



Anti-Bullying Policy

Version Control	
Issue/Version Number	2.0
Policy Author(s)	Deputy Head Pastoral & Boarding
Key Staff	All Staff Deputy Head Pastoral and Boarding DSL Team Head of Wellbeing Head of Boarding SMT
Review Frequency	Annually
Next Review Date	Michaelmas 2027
Through School Policy	No
Policy Category	Academic and Operational
Approved By (SMT Member)	Head
Ratified By & Date (Committee)	Pastoral & Safeguarding Committee Michaelmas 2027 (TBC)
Published (Internal and/or Web)	Internal and Website

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1. Introduction, purpose and aims

Repton Prep is committed to providing a safe, caring, welcoming and inclusive environment in which every pupil can flourish. Our culture is rooted in the Repton values of Respect, Wholeness, Truth and Excellence. Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination are incompatible with those values and will not be tolerated.

Bullying affects more than the pupil who experiences it. It can also harm those who engage in bullying behaviour, those who witness it and the wider community. It is neither an inevitable part of school life nor a necessary part of growing up.

The School's primary aim is prevention: to create a culture in which positive relationships, kindness, openness and early reporting make bullying less likely to develop. Where concerns arise, the School will respond promptly, proportionately and effectively, with safeguarding and the best interests of pupils at the centre of decision-making.

This policy applies to all pupils from EYFS to Year 8, including day pupils and boarders. It applies to conduct on the School site, in boarding, on trips and activities, while travelling to or from School where relevant, and to behaviour online or outside School where it affects a pupil's welfare, the orderly running of the School or the School community.

This policy should be read alongside the current versions of:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy and Pupil Code of Conduct
- Online Safety / Acceptable Use Policy
- Boarding Handbook and relevant boarding policies
- PSHE / RSHE policy
- Curriculum
- Educational Provision for SEND and EAL policies
- EDIB and Equal Opportunities Policy
- Supervision policies
- Complaints Policy

The policy has regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, the Equality Act 2010, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools and relevant Department for Education guidance on behaviour, bullying and online safety.

2. Fundamental principles

- Every pupil has the right to feel physically and emotionally safe at School.
- Every pupil should know that they can talk to someone about anything that worries them, however small or difficult it may feel.
- Concerns about bullying will be taken seriously and will not be dismissed as 'banter', 'just a joke', 'part of growing up' or similar.
- Pupils who report concerns in good faith will be listened to, supported and protected from retaliation.
- Adults will focus on behaviour rather than labels. The terms 'pupil who has experienced bullying' and 'pupil who has engaged in bullying behaviour' are preferred to fixed labels such as 'victim' and 'bully'.
- Responses will consider the needs, age, SEND, vulnerabilities and circumstances of all pupils involved.
- Restorative work may be helpful, but it will never be used to minimise harm or require a pupil to meet another pupil against their wishes.
- Safeguarding procedures take precedence wherever there is a risk of significant harm, child-on-child abuse, sexual violence or harassment, criminal behaviour, or another child protection concern.

3. Definition and forms of bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group that hurts another pupil physically or emotionally and involves a real or perceived imbalance of power. It is usually repeated over time, although a single incident can be sufficiently serious to require action under this policy, the Behaviour Management Policy and/or the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The imbalance of power may be physical, social, psychological, intellectual or technological. It may arise because one pupil has the support of a group, access to personal information, greater status or seniority, or the ability to isolate or humiliate another pupil.

3.1 Forms of bullying

- **Physical:** hitting, kicking, pushing, deliberately jostling, spitting, damaging or taking possessions, or using physical intimidation.
- **Verbal:** name-calling, taunting, teasing, threatening, insulting, humiliating or repeatedly using language intended to undermine another pupil.
- **Emotional / psychological:** controlling or manipulating another pupil, deliberately humiliating them, using knowledge of what upsets them, or creating fear.
- **Relational / exclusionary:** deliberately isolating, shunning or excluding a pupil from groups, games, conversations or social networks in order to cause distress.
- **Manipulative:** spreading rumours, making malicious accusations, manipulating friendship groups or encouraging others to turn against a pupil.
- **Prejudice-based:** behaviour motivated by actual or perceived difference, including race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability, SEND, health condition, appearance, family circumstances, adoption, care status or caring responsibilities.
- **Sexual / sex-based:** sexualised comments, jokes, taunting, unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, misogynistic behaviour, sexual harassment or sexual violence. These may constitute child-on-child abuse and will be handled under safeguarding procedures.
- **Initiation / hazing:** rituals, tests, forfeits or activities used to initiate or maintain membership of a group where they involve humiliation, coercion, intimidation, abuse or pressure.
- **Cyberbullying:** bullying through technology, including messaging, social media, gaming platforms, images, video, email, impersonation, group chats or other digital communication.

Not every disagreement, argument or one-off unkind act is bullying. However, such behaviour may still breach the Behaviour Management Policy or amount to harassment, discrimination, assault, harmful sexual behaviour or a safeguarding concern and will be addressed appropriately. Low-level behaviour that is left unchallenged can become a repeated pattern; staff should therefore record and respond to concerns early.

3.2 Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying may take place at any time and may extend beyond the School site. Technology can increase the impact because content can be shared rapidly, reach a wide audience, be difficult to remove and intrude into a pupil's home or boarding space. Online incidents will be addressed where they affect the safety, welfare or education of Repton Prep pupils or the School community. Further guidance is set out in Appendix 2.

4. Responsibilities, vulnerability and signs

Bullying thrives on secrecy. Every member of the Repton Prep community has a responsibility to notice, challenge and report behaviour that may amount to bullying. Staff must not assume that another adult will deal with a concern.

Any pupil can experience bullying. Staff should be particularly alert to pupils who may be more vulnerable because they are new to the School, have SEND or a disability, are boarders, have difficulty forming friendships, are perceived as different from peers, have protected characteristics, or have experienced previous social difficulties.

4.1 Possible indicators

- becoming withdrawn, anxious, unusually quiet or tearful;
- a sudden deterioration in work, concentration, attendance or punctuality;
- reluctance to attend School, boarding, particular lessons, activities or areas of the site;
- a desire to remain close to adults or avoidance of usual peer groups;
- unexplained injuries, damaged or missing belongings, or repeated unlikely explanations;
- changes in friendships, mood, eating, sleep, confidence or established habits;
- frequent visits to Health and Wellbeing with headaches, stomach pains or other non-specific symptoms;
- becoming nervous or distressed when messages or notifications are received, or suddenly avoiding online activity;
- talk of running away, hopelessness, self-harm or suicide.

These indicators can have many causes and do not prove that bullying is taking place. They should nevertheless prompt sensitive enquiry, professional curiosity and, where appropriate, recording and investigation. Repton Prep encourages pupils to be upstanders, not bystanders, and uses the anonymous reporting tool Whisper to encourage pupils to report anything that makes them feel uncomfortable, or information they feel is important to share.

5. Prevention and positive culture

The School seeks to prevent bullying through education, culture, vigilance and strong pastoral systems. Prevention is a whole-school responsibility and includes:

- consistent modelling by adults of respectful, inclusive and calm behaviour;
- the Repton Prep Code and explicit teaching of Respect, Wholeness, Truth and Excellence;
- PSHE and RSHE that develops empathy, respectful relationships, online safety, consent, diversity and the confidence to seek help;
- assemblies, form time, Anti-Bullying Week, Online Safety Week and age-appropriate discussion whenever issues arise;
- a strong pastoral plan that addresses themes and issues to support a pupil's development;
- Anti-Bullying Ambassadors and pupil leadership roles that promote kindness, inclusion and responsible bystander behaviour;
- pupil voice, wellbeing surveys and other listening systems like Govox which help identify patterns, vulnerable groups and locations;
- the anonymous reporting tool Whisper, alongside clear routes for face-to-face reporting;
- appropriate staff induction, safeguarding training, briefings and regular reminders about recording and escalation;
- close supervision and attention to known vulnerable times and places, including boarding and unstructured periods;
- education for parents about online safety, age restrictions, digital footprints, group chats and emerging risks;
- effective filtering and monitoring arrangements and clear expectations for acceptable use of technology.

In EYFS and the youngest year groups, prevention is developmentally appropriate and focuses on kindness, empathy, sharing, personal boundaries, respect for belongings, asking for help and learning the difference between accidental conflict and repeated hurtful behaviour.

6. Reporting concerns

6.1 If a pupil feels they are being bullied

Pupils are encouraged to tell an adult as soon as possible. They can speak to any member of staff, including their Form Tutor, Year Group Head, Houseparent, Head of Boarding, Health and Wellbeing staff, School Counsellor, Head of Wellbeing, Deputy Head Pastoral & Boarding, DSL or Head. They may also tell a parent, friend or another trusted pupil, or use Whisper.

The central message to pupils is simple: tell someone and keep telling until you feel safe and heard.

6.2 If a pupil knows someone else is being bullied

Pupils should not join in, laugh, forward content, 'like' humiliating material or stand by silently. They should report what they have seen or heard. Reporting is not 'snitching'; it is helping another person and helping the School address harmful behaviour.

6.3 Parents and carers

Parents should raise concerns promptly with the Form Tutor or Year Group Head in the first instance, or with the Deputy Head Pastoral & Boarding / DSL if the matter is serious or safeguarding-related. Concerns will be treated seriously and sensitively, and parents will be kept informed as appropriate.

7. Procedures, investigation and recording

7.1 Initial response by staff

When a pupil reports bullying, or a member of staff observes or suspects it, the member of staff should:

- listen calmly and take the concern seriously;
- reassure the pupil that they have done the right thing by speaking up;
- establish whether there is any immediate risk to physical or emotional safety and take protective action if required;
- use open, non-leading questions and allow the pupil to describe events in their own words;
- avoid promising confidentiality; explain that information will be shared only with those who need to know in order to help;
- preserve relevant evidence, including screenshots, messages, photographs or names of witnesses where appropriate;
- report the matter promptly to the relevant Year Group Head and Deputy Head Pastoral & Boarding, and to the Head of Boarding where the concern arises in boarding;
- refer immediately to the DSL where there is any safeguarding concern;
- record the concern on the School's safeguarding/pastoral recording system (CPOMS), even if later enquiries conclude that bullying has not occurred.

Where a fuller formal interview record is required, Appendix 1 may be used and uploaded to CPOMS. Staff should not conduct an extensive investigation alone before escalating a concern.

7.2 Safeguarding threshold

A bullying concern must be treated as a safeguarding concern where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm; where behaviour may constitute child-on-child abuse; or where sexual violence, sexual harassment, exploitation, coercion, hate crime, serious threats, criminal conduct or another child protection concern may be present. The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will then be followed.

7.3 Investigation

The Deputy Head Pastoral & Boarding, Head of Year or another suitably senior member of staff will coordinate the response. The investigation will be proportionate to the concern and may include:

- separate conversations with the pupil who raised the concern, the pupil(s) alleged to have engaged in the behaviour and relevant witnesses;
- consultation with Form Tutors, Houseparents, subject teachers, Health and Wellbeing staff or other adults who know the pupils;
- review of CPOMS chronology and any previous related behaviour or safeguarding records;
- consideration of online evidence such as screenshots, messages, images or account activity where available and lawful to review;
- consideration of motivation, power imbalance, repetition, impact, protected characteristics, SEND, boarding context and any wider group dynamics;
- consideration of whether the matter requires referral to children's social care, the police or another external agency.

Pupils will normally be spoken to separately during fact-finding. A joint or restorative meeting will only take place where it is judged safe and appropriate and the pupil who has experienced the behaviour agrees.

