RIFA

RISHWORTH INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL ACADEMY



RISHWORTH SCHOOL

Football Academy for Girls and Boys Aged 12+

United Kingdom

Welcome to RIFA

At Rishworth School's International Football Academy (RIFA), we combine a world-class education with elite football training, creating the ideal environment for ambitious young players from around the globe.



With over 300 years of educational excellence and 30 years of elite football development, RIFA has helped countless athletes achieve success both on the pitch and in life.

Students live and study at Rishworth School—one of the UK's leading boarding schools—while benefiting from top-tier training, including sessions at top state-of-the-art training facilities.

Our comprehensive programme focuses on technical skills, tactical understanding, physical conditioning and mental resilience. Guided by experienced coaches, students receive tailored training to help them reach their full potential.



"RIFA has given me the opportunity to train at an elite level and is helping me to develop a pathway into professional football."

~ Current International RIFA Student from Mexico



RIFA's Education Provision

Rishworth School is a thriving, independent co-educational school with a happy mix of day students and boarders, set in over 140 acres of beautiful Yorkshire countryside.

Rishworth School combines a three hundred year history with innovation to create an atmosphere in which traditional values are cherished and invention and exploration are encouraged. Rishworth is an exceptionally friendly and caring international community, with 15 nationalities represented within the student body.

Academically, students at Rishworth achieve outstanding grades, where GCSE and A-Level students perform above the national average across all subjects including BTEC Sports Studies and A-Level Sport.

A Rishworth student enjoys a life filled with opportunities, including access to over 100 extracurricular clubs and activities each week. Throughout the year, students can also participate in an extensive range of cultural, leisure, creative and sporting trips, enriching their educational experience.





RIFA
Life at Rishworth

Ethos

For 300 years, our motto, "**Res Non Verba**," has shaped our culture, emphasising action over words. We believe in hands-on, experiential learning through guest speakers, field trips, experiments, and live briefs, recognising that every child learns differently.

Education

With small class sizes and passionate, knowledgeable teachers, our students achieve exceptional results.

GCSE (2025)

- 90% of our students attained grades 4 – 9 with GCSE results at grades 9 – 7 10% above the national average.

A-Level (2025)

- Almost 40% of A-level grades awarded at A–A*, placing Rishworth students more than 10% above the national average.
- BTECs and vocational qualifications were equally strong, with 75% of grades awarded at Distinction – Distinction*

English as a Foreign Language

We provide student-focused lessons in small groups for rapid language development, offering expert guidance and personalized tuition to help international students succeed across the curriculum.

> We encourage students to foster a deep love of learning, to build their confidence and courage to grow to be an individual, whilst embracing the warmth and unity of our community.
>
> ~ Mrs Jessica Sheldrick, Head of Rishworth School

Diet and Nutrition

Our experienced catering team prepares fresh, nutritious dishes from scratch using seasonal, locally sourced ingredients. Catering to all dietary needs, they offer students the chance to explore global cuisines and expand their palates.

The catering team can provide tailored meals for athletes, aligning with the students' training plans.







Boarding with RIFA

Our facilities are comfortable and homely, with welcoming common rooms for socialising and quiet study bedrooms for relaxation.

Our boarding community feels like one big family with our compassionate staff prioritising students' emotional, physical and social welfare.

Boarding life is an enriching and rewarding experience with a structured programme of activities in place for boarders including cooking, mini competitions, film nights, skiing and British holiday celebrations.

Boarding Moments



















> Boarding at Rishworth felt like my extended family, where the students, boarding staff and matron treated me as such.
>
> ~ Tobi C, Former Sixth Form Boarder from Nigeria



RIFA's Football Provision

RIFA provides a unique and elite programme for boys and girls from around the world. Under the leadership of our Head, Mrs Jessica Sheldrick, Director of Football, Mr Paz Shan (founder of Street Work Soccer Academy) and our Head of Sport, Mr Andy Thomas, the academy is backed by an extensive network of football connections and experienced consultants. Together, they bring over 85 years of expertise, helping young minds and aspiring footballers to achieve extraordinary success.

Meet the Director of Football: Paz Shan

Paz Shan has over 30 years of experience as a player and coach, including a former role as Manager of Manchester City FC Women's U17s. He leads RIFA, works with Manchester City FC's Recruitment Department, and is the Founder of Street Work Soccer Academy in Leeds. With a vast network of connections in professional football, nationally and internationally, Paz is highly respected within the industry.





Why Train with RIFA?

- '**Total Football**' Philosophy
- Individualised '**Player Pathways**'
- **Balanced** training and learning schedule
- **RIFA Perks** - including trips to watch Premier and Champions League matches
- Connections and training opportunities with **Premier League Giants**
- RIFA branded **Adidas uniform** and training kits provided



RIFA Philosophy

'Total Football' Approach

The RIFA 'total football' philosophy is one that emphasises supporting the whole person whilst playing attacking football with freedom and creativity.

Our holistic approach recognises that football development extends beyond the pitch. Our academy focuses not only on physical skills but also on mental resilience and character development. We aim to instil qualities such as leadership, sportsmanship, resilience and a strong work ethic that will benefit players both on and off the field.

We offer a bespoke individualised training programme ensuring the right balance is met from both a football and an academic perspective, set in a school with a reputation for the highest standards of pastoral care and excellent academic results.

Key Focus Areas

To develop a player's understanding of the game as a whole, we focus on the following:

Skill Development	A focus on improving ball control, dribbling, passing, shooting and other technical skills essential for a successful football player.
Tactical Understanding	Learn the fundamentals of team play, positioning and strategy to understand the game at a deeper level and make intelligent decisions on the field.
Physical Conditioning	Fitness training programmes designed to enhance speed, agility, strength and stamina which is essential within top level football.
Individual Attention	Regular individualised feedback and guidance to help maximise potential and skills as a player.
Mental Preparation	Develop the right mindset, confidence and resilience to overcome challenges and perform at an elite level.







RIFA Training

Training sessions are part of RIFA students' weekly timetable, whether that be evening sessions, weekday sessions or offsite sessions at leading Premier League Clubs within 30 miles. All students have a rest day over the weekend, and will attend matches outside of school hours.

Our training sessions focus on these key development areas:

Ball Mastery

Control and manipulation of the ball on different training surfaces.

Passing, receiving & possession

Tempo, retention and risk.

Defending

Pressing and blocking; beginning a press, protecting goal, defending in and around the box, pressing in the middle and defensive third.

Attacking

Build up the play from back 4, goalkeeper situations, creating in final third, finishing, and building play with advanced full backs.

Transition

Counter attacking, regaining to exploit space in wide areas, recovering team shape to counter.

Constructive Feedback

Honest feedback to the development of all the skills mentioned to help players learn and develop mid-session.

RIFA
Development



UEFA Licensed Coaching

Professional training taking your game to the next level.

- Highly qualified UEFA licensed football coaches with vast experience in football development, with over 16 hours of football played per week.
- RIFA offers a clear and unique pathway for students with opportunities into the professional football arena through the quality of the programme, and strong partnerships with professional football clubs globally.



Player Development Reviews

Every player excels with the right support system, whether it's from teammates, coaches, or their strongest supporters – their families. That's why we invite parents to join their child's termly development reviews with the Director of Football and coaching staff (via Zoom). During these reviews, we'll assess the student's strengths and areas for growth in five key areas: technical, tactical, physical, psychological and social development. Together, we'll create a clear, measurable development plan for the student to focus on in the upcoming term.

Individualised Player Pathways

RIFA's tailored pathways help students achieve their football goals—whether in professional, semi-professional, or coaching roles.

Through partnerships around the world, students can explore universities combining high-performance football with top-tier academics.

RIFA remains dedicated to supporting students throughout their journey and beyond.





RIFA Facilities

On-site Facilities

The unique part of the RIFA experience is also the professional high-quality training facilities within Rishworth School's grounds

- 3 Grass Football Pitches
- Indoor Sports Centre
- Weight Training Room
- Cardio Gym
- Swimming Pool



External Facilities

As part of a RIFA student's learning and development, some coaching sessions will also be delivered at top state-of-the-art training facilities, thus enabling students to have the ultimate professional academy player experience.



RIFA
Location Map



Burnley

Burnley

FC Halifax Town

LBA

Leeds

Leeds United

RISHWORTH INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL ACADEMY

RIFA at Rishworth School

Bolton Wanderers

Huddersfield Town

Manchester United

Oldham Athletic

Manchester

Liverpool

Liverpool

Everton

MAN

Manchester City

Sheffield

Location & Travel

Rishworth School is perfectly located in West Yorkshire, United Kingdom, less than a hour's drive from 10 elite football clubs. Nestled in the charming village of Rishworth, RIFA students enjoy a safe, tranquil environment with access to local shops, cafés and bus and train routes—perfect for weekend outings.

The school is also conveniently close to two major airports: Manchester Airport (35 minutes) and Leeds Bradford Airport (45 minutes). Transfers can be arranged through our DBS-certified taxi service.



> Students join us with varying levels of ability and knowledge, but our pathways help every student progress, and in their own time with the right programme.
>
> ~ Paz Shan, Director of Football

How to Apply

Tel: +44 (0) 1422 822217

Email: admissions@rishworth-school.co.uk

Web: www.rishworth-school.co.uk/rifa-rishworth-international-football-academy

Visit: @rifascoccer

Learn more about RIFA or complete an application form

RIFA at RISHWORTH INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL ACADEMY

RISHWORTH SCHOOL

Rishworth School
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