



Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Introduction

1.1. This policy is applicable to all pupils, including those in the EYFS. This policy has been reviewed with consideration of "Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies" (DfE, July 2017), "Cyberbullying: Advice for head teachers and school staff (DfE, November 2013) and "The Use and effectiveness of Anti-Bullying Strategies in Schools" (a Research Report published by the DfE undertaken by Goldsmiths, University of London, 2011). The policy also complies with the Education and Inspections Act (2006), the Equality Act 2010 including the Public Sector Equality Act, the Independent School Standard Regulations (2014), and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE September 2025).

2. Statement of Intent

2.1. The community at Ripley Court School is based upon the three core behaviour expectations;

Ready, Respectful and Safe.

2.2. The School is committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every pupil can develop to their full potential. Pupils are expected to treat members of staff and each other with respect so that they can learn in a safe environment. Ripley Court prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. The School expects the support of governors, staff and parents/guardians in creating an environment of model behaviour. Please also refer to the Behaviour, Suspension & Exclusion Policy.

2.3. Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. All pupils and their parents are treated fairly and with consideration and the School expects them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the School. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable. There may be times where the School may address bullying concerns that have occurred outside of School that directly impact the wellbeing of pupils.

3. Definition of Bullying

3.1. The School defines bullying as the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online.

- 3.2. Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, homophobic, anti-religion, anti-cultural or which focus on disabilities, SEN or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and includes Cyberbullying (i.e. bullying behaviour delivered by means of electronic communications such as social media, or email, i.e. “online” and/or “digital”).
- 3.3. The School recognises that certain children may be more at risk of bullying than others and may require additional support when dealing with an incident of bullying, for example children with SEND and LGBTQ+ pupils. The School provides appropriate training to staff to be able them to understand the specific needs of pupils, and to enable all staff to provide an inclusive environment for all pupils.

4. The School’s Response to Bullying

- 4.1. The School always treats bullying seriously including prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying. When incidents of bullying do occur, they are dealt with quickly and effectively.
- 4.2. The School understands that bullying can be so serious that it may cause physical, emotional and psychological damage, such as eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide. Stopping violence and ensuring the immediate physical safety of pupils is the School's first priority, however, the School acknowledges that emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical bullying, and therefore staff will use their /professional judgement when dealing with an incident of bullying within the parameters of this policy and the Behaviour Policy. Whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment, sexual violence and assault, up-skirting and to violent and threatening behaviour. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying: everybody has the right to be treated with respect.
- 4.3. Pupils who are victims of bullying will be supported. Pupils who have engaged in bullying behaviour will not be labelled as bullies but will be subject to appropriate disciplinary sanctions and be supported in learning different ways of behaving.
- 4.4. Bullying which occurs on School trips or outside of the School's premises, including Cyberbullying using non-school controlled devices, will not be tolerated any more than bullying on School premises.

5. Signs of Bullying

5.1. Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to School and/or to use the School minibus
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change in accent or vocabulary used/disturbing vocabulary)
- Diminished levels of self confidence
- Frequent visits to the Medical Room with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches
- Unexplained cuts, bruises and minor injuries
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance or late arrival to class

- Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, nightmares
- Talking of suicide, attempting suicide, running away, self-harming
- Becoming aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous and jumpy when an online message is received
- Stops eating or significantly changes eating habits
- Is frightened to say what is wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above

5.2. Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers immediately.

6. Curriculum

6.1. The School takes pride in ensuring its pupils have an understanding and respect for the Protected Characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation).

6.2. Assemblies and RSE/PSHE are used to explain the school policy on bullying. The RSE/PSHE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. The programme is designed to teach the message of community involvement and taking care of each other, as well as the Protected Characteristics.

6.3. Special projects such as Black History Month promote the discussion of differences and similarities.

6.4. The School recognises that pastoral care is integral to pupils' academic development. School staff strive to embed an ethos demonstrating to the pupils that 'we're here and we care for you'. At Ripley Court an initiative called 'Bubble Time' has been implemented, which is based upon substantial research on emotional well-being and academic development.