7.4 Communication with parents

Parents of pupils directly involved will be informed at an appropriate stage, ordinarily as early as practicable once immediate safeguarding needs and the integrity of the initial fact-finding have been considered. The School will communicate clearly about what can be shared while respecting confidentiality and the rights of other children.

7.5 Recording and closure

All allegations and incidents of bullying will be recorded on CPOMS. The Deputy Head Pastoral & Boarding will maintain oversight of a central bullying log so that repeated incidents, protected-characteristic concerns, online patterns, group dynamics and vulnerable locations can be identified.

The record should show the concern raised, key evidence, safeguarding considerations, outcome, actions, parental communication, support and follow-up. Cases will not be regarded as closed simply because a sanction has been issued; follow-up must establish whether the behaviour has stopped and whether the pupils involved feel safe.

8. The School's response: support, intervention and sanctions

No two cases are identical. The School will use a proportionate combination of support, education, safeguarding action, restorative work and disciplinary consequences.

8.1 Support for a pupil who has experienced bullying

- a named trusted adult and regular check-ins;
- support from the Form Tutor, Head of Year, Head of Wellbeing, Health and Wellbeing team or School Counsellor;
- practical safety planning, including supervision, seating, routes, boarding arrangements or access to a safe space where appropriate;
- support to rebuild confidence, friendships and a sense of belonging;
- reasonable adjustments or additional SEND support where appropriate;
- support with preserving, blocking or reporting harmful online content;
- careful reintegration where attendance, boarding or participation has been affected;
- continued monitoring and liaison with parents for as long as necessary.

The School will not place responsibility on a pupil who has been bullied to change ordinary aspects of their identity or behaviour in order to avoid being targeted.

8.2 Support and intervention for a pupil who has engaged in bullying behaviour

- clear explanation of the harm caused and the School's expectations;
- consideration of the motivation and any underlying pastoral, social, emotional or safeguarding needs;
- targeted pastoral work, counselling or mentoring where appropriate;
- strategies to develop empathy, self-regulation, respectful communication and healthier peer relationships;
- work with parents to establish consistent expectations;
- a behaviour or pastoral support plan where appropriate;
- carefully managed reintegration into peer groups and ongoing monitoring.

8.3 Sanctions and protective action

Bullying is a serious breach of School expectations. Sanctions will be applied fairly, consistently and reasonably in line with the Behaviour Management Policy, taking account of age, SEND, vulnerability, intent, impact, repetition and safeguarding considerations. Serious or persistent bullying may result in suspension or permanent exclusion.

Additional protective action may include increased supervision, changes to groupings or routines, restrictions on access to devices or online systems in accordance with School policy, action to break up a harmful group dynamic, and referral to external agencies. Moving a pupil who has experienced bullying will not be used as a default solution; any such change will be carefully considered and discussed with the pupil and parents.

Where behaviour may be criminal or poses a serious threat, the DSL and Head will consider referral to the police and/or children's social care.

9. Restorative practice, mediation and reconciliation

Repton Prep believes that education should help pupils understand the impact of their actions, repair harm where possible and develop the skills to behave differently in future. Restorative approaches can therefore form part of the response to bullying.

Restorative work is not a substitute for safeguarding action or appropriate sanctions. It will only be used when it is judged safe and constructive. The pupil who has experienced bullying will not be pressured to meet, forgive or reconcile with another pupil.

Where appropriate and agreed, a supervised restorative conversation may help pupils to understand different perspectives, acknowledge harm, agree boundaries, make reparation and establish a practical plan for avoiding future conflict. The agreed actions should be recorded and followed up.

The School recognises that children can learn, change and rebuild trust. Equally, second chances must be accompanied by accountability, monitoring and clear evidence that harmful behaviour has stopped.

10. Monitoring, training and governance

The School will keep the effectiveness of this policy under review through:

- regular review of CPOMS records and the central bullying log by the Deputy Head Pastoral & Boardin);
- analysis of patterns involving pupils, year groups, boarding, protected characteristics, online behaviour and locations;
- pupil voice, wellbeing surveys and feedback from pupils, parents and staff;
- discussion within appropriate pastoral, safeguarding and senior leadership meetings;
- termly reporting of relevant themes and data to the Pastoral and Safeguarding Committee / Governing Body;
- review of incidents to identify lessons for supervision, curriculum, training and site arrangements;
- annual review of the policy and procedures.

