ISI Policy Number : 10a
Reviewed by: KdF
Date: Trinity. 2026
Next Review: Trinity. 2027

RISHWORTH SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Distribution: Issued to parents and students (including boarders) via Students' Handbook, Student Planner and to parents via the website. Available to staff via same and via School's Internal Policy Files.

1. Preamble

1.1 This policy forms part of a series of policies whose purpose is to promote and protect students' welfare throughout their education at Rishworth. These policies, which should be read in conjunction with the most recent version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and the school policies:

a) Safeguarding Policy & Child Protection Procedures,

b) Health and Safety,

c) Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits and

d) Behaviour Policy.

1.2 The keynote of all these policies is that students will learn best in a safe and calm environment that is free from disruption and in which education is the primary focus.

2. Principles

2.1 Rishworth School has a zero tolerance to bullying or child on child abuse. This policy exists to help prevent and combat bullying, promote welfare and allow all members of the school community to live as one together. Prevention of bullying comes first, followed by swift intervention to deal with any incidents that do occur. Bullying, including child-on-child abuse, may constitute a safeguarding concern. All bullying concerns with safeguarding elements will be referred to the DSL

3. What is meant by bullying?

3.1 Bullying (including prejudice based and discriminatory bullying and cyberbullying; including online and off-site behaviour where it impacts pupils' safety) may be understood as the persistent or systematic use of superior strength or influence to intimidate another person (or persons) such that the repeated treatment received by that person (or persons) from the other (or others) causes, or is likely or intended to cause, hurt or harm. Such hurt or harm includes physical, emotional, sexual and social (for example besmirching a person's reputation or attacking someone, overtly or covertly, based on race, gender or sexual orientation).

3.2 It follows that bullying can take many forms besides the physical, including verbal, gestural, taking property belonging to another, and 'cyber' (the misuse of technology, e.g. texts / sexting, mobile phones, emails and the internet, including social networking sites, films and photographs), and can involve extortion, humiliation, spreading rumours and exclusