

Anti Bullying Policy

Last update: 09.2024
Next review: 09.2026
Reference: SP-01

Statement

Bullying is a conscious act which affects everyone involved. It can take place in any setting. Therefore, there is a need for a concerted effort to challenge this behaviour.

Rise Learning Zone will not tolerate bullying. This organisation consists of students, parents/guardians/carers, management committee, tutors, pastoral staff, volunteers and other staff. We will actively support all those who have experienced bullying and take appropriate action with the perpetrators as laid out in our behaviour policy. All perpetrators will incur sanctions, up to and including exclusion, relative to the seriousness of their behaviour.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to prevent bullying from happening between young people who are a part of our organisation or take part in our activities
- to make sure bullying is stopped as soon as possible if it does happen and that those involved receive the support they need
- to provide information to all staff, volunteers, children, and their families about what we should all do to prevent and deal with bullying.

This policy statement applies to anyone working on behalf of Rise Learning Zone including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students.

This policy has been drawn up based on legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in the UK.

What is bullying?

According to the Anti Bullying Alliance "Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online".

There are four key elements to the definition:

- Hurtful
- Repetition

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- Power imbalance
- Intentional

Bullying behaviour can be:

- Physical: pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc.
- Verbal: name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling.
- Emotional: isolating others, tormenting, hiding books, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation and coercion.
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc.
- Online /cyber: posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion
- Indirect: Can include the exploitation of individuals.

Banter is the playful and friendly exchange of teasing remarks.

Baiting can be used in bullying both on and offline. It can be used to bully someone to get 'a rise' out of them and it can be used to antagonise those who might be bullying others to get them to bully. Sometimes baiting is used secretly to try and get a person to explode in a rage or react negatively/loudly so that they get in to trouble.

Children that bully very often target any kind of perceived 'difference'. Sadly, this means that disabled children and those with special educational needs, children with any kind of disfigurement, young carers, children in care, children from a minority ethnic background, children living in poverty, children who are bereaved, children with allergies, children who do not conform to gender 'norms' or are exploring their sexuality are very often targets.

Some forms of bullying are illegal and should be reported to the police. These include:

- violence or assault
- theft
- repeated harassment or intimidation, for example name calling, threats and abusive phone calls, emails or text messages
- hate crimes

At Rise, we believe that:

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and operate in a way that protects them.

At Rise, we recognise that:

- bullying causes real distress and affects a person's health and development
- in some instances, bullying can cause significant harm
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse

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- everyone has a role to play in preventing all forms of bullying (including online) and putting a stop to bullying.
- children and young people's behaviour can be affected by the behaviour of the adults around them. Therefore, we expect adults at Rise to model respectful and courteous behaviour.

At Rise, we will seek to prevent bullying by:

- developing a code of behaviour that sets out how everyone involved in our organisation is expected to behave, in face-to-face contact and online, and within and outside of our activities
- holding discussions with staff, volunteers, children, young people, and families who use our organisation about bullying and how to prevent it
- providing support and training for all staff and volunteers on dealing with all forms of bullying, including racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, and sexual bullying
- Ensuring the environment does not allow bullying to go unnoticed. Students will be always supervised, including breaks outside and when leaving at the end of the day. Toilet breaks will be appropriately supervised.

Our regular discussions with staff, volunteers, children, young people, and families will focus on:

- the responsibilities to look after one another and uphold the behaviour code
- practising skills such as listening to each other
- respecting the fact that we are all different
- making sure that no one is isolated or excluded
- dealing with problems in a positive way
- checking that our anti-bullying measures are working well.

Signs of bullying

Some signs that may point to a bullying problem are:

- Unexplainable injuries
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewellery
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness
- Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating.
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self esteem
- Self-destructive behaviours such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide

Responding to bullying

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We will make sure our response to incidents of bullying considers:

- the needs of the person being bullied
- the needs of the person displaying bullying behaviour
- needs of any bystanders
- our organisation as a whole.

Any person is capable of displaying bullying behaviour. It is important to ensure we do not make assumptions about children who are bullying others. It is important to not label individual children and we recommend avoiding using the term 'bully' to describe children who are displaying bullying behaviour.

All worker at Rise will be aware of potential bullying incidents and how to take appropriate action. At induction and at regular intervals, students will be made aware to alert an adult they trust if an incident does occur. The person who receives a report from a young person will take it extremely seriously and be seen to be doing so. Staff have a responsibility in addressing all forms of bullying.

When incidences of bullying occur, staff will;

1. Reassure. Let the student know this is not their fault and together you will sort it out. Make sure the student is safe.
2. Record. Make a note of what has happened where, with who, and for how long, and any action taken.
3. Ask the student what they need from you. Ask them how it is making them feel, and any practical steps you can take to help stop the bullying. It's important that the student feels in control of the situation. They may be very fearful of the impact of telling you (e.g. being called a snitch) so work out the best action together.
4. Then act quickly. Follow up with all students involved, explore what has taken place and action needed to stop it happening again. The important message is that you will not tolerate bullying of any kind.
5. Give further support. What other strategies can you put in place to support all students involved longer term?
6. Learn from each incident. Consider actions to take as a school to stop this happening again.

Rise staff will aim to use restorative justice techniques with all parties involved.

Restorative practice is a way of working with conflict that puts the focus on repairing the harm that has been done. It is an approach to conflict resolution that includes all the parties involved.

Rise will review the plan we have developed to address any incidents of bullying at regular intervals, to ensure that the problem has been resolved in the long term.

Bullying may take place online or outside of the provision. This may take place on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in areas where students live. Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted on, to reduce the likelihood of incidents occurring at Rise.

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Cyber bullying and incidents that occur outside of Rise, will be dealt with in line with this policy and the behaviour policy.

Diversity and inclusion

Rise recognises that bullying is closely related to how we respect and recognise the value of diversity. We will be proactive about:

- seeking opportunities to learn about and celebrate difference
- increasing diversity within our staff, volunteers, children, and young people
- welcoming new members to our organisation.