Staff, governors and volunteers will receive appropriate guidance and training so that they understand the signs of bullying, groups who may be more vulnerable, the distinction between bullying and other forms of harmful behaviour, online risks, child-on-child abuse, and the School's reporting and recording procedures.

11. Working with parents and carers

A strong partnership between School and home is central to preventing and responding to bullying. Parents and carers are encouraged to:

- notice changes in behaviour, confidence, friendships, attendance, sleep or attitudes to School or boarding;
- take an active, curious and non-leading interest in friendships and how free time is spent;
- maintain appropriate oversight of online activity, group chats, social media, gaming and device use;
- encourage children to report bullying whether they experience it or witness it;
- preserve evidence of online incidents rather than responding publicly or escalating conflict between families;
- share relevant information with the School promptly and allow the School to investigate fairly;
- support consistent expectations about respectful behaviour and the responsible use of technology;
- attend or engage with School guidance on anti-bullying, relationships and online safety.

Parents who remain dissatisfied with the School's handling of a bullying concern may use the School's Complaints Policy.

12. Sources of information and advice

- Anti-Bullying Alliance
[Anti-Bullying Alliance](#)
- Childline
[Childline | Free counselling service for kids and young people](#)
- NSPCC
[NSPCC | The UK children's charity](#)
- Childnet
[Childnet — Online safety for young people](#)
- CEOP Education
[CEOP Education](#)
- Kidscape
[About Coram Kidscape | Award-winning Bullying Prevention Charity](#)
- Restorative Justice Council
[Restorative Justice Council | Promoting quality restorative practice for everyone](#)
- Children's Commissioner for England
[Homepage | Children's Commissioner for England](#)

13. Anti-Bullying in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The principles of this policy apply fully to children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, the School recognises that children in the EYFS are at an early stage of social, emotional and language development and may not yet have the maturity, understanding or vocabulary to recognise, describe or intentionally engage in bullying behaviour in the same way as older pupils. For this reason, concerns involving younger children will always be considered carefully in the context of the child's age, stage of development, individual needs and the circumstances of the incident.

In the EYFS, behaviour that is unkind, hurtful, controlling, excluding or physically aggressive will be taken seriously whether or not it meets the threshold for bullying. Staff will not dismiss such behaviour as simply being "part of growing up". Instead, they will respond promptly and proportionately, helping children to understand the impact of their actions, develop empathy, manage emotions, resolve difficulties appropriately and build positive relationships. Where behaviour is repeated, targeted, involves an imbalance of power, or causes another child ongoing distress, staff will consider whether it constitutes bullying and will follow the procedures set out in this policy.

The prevention of bullying in the EYFS is closely linked to the development of positive relationships and emotional literacy. Through everyday interactions, planned activities and the Personal, Social and Emotional Development curriculum, children are supported to:

- recognise and name their own feelings and those of others;
- understand kindness, fairness, friendship and respect;
- develop appropriate ways of managing disagreement and frustration;
- learn that hurting, excluding, frightening or controlling others is not acceptable;
- develop confidence to say when something has upset or worried them;
- understand the importance of telling a trusted adult when they, or another child, need help; and
- learn how to include others in play and respond positively to difference.

EYFS staff are expected to be particularly vigilant because younger children may communicate distress through changes in behaviour rather than through a clear verbal disclosure. Possible indicators may include reluctance to attend School, becoming unusually withdrawn or tearful, changes in play, sleep or toileting patterns, unexplained injuries, anxiety around particular children or activities, loss of confidence, increased aggression, or a sudden reluctance to take part in previously enjoyed activities. Such indicators do not necessarily mean that bullying is occurring, but they should always be explored sensitively.