6.5. Bubble Time allows staff and children the opportunity to request a 1:1 meeting to discuss worries, concerns or share an idea. Teaching staff and school leaders are made available to pupils through a visual notice, staff will respond to this by arranging a timely discussion with the individual pupil. Alongside this, staff and pupils will visually check in at designated times using the class emotion chart. These tools build a consistent feedback loop between staff and pupils and minimise levels of discipline by offering a consistent approach to wellbeing which can be seen by all pupils.

6.6. All pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place. (See also Section 9 below) Pupils are educated on the definition of bullying and how to respond using the Child Friendly Anti-Bullying policy.

7. Staff

- 7.1. Formal staff training in anti-bullying awareness takes place regularly with informal briefings being carried out as part of pastoral team meetings.
- 7.2. All reported incidents are recorded on CPOMS and investigated at once. This is monitored by the Headmaster, who identifies patterns in behaviour and ensures preventative measures are in place.
- 7.3. The School has a strong and experienced pastoral team, who support the Headmaster and are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and are alert to possible signs of bullying.
- 7.4. The school employs three Emotional Literacy Support Assistants who have special training from Educational Psychologists to support the emotional development of pupils in school.
- 7.5. The Girls On Board programme and similar workshops for boys are used to encourage empathy and understanding the complexities of friendships and behaviour types.
- 7.6. Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site.
- 7.7. The house system is important in reinforcing a pupil's standards and values, providing the opportunity for friendly, informal discussion of matters of concern to the individual pupil outside the formal classroom.
- 7.8. All pupils have access to a telephone helpline, enabling them to call for support in private. The NSPCC/Childline number is 0800 1111.
- 7.9. Serious cases will be dealt with in accordance with the Behaviour, Suspension and Exclusion Policy.

8. Cyberbullying

- 8.1. Cyberbullying may constitute online abuse, which is any type of abuse that happens on the internet. It can happen across any device that is connected to the web, like computers, tablets and mobile phones. And it can happen anywhere online, including:
 - social media
 - text messages and messaging apps
 - emails
 - online chats
 - online gaming
 - live-streaming sites.
- 8.2. The School acknowledges that cyber-bullying may take place inside School, outside of School and at any time of the day.
- 8.3. The School acknowledges that cyber-bullying may take many different forms including: cyber-stalking, exclusion or peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorised publication of private information or images, encouraging derogative comments on online platforms, upskirting and sexting.

8.4. The School has a role to play in teaching pupils about the underpinning knowledge and behaviour that can help them to navigate the online world safely and confidently regardless of the device, platform or app. In taking this forward, the School has regard to the DfE's non-statutory guidance on Teaching online safety in school (updated January 2023).

9. Online Safety Curriculum

9.1. At Ripley Court pupils are taught an extensive online safety curriculum using the Purple Mash Scheme of Work and Safe Skills resources. The threats and potential dangers of working online are made clear to all pupils.

9.2. Ripley Court School:-

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its Acceptable Use Policy for the safe use of the internet. Certain sites are blocked by the School's filtering system and the IT Department monitors pupils' use.
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in PSHE lessons, which covers blocking and removing contacts from "buddy" lists.
- All children are taught the importance of keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- SMART rules are used, displayed and taught to all pupils.
- Periodically offers training to parents on internet safety.
- Does not allow the use of mobile phones in classrooms or in public areas of the school. Exceptions may be made in rare medical circumstances.
- Holds dedicated assemblies and information for parents on Internet Safety Day to increase awareness.

9.3. Further information is available in the Acceptable Use Policy for Pupils and the Online Safety Policy.

10. How to report Bullying including Cyber-bullying

10.1. Children are encouraged to report any instances of unpleasant or unkind behaviour as soon as they occur to any member of staff. Posters such as "Speak up about bullying" are placed around school. It is not expected that the children will be able to determine which instances meet the definition of 'bullying' and therefore any incident deemed notable by staff must be logged on CPOMS. Children are educated on the definition of bullying and how to respond using the child friendly anti-bullying policy.

