustees

Signed: 

Adopted: November 2026

Review Date: November 2027