



Bullying, Harassment (inc. sexual harassment) and Sexual Violence of Students Policy

Mission Statement

We are a Catholic College dedicated to the education and development of the whole person and supporting all students to realise their full potential. As an outstanding learning organisation SJR will have a strong sense of purpose and a commitment to shared values within a Christian community. We will establish a unique, safe and challenging environment where every individual is valued, talents are recognised and nurtured, achievements are celebrated and dedication is rewarded. To achieve this as a community we will:

- Welcome all students who are happy to be educated within a Christian environment
- Value the uniqueness and dignity of each individual
- Deliver the highest standards of teaching and learning
- All show a commitment to our work, to the Christian values of the College and to the safety of all in our community
- Provide equality of opportunity, with mutual respect and positive encouragement
- Build and further develop local, national and international partnerships

Core values in daily life at St John Rigby College are expressed as:

- Genuine concern for others
- Support for and challenge of one another
- High standards and expectations
- Consistency and perseverance
- Recognition of talents, progress and achievements.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to ensure that:

- all members of staff, and students have an understanding of the meaning and nature of bullying, harassment (inc. sexual harassment) and sexual violence.
- all members of staff understand the College policy on bullying, harassment (inc. sexual harassment) and sexual violence of students, and follow the correct procedures when it is reported.
- all students understand the College policy on bullying, harassment (inc. sexual harassment) and sexual violence of students and what they should do if it arises.

The policy shows that the College takes all bullying, harassment and sexual violence allegations seriously and students should be assured that they will be supported if they report any incidents.

Scope

This policy and its associated procedures apply to all students and should be read in conjunction with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.

As well as threats to the welfare of young people from within their families, young people may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families. These extra-familial threats might arise at College, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online. Staff will endeavour to assess the impact of contextual issues on the student's safety and welfare and make referrals to relevant outside agencies.

We will address bullying or harassment of students involved in out of College activities, for example work placements or College visits, or by visitors to the College. It must be noted that The Education and Inspections Act 2006 Section 89 (5) states that colleges have the 'power' to intervene where bullying, including cyber bullying, occurs off the College premises. St John Rigby College will, where appropriate, take reasonable steps in these circumstances to support students and assist them in succeeding and progressing at College.

Students will be informed about this policy through assemblies, tutorial and the values for living programme. Staff will be informed via the Staff Handbook.

Policy Statement

St John Rigby College is committed to providing a friendly, supportive and safe environment for all students and promoting successful learning. **Bullying or harassment (inc. sexual harassment) of any kind is unacceptable.** If it occurs, students will be encouraged and supported to tell a member of staff and will be told that incidents will be dealt with promptly and with respect for all involved. Anyone who is aware that bullying or harassment is happening should tell a member of staff.

One approach to dealing with bullying or harassment incidents is mediation and the Restorative Justice methodology. Victims of alleged bullying and their parents will always be consulted as to their preferred method of intervention. Resorting to disciplinary procedures with more punitive outcomes may be necessary.

Definitions

The term bullying refers to a range of harmful behaviour, both physical and psychological. All bullying behaviour usually has the following four features.

1. It is repetitive and persistent — though sometimes a single incident can have precisely the same impact as persistent behaviour over time, as it can be extremely threatening and intimidating, for example an incident of racist, homophobic, transphobic bullying.
2. It is intentionally harmful — though occasionally the distress it causes is not consciously intended by all of those who are responsible.
3. It involves an imbalance of power, leaving someone feeling helpless to prevent it or put a stop to it.
4. It causes feelings of distress, fear, loneliness and lack of confidence in those who are at the receiving end

(Source: www.teachernet.gov.uk)

Bullying can be:

Emotional	being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
Physical	pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, any use of violence and aggressive posturing
Serious Violence	this may be used to coerce a young person into becoming involved with violent crime
Racist	racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
Religious	refusing to allow the hijab or turban, stirring up hatred of a particular religious group or issues of sexuality relating to faith or religious belief
Sexual	unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments

Homophobic	because of, or focussing on, the issue of sexuality
Transphobic	because of, or focussing on, the issue of gender identity
Verbal	name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
Cyber	all areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room and social networking site misuse Mobile threats by text messaging & calls. Misuse of associated technology , i.e. camera & video facilities
Child on Child Abuse	any form of physical, sexual violence, sexual harassment, upskirting, sexting, emotional and financial abuse, initiation/hazing type violence and rituals and coercive control, exercised between children and within children's relationships (both intimate and non-intimate).