10.2. Parents/Guardians are also encouraged to raise any issues with their child's class teacher as soon as possible after the incident. Incidents which take place outside of school and/or during periods where the school is closed (such as during the summer holidays) should still be reported promptly but should be reported to the Head and to the DSL as well as to the class teacher. (See also Section 12 below)

11. Procedures for Dealing with Reported Bullying

11.1. If bullying is reported, in conjunction with the procedures outlined in the Behaviour, Suspension & Exclusion Policy, the following procedures are adopted:

- The member of staff to whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation, will reassure and support the pupils involved.
- The reporting staff member will inform the Head of Little Court (including Nursery) or Head of Upper Court who will deal with the matter in the first instance.
- They will also inform the Headmaster and a discussion will be had with all pupils involved.
- The incident will be promptly recorded in CPOMS. Incidents of prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying will be marked as such.
- All relevant members of staff will be informed immediately, and the issue will be discussed at the weekly pastoral staff meeting.
- The parents/guardians of all parties will be informed and invited into school to discuss the matter with the class teacher, with the Head of Little Court (including Nursery) or the Head of Upper Court, or Headmaster if necessary. Parent/Guardian's support should be sought.
- Outcomes, including any disciplinary sanctions and/or counselling, will be agreed. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for pupils who are being bullied and for pupils who have engaged in bullying behaviour.
- Staff will always consider the motive behind bullying behaviour and whether it raises any concerns for the welfare of the perpetrator.
- In specific cases, (For Example: Bullying involving a crime; Child-on-Child Abuse) it may be necessary for the DSL to make a report to the Police or to the Social Services as per the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy if a child is believed to be in significant danger of harm. Staff should follow the procedures set out in the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and discuss their concerns with the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay.

12. Advice for Parents

12.1. Children experiencing bullying often hide their experiences for fear of retaliation. Parents/guardians play a key role in this because they are most likely to first notice the symptoms as detailed above.

12.2. The School recommends that parents/guardians:

- Talk through the child friendly anti-bullying policy.
- Talk to their child/ren about their social interactions.
- Watch out for distress or any repetitions or combinations of signs of bullying.
- Listen to their children and take seriously any accounts of bullying.
- Engage in conversation with staff and/or the Headmaster at the earliest possible time if

they suspect a problem.

- Monitor internet access at home and have a strong filtering system in place

13. Complaints Procedure

- 13.1. Parents and pupils are encouraged to use the Complaints Procedure (which is published on the School's website) if they feel that any concerns about bullying (or anything else) are not being addressed properly.

14. Monitoring and Review

- 14.1. The School will record all incidents of reported bullying in accordance with this policy.
- 14.2. The Headmaster will review all incidents of reported bullying to help identify patterns of behaviour, so that appropriate steps can be taken to address bullying behaviours within the School. Records of bullying incidents will also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the School's anti-bullying procedures, and to highlight any necessary amendments.
- 14.3. This policy is reviewed and updated at least annually, by the Head of Little Court (including Nursery) and the Head of Upper Court, in agreement with the Headmaster.
15. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Online Safety Policy, Acceptable Use Policy and Behaviour, Suspension & Exclusion Policy.

Compiled by: Head of Little Court (including Nursery) and Head of Upper Court	Revision Number: 4 (Autumn Term 2025)
Approved by: Education & Pastoral Committee	Next Revision date: Autumn Term 2026

Revision History Table

Revision Number	Section/Paragraph number	Amendments
4 – Autumn 2025	Whole document	Changes to role titles for Headmaster, Head of Little Court (including Nursery) and removal of reference to Headmistress and Deputy Head. Minor changes to bring consistency of language with other school policies, e.g. changing 'our' to 'the School'.
	1.1	Update references to guidance and legislation
	4.1	Remove reference to 'protected characteristics' and replace with 'prejudice-based and discriminatory based' to align with language in KCSIE 2025.
	8.1	Updated definition of Cyberbullying.

	9.1	Updated curriculum information