Where a concern arises, staff will listen carefully to each child, using developmentally appropriate language and avoiding leading questions. The immediate priority will be to ensure that the child feels safe and supported. Staff will share concerns with the appropriate EYFS pastoral lead and, where necessary, the Deputy Head Pastoral & Boarding and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead. Parents will normally be involved at an early stage so that the School and home can work together consistently and constructively.

Responses will focus primarily on education, support and behaviour change rather than punishment alone. This may include increased supervision, supported play, social skills work, restorative conversations appropriate to the child's developmental level, individual pastoral support, adjustments to routines or groupings, and close monitoring over time. Where there are

wider safeguarding concerns, including concerns about child-on-child abuse, the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will take precedence.

All significant concerns, patterns of behaviour and actions taken will be recorded in accordance with the School's pastoral and safeguarding procedures. Repeated incidents involving the same child, group, location or type of behaviour will be reviewed carefully to identify emerging patterns and to ensure that appropriate support and intervention are in place.

The School's aim within the EYFS is not simply to respond to incidents, but to establish from the earliest years a culture in which children learn that everyone has the right to feel safe, included and valued.

Appendix 1. Pupil Incident / Interview Record

This form may be used where a structured record of a formal pupil interview is helpful. The completed record should be uploaded to CPOMS and handled in accordance with the School's data protection and safeguarding procedures.

Pupil name	
Year / Form	
Date and time	
Interviewing staff	
Nature of concern	
Key account / chronology	
Witnesses / evidence	
Immediate safeguarding or welfare action	
Follow-up / outcome / parental contact	

Staff signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix 2. Cyberbullying guidance

A2.1 What makes cyberbullying different?

Cyberbullying is bullying carried out using digital technology. It can occur through messaging, social media, gaming platforms, email, images, video, shared documents, group chats or other online services.

- Reach: material can be shared quickly with a very large audience.
- Persistence: posts, images and messages may be copied, stored or recirculated.
- 24/7 access: harmful behaviour can follow a pupil into home or boarding time.
- Anonymity and impersonation: the person responsible may conceal or falsify their identity.
- Group involvement: forwarding, reacting to or joining a group can rapidly increase the number of people involved.
- Evidence: digital material can provide useful evidence, although screenshots may not always show the full context.

A2.2 Examples

- threatening, abusive or humiliating messages;
- repeated unwanted contact or online harassment;
- posting or sharing rumours, insults, prejudiced content or humiliating images;
- excluding a pupil from online groups in order to isolate or distress them;
- impersonating another person or accessing an account without permission;
- sharing images, videos or personal information without consent;
- doxing or publishing private information;
- coercion, threats or pressure connected with images, videos, dares, forfeits or online challenges;
- creating or circulating sexualised, manipulated or indecent images;
- filming fights, assaults or humiliating incidents and sharing them.

A2.3 Prevention

Prevention of cyberbullying is part of the School's wider Online Safety approach. Pupils are taught to use technology responsibly, protect personal information, understand age restrictions and digital footprints, report harmful content, preserve evidence and seek help. The School uses appropriate filtering and monitoring and works with parents to reinforce safe and age-appropriate use.

A2.4 Responding to cyberbullying

- Take the pupil's report seriously and consider immediate safety and safeguarding needs.
- Preserve evidence where safe to do so; do not ask pupils to repeatedly view harmful material.
- Record and report the concern in the same way as other bullying concerns.
- Consider whether content should be reported to a platform, removed, blocked or referred to the police or another agency.
- Do not forward sexual images or other illegal/harmful content. Follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Address the behaviour even when it occurred outside School if it affects Repton Prep pupils, their welfare or the School community.

- Support both the pupil harmed and the pupil responsible, while applying appropriate consequences and safeguards.

A2.5 Serious cases

Online bullying may overlap with harassment, stalking, hate crime, threats, sexual offences, sharing of intimate images, coercion or other criminal behaviour. Where criminal conduct or significant harm may be involved, the DSL and Head will consider referral to children's social care and/or the police in accordance with safeguarding procedures.