

RISS Anti-bullying Policy

ROTTERDAM INTERNATIONAL SECONDARY SCHOOL
RISS

Contents:

1.- Mission, Vision and Core Values	2
2.- Clarification of terms	2
3.- Roles, responsibilities and regulations	3
4.- Cyberbullying	4
5.- Reporting, sanctions and monitoring	5
6.- Strategies to reduce bullying	7
7. Actions	7
8.- Other policies	7
9.- Useful websites	8

Approved MR : April 2026

1.- Mission, Vision and Core Values

At Rotterdam International Secondary School (RISS), every student must feel safe, respected and able to learn. Our mission - *for every student to enjoy their youth* - and our vision of *educating for self-awareness, curiosity and integrity* guide all actions taken to prevent and respond to incidents of bullying.

Our core values of **Responsibility, Respect, Relationships and Courage** define how we expect all students and staff to treat each other. RISS is committed to fostering an inclusive environment where every student belongs and thrives. As such, we are committed to the ongoing prevention of bullying, harassment and any other form of aggression and violence.

Bullying undermines wellbeing, academic success and our school values. This policy ensures a proactive, consistent approach to preventing, identifying and responding to bullying across RISS.

RISS aims to:

- Ensure a safe, supportive culture for all students
- Identify bullying early and intervene effectively
- Support both the person experiencing bullying and the person engaging in the bullying behaviour through restorative means.
- Uphold the safeguarding requirements of the Dutch Government and school expectations.

RISS aims to create a supportive environment where students feel valued and included, reducing the likelihood of bullying. However, we also recognise that bullying is a complex phenomenon and that it requires a continued focus to manage and address.

2.- Clarification of terms

Definition of bullying

“Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online” - Anti-Bullying Alliance.

Any member of our community can determine when behaviour towards them is not desirable. Any joke, comment or action towards someone else is not acceptable once someone else indicates it makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe. When this type of behaviour continues, it can be defined as bullying, when it is systematic, hurtful or threatening and when a member of our community no longer feels safe.

Forms of bullying

- **Physical:** Deliberately hurting particular people on a regular basis
- **Verbal:** Deliberately hurting feelings through name-calling, etc.
- **Social Exclusion:** Making someone feel left out and different by deliberately setting out not to include them.
- **Social -Relational:** damaging someone’s social relationships or reputation, often to isolate or exclude them.
- **Emotional/ Psychological** manipulation or humiliation to instil fear, shame, or insecurity.
- **Cyber-bullying** misuse of any and all areas of the internet, including email, instant messaging and online gaming chats, as well as mobile threats by text messaging and calls. Misuse of all associated technology.

(*) Please note: RISS has a duty to ensure the safety of all individuals on our school premises, as mandated by Dutch law for safeguarding. However, any incidents occurring outside the school may still be addressed should they affect student well-being in school.

Possible Indicators of Bullying

All forms of bullying cause various stresses to people; however, responses are individual and may differ from case to case. Some potential indicators could be:

- changes in mood
- increased anxiety
- unexplainable injuries
- lost or destroyed belongings
- avoidance of school, including a potential increase in minor ailments or “faked” illness
- changes in eating habits
- difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
- withdrawal from friends or activities
- self-destructive behaviours such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide.

The above behaviours are not exclusive to incidents of bullying and may indicate other underlying concerns. All concerns will be explored sensitively.

Reasons bullying may occur

Students may bully due to feelings of insecurity, peer pressure, misunderstanding differences, previous experiences or a need for control, amongst other reasons.

What is NOT considered to be bullying?

Normal conflict, isolated incidents, unintentional exclusion, arguments or one-off unkind comments. These will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis in line with RISS’ behavioural expectations.

3.- Roles, responsibilities and regulations

In accordance with Dutch Education Law, the Dutch School Safety Act 2006 and the Dutch Equality Act 2010, RISS has a legal responsibility to prevent and respond to incidents of bullying. As such, RISS aims to provide a safe learning environment for all and fully complies with all laws pertaining to the prevention of discrimination of any kind.

The school has a duty to ensure that students feel safe at all times when they are under our care (including any school trips or out of hours activities) as well as dealing with any instances of cyberbullying that relate to, or have a direct impact upon, the school community.

In School Contacts

Executive Principal - Mr Matthijs Ruitenbergh	mru@wolfert.nl
Principal - Ms Lani Du Plessis	lp@wolfert.nl
Deputy Principal - Ms Natalie Prudhoe	npr@wolfert.nl
Head of Senior Years - Mr Timothy Mottram	tmo@wolfert.nl
Head of Middle Years - Mr Gerald Oudman	gou@wolfert.nl
Head of Foundation Years - Ms Marietjie Swart	msw@wolfert.nl
Anti-Bullying Coordinator - Mr William Murphy	wmu@wolfert.nl
School Counsellor/Vertrouwenspersoon - Ms Caley Stearn	cse@wolfert.nl
Wolfert Psychologist - Ms Vera Vergunst	vve@wolfert.nl

For staff seeking support related to bullying, the following may also be contacted:

Contactpersoon - Ms Diana van Adrichem-Smits	dad@wolfert.nl
Staff Wellbeing Advisor - Ms Scarlett Murphy	smu@wolfert.nl

The role of governors

The Executive Principal and the governing body of the school group support the implementation of this policy and ensure it is utilised to prevent bullying in all its forms. Any concerns about how a bullying incident has been dealt with may ultimately be escalated to the Executive Principal.

The role of the Principal

The Principal is ultimately responsible for the school-wide implementation of the anti-bullying strategy. They will ensure that all staff, students and families are familiar with the school's policy and how incidents of bullying will be recognised and addressed. The Principal also reserves the right to appoint an Anti-Bullying Coordinator to implement the procedures set out in this policy.

The role of the Anti-Bullying Coordinator

The Anti-Bullying Coordinator oversees the implementation of this policy and ensures that students and staff understand the school's expectations for behaviour and bullying prevention. They ensure that staff receive appropriate training to identify and respond to bullying. Together with the Heads of Section, the Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that all bullying incidents and actions taken are properly documented.

The role of staff

All RISS staff are responsible for staying alert to signs of bullying and responding in accordance with this policy. Staff must model respectful behaviour, act quickly on any concerns and record all incidents in the appropriate school systems (Magister logbook).

Staff will maintain appropriate training to identify and address bullying effectively. They will use a range of strategies to build a community based on trust and respect, including restorative practices to promote understanding, accountability, and the repair of any harm done.

Bullying in the workplace

Bullying incidents involving staff - towards students or colleagues - will be treated with utmost seriousness and addressed under the staff code of conduct. Investigations will follow the procedures outlined below and be led by the Principal with support from the school's governing body and Executive Principal.

If the Principal is implicated, concerns must be reported directly to the Executive Principal, who will initiate formal action with governing body support.

Concerns about staff bullying can be reported promptly to the senior leadership team, the MR (Medezeggenschapsraad) representative, our staff confidant or the Executive Principal.

The role of parents/guardians

Parents and guardians should report any concerns promptly to their child's tutor and/or Head of Section. Parents are expected to support the school's anti-bullying policy by supporting the school's core values and encouraging their children to be positive members of the school community.

The role of students

All students are expected to participate in any bullying awareness activities and engage in forming positive relationships within our school community.

Should a student feel that they are being bullied, they must report this immediately to a trusted adult (teacher, tutor, Head of Section, counsellor, Anti-Bullying Coordinator). Should bullying continue, then the student should continue to raise the matter

Seeking help, either for oneself or for observed incidents by another student who sees instances of bullying, is not "snitching" but responsible, courageous behaviour that responds to bullying in line with school expectations and the law.

Out of School Contacts

When actions within the school has not been satisfactorily addressed members of our community have access to the complaints procedure of BOOR, which can be accessed [here](https://stichtingboor.nl/over-ons/regelingen-en-formulieren/):
<https://stichtingboor.nl/over-ons/regelingen-en-formulieren/>

4.- Cyberbullying

Please refer directly to the [Acceptable Use of Technology Policy](#) on our website.

5.- Reporting, sanctions and monitoring

Procedure:

All members of RISS, staff and students, have a duty to report any incidents of bullying they encounter or suspect, using the following process:

Stage	People involved	Actions to be taken
Stage 1 - Disclosure or suspicion of incident	Students Parents Teaching staff Support staff	A written statement is taken from the student by the staff member to whom the disclosure is made, in a safe setting and recorded in line with RISS safeguarding procedures. The report is forwarded to the Head of Section, Tutor and Anti-Bullying Coordinator and formally logged in Magister.
Stage 2 - Inquiry	Head of section/ Tutor with Anti-bullying coordinator Involved students Parents Subject teachers	- Potential victims and perpetrators will be interviewed separately by the Head of Section/Tutor. The Anti-Bullying Coordinator will be informed and all outcomes will be documented in Magister. Students will be encouraged and supported to collect and save evidence (such as photos, screenshots, emails or messages), along with any relevant witness statements. - Tutors and subject teachers will be informed only to monitor interactions between the students involved; no details of the concern will be shared at this stage. - Parents of the students involved will be notified of the inquiry and possible consequences in accordance with Dutch law. All student names will be anonymised to comply with GDPR requirements.
Stage 3 - Outcomes	Head of section Anti-bullying coordinator Involved students Parents Counsellors Pastoral Team	Confirmed Incident - Support and guidance will be offered to all affected students by the pastoral team and/or counselling department. - Appropriate sanctions will be applied to the perpetrator in line with the RISS Restorative Practices and Formal Code of Conduct or escalated through the sanctions ranging from verbal to written communications. All behaviours and actions will be documented in Magister, and parents will be informed of the outcome. No Clear Evidence - The interactions between the students involved will continue to be monitored to ensure everyone feels safe at school. - Support and guidance will still be provided to all parties through the pastoral and counselling teams, and preventative conversation highlighting concerns will be held with those involved and their parents.
The below is followed only after a bullying incident is confirmed		
Stage 4 - Restoration	Anti-bullying coordinator Students	Restorative conversations will take place between the students involved, focusing on helping them understand the impact of the incident. These conversations are intended to integrate students back into the school community so that effective learning may continue to take place.
Stage 5 - Follow up	Students Anti-bullying coordinator Heads of Section Pastoral Team Counsellors Parents	- Regular check-ins will be scheduled with all involved students to ensure no further issues arise. - Follow-up conversations with parents will take place in order to ensure that any actions have been implemented and the ongoing support for all parties. - Where appropriate, pastoral guidance will be incorporated into tutor time to support learning around the incident. - Relevant staff will complete an incident review form to reflect on the process. - A review of all potential bullying incidents will be conducted to inform and improve practice every two years.

Sanctions

The level of consequence to be applied for bullying behaviour is to be decided in consultation between the Anti-Bullying Coordinator and Leadership Team, based on the level of severity and/or repetitive nature of the incident/s. Any decisions, including the applied sanction, will be detailed in full on Magister