From the perspective of the victim the following points are important:

Bullying is when a person or group of people makes you feel:

- 'badly different', alone, unimportant and/or unvalued
- physically and/or mentally hurt or distressed
- unsafe and/or frightened
- unable to do well and achieve
- unable to see a positive future for yourself

(Source: www.teachernet.gov.uk)

Harassment covers a wide range of offensive behaviour. It is commonly understood as behaviour intended to disturb or upset. In the legal sense, it is behaviour which is found threatening or disturbing. It is also commonly related to discriminatory behaviour linked to:

Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Race, Religion or belief, Sex, Sexual orientation and Sexual violence.

Sexual Harassment

When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child on child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a student's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment. Sexual harassment can occur between two young people of any sex and/or a group of young people sexually harassing a single young person or group of young people.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- sexual "jokes" or taunting
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- online sexual harassment. It may include:
 - non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos.
 - sexualised online bullying;
 - unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media; and
 - sexual exploitation; coercion and threats

Sexual Violence

When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

- Sexual violence includes any form of sexual activity that takes place without the other person's full and informed consent. Rape and sexual assault are mostly carried out by someone known to the victim; a partner, friend, colleague or other family member. Sexual violence can also be committed by strangers.
- Sexual violence can happen to anyone regardless of age, gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, class, or background.
- Research shows that the majority of sexual violence is experienced by women and girls, but men and boys can also be victims

Allegations of Bullying, Harassment (inc. sexual harassment) and Sexual Violence

All allegations of bullying or harassment will be taken seriously by the College.

- When a student, member of staff or parent/carer reports a case to a member of staff they will deal with the matter as quickly as possible using the procedures detailed in Appendix 1 of this document.
- The College will do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any students involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment
- The member of staff will ensure that proposed approaches are discussed with the student and/or their representative and that they are happy with the proposed approach.
- The College will implement procedures to ensure that the matter is reconciled/resolved, and that the student who has been bullied/harassed feels confident that the matter has been dealt with effectively.
- In all cases the student who is making the allegation will be helped with personal strategies to enhance their feeling of safety.

Learners with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) can be especially vulnerable to bullying, harassment and sexual violence. Disabled and deaf children are three times more likely to be abused than their peers

Any indication of bullying/harassment of these students should be reported in the same way as for other students. Where appropriate, the Learning Support Manager, teacher or Learning Mentor who is supporting the student will be involved.

Additional barriers can sometimes exist when recognising abuse in SEND students. If a student has difficulties in communicating they should be given the chance to express themselves to a member of staff who will act as their advocate.

Increasing awareness of anti-bullying, harassment (inc. sexual harassment) and sexual violence

All students and staff need to be aware of this policy, what constitutes bullying and harassment and the College's approach to the reporting of bullying and harassment

St John Rigby College will endeavour to address these requirements through:

- a. Appropriate information for staff
- b. Information for students via posters, the College website, and through tutorial and VFL programme and teaching materials around the following topics;
 - healthy and respectful relationships;
 - what respectful behaviour looks like;
 - consent;
 - gender roles, stereotyping, equality;

- body confidence and self-esteem;
- prejudiced behaviour;
- celebrating racial diversity and LGBTQ+;
- that sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong; and
- addressing cultures of sexual harassment.

Equality and Diversity

This policy is intended to have a positive impact on equality and diversity in College. Specific guidance is given to ensure that any bullying is logged by the Equality and Diversity Group according to perceived type and appropriate changes made in the College.

Related Policies

- Data Protection Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEMH Policy
- Student IT User Agreement
- Student Charter
- Student Suspension and Exclusion Policy
- Student Support and Disciplinary Procedures
- Transgender Policy

Appendix 1: Guidance and Procedures

Why is it important to report bullying, (inc. sexual harassment) and Sexual Violence of Students?

St John Rigby College has a duty to respond promptly and effectively to allegations of bullying, (inc. sexual harassment) and Sexual Violence of Students. The College's mission statement includes our commitment to valuing the uniqueness and dignity of each individual and providing equality of opportunity, with mutual respect and positive encouragement for all. Bullying and Harassment therefore has no place in the College and will not be tolerated. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect.

Students who are bullying or harassing others also need to be helped to learn different ways of behaving and how to respond to the College's mission.

Whilst some students may make staff aware of incidents quickly and as soon as they have happened, others may have suffered on a long term basis and /or have suffered in primary or secondary school. Such cases may have been dealt with satisfactorily by the school, others may not and the student may still be emotionally affected in which case they may require some specialised support from the College Counsellor. The bully and the bullied may have gone their separate ways at school but find themselves together once again in College. Bullying and harassment can be brought into College from neighbourhoods.

Signs and Symptoms

A student may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied in College. Members of staff should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a student:

- is frightened of walking to or from College
- doesn't want to go on the College / public bus
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to College (College phobic)
- begins to miss lessons
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in College work
- has possessions which are damaged or " go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- self harms, attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

(Source: www.kidscape.org.uk)

These symptoms could be a result of other factors but could be indicators of bullying.

Dealing with allegations of bullying, (inc. sexual harassment) and Sexual Violence of Students

Any student or parent/carer who reports a case of bullying needs to know that the allegation will be taken seriously and investigated promptly. They should not be made promises about the outcome.

It is common but not always the case that counter allegations are made by the alleged perpetrator. These will also be investigated so that a full picture is obtained. The student or parent initially reporting the bullying should be made aware of this possibility and sensitively asked whether they are aware of any claims that the alleged perpetrator might make. They should be re-assured that an investigation will still go ahead if there are counter allegations.

Procedures

Reporting and Investigation

If a student or parent/carer reports a case of bullying to you, you should:

- Stay calm and reassure the student/parent that the matter will be dealt with as quickly and sensitively as possible
- Talk to the student/parent and find out what has happened – keep commentary notes of this conversation. Try to find out **when** (dates/times), **where** (places) and **who**. Naming the alleged bully/bullies – is often difficult for students/parents/carers as they can be concerned about the repercussions if the alleged bully/bullies find(s) out. Please reassure them – we cannot deal with specific cases of bullying if we do not have this information.
- If Safeguarding issues are involved refer to the Vice Principal - Students, the College's Designated Senior Leader for Child Protection (DSL) and/or the Deputy Designated Lead.
- Deal with the situation if it is straightforward and less serious and you feel that you are able e.g. name-calling in a classroom situation.
- Refer the case on to your Senior Tutor or Vice Principal - Students if you feel that it is a more complex case and outside your area of expertise or involves students outside your area.

Upon receiving your referral, Senior Tutors may invite parents of all parties to discuss the problem. More complex cases referred to the Vice Principal (Students) may require police involvement. In all cases a decision will be made about whether it is in the interests of relevant parties to suspend students ahead of any actions and during investigations to ensure the fair treatment and safety of all concerned.

Outcomes from Investigation

Part of the discussion with the student being bullied should involve asking him/her "What would you like the outcome to be?". A number of different alternatives can be discussed:

- Speaking to the alleged bully about 'relationship difficulties' that have been noted and advising the alleged bully of a more sensible approach to the relationship difficulties in the hope that a first non-accusatory intervention may bring about the desired outcome for all. This is often a successful approach.
- The College will generally use an approach linked to the principles of Restorative Justice. This could involve a facilitated meeting between both parties (sometimes including parents or other supporters). Staff undertaking this approach should have undertaken some training to ensure it is carried out effectively. The intention is to achieve some reconciliation to allow for students to co-exist and be successful in College.
- Outcomes are likely to involve apologies, commitment to changed behaviour and perhaps some support to achieve changed behaviour e.g. anger management or other skill improvements.
- The restorative justice approach cannot always replace a disciplinary approach and student perpetrators may be subject to the College Support and Disciplinary Procedures or in more extreme or repeated cases be excluded using the College Exclusion Policy.
- The outcomes of all investigations should be recorded on the perpetrators CPOMS incident log and any documents should be uploaded to CPOMS. It is also important to log the type of bullying that has taken place to enable College to identify any bullying trends.
- It may be appropriate to meet with all parties after an agreed period of time to check that what has been agreed remains effective.

This policy supports compliance with the 2025 Ofsted inspection framework, including the safeguarding ('met'/'not met') judgement and the evaluation areas for behaviour, attitudes, and personal development. Records and trends from this policy contribute to the College's safeguarding self-evaluation and are reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and Governors.

This policy also supports compliance with the Online Safety Act 2023 and anticipated requirements under the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2025, ensuring proactive education and monitoring of online sexual harassment and peer abuse.

(Prevent & Gender Guidance): Staff and students are supported to recognise harmful peer influence and online behaviours that may contribute to extremism, in line with the Prevent Duty (DfE 2024). The College recognises its duty of care to gender-questioning and transgender students in line with DfE guidance (2023), ensuring their safety and dignity within anti-bullying and safeguarding frameworks.