Level of Sanction	Sanction to be applied
Low Level Isolated Incidents	Verbal warning given to perpetrator - The expectation is that the student must stop the bullying behaviour immediately and take responsibility for their actions. This will be noted in the student's logbook on Magister.
Low-Mid Level Repeated Incident	Written information and warning sent home to parents of perpetrator - The student must participate with all restorative processes following the incident (s), and any further incidents will be met with additional consequences.
Mid Level Continued Incidents	The Anti-Bullying Coordinator will continue to monitor the situation and suggest restorative actions as outlined in the RISS Handbook.
Mid-High Level Severe Incidents	Fixed-term suspension (in consultation with the Care and Crisis Team) - Student will be provided with work at home via Google Classroom (in order for learning to continue) for a period at the discretion of the Leadership Team. This is to offer time for reflection and provide some distance between the perpetrator and the victim.
High Level Repeated/ Very Severe Incidents	Permanent exclusion - The school will work to help the student find an alternate school placement, in the meantime the student is expected to continue learning with work provided until a new placement is found.
Very High Level Extreme Incidents	Police Involvement - This will only happen in extreme cases. In the Netherlands some bullying incidents may be classified as a criminal offence, these include: ● Violence ● Theft ● Repeated harassment (including online) ● Hate crimes

Monitoring, evaluation and review

As stated in the above procedure, all incidents of bullying behaviour and subsequent actions will be recorded in the Magister Logbook system as an Incident, and clearly marked as "pesten". Incident review forms will also be stored centrally and used to carry out a review of all bullying incidents and how they have been dealt with in order to improve on current practice. This will be conducted every two years.

The Executive Principal reserves the right to request data of any and all incidents of bullying, should they be required.

This policy will also be reviewed every two years by the Anti-Bullying Coordinator and the Senior Leadership Team to ensure its implementation remains effective and aligned with all current policies.

6.- Strategies to reduce bullying

RISS aims to prevent incidents of bullying by raising awareness, supporting both victims and perpetrators of bullying and promoting a safe culture through embedding our mission, vision and core values in all that we do.

Direct prevention starts with our tutors. As such their role within the prevention of bullying is as follows:

- Discuss expectations, both in school and in the online realm on an annual basis.
- Be aware of group dynamics within their class, especially any behaviours that may be classified as bullying.
- Log any observations of untoward behaviour on Magister.
- Integrate topics related to bullying and mutual respect across all age ranges of the pastoral curriculum.
- Conduct individual conversations with students when necessary.
- Attempt to restore group cohesion and safety after any incidents where possible.

Throughout the school, all staff are expected to :

- Utilise restorative practices in order to improve understanding of the impact of bullying and build relationships based on this mutual understanding.
- Promote awareness campaigns within school, such as Anti-Bullying Week.
- Access training for staff to identify and respond to instances of bullying.
- Address any instances of discrimination when it is encountered.
- Celebrate diversity and inclusion in the school.
- Provide supervision during breaks.
- Engage in contact with parents, both throughout the reporting procedure of bullying incidents and to inform on the signs of bullying and the procedures in place
- Ensure that an effective recording system is maintained (Magister Logbook)
- Maintain and enforce our policy on the use of mobile devices and online resources within school.
- Collaborate with external agencies where relevant (e.g. Youz, Veilig Thuis and the local police)
- Model expectations of behaviour at all times.

7. Actions

Bullying incidents will be addressed in line with the procedures set out above and the “[Restorative Practices and Formal Code of Conduct](#)” section of the Student Handbook (found on the RISS website)

8.- Other policies

All other relevant policies can be found in the [key documents section](#) of the RISS website. The aim of all policies is to ensure the safest possible environment for all of our students.

In addition, this policy follows the lead provided by the following Dutch Government organisations.

- [Child Abuse](#) Board, Government of the Netherlands.
- [Youth Care and Child Protection](#), Government of the Netherlands.
- [Netherlands Youth Institute](#), Government of the Netherlands.
- [Reporting Code Domestic Violence and Child Abuse](#), Government of the Netherlands.
- [Guided steps in dealing with Bullying Incidents](#)

Finally, as school members of Wolfert and BOOR, this policy is in line with their guidelines and procedures.

- The BOOR Code of Conduct and Complaints Procedure can be found [here](#)

9.- [Useful Resources](#)

Please use the link above to access a variety of resources that provide information, help and support for people who may be dealing with bullying incidents and those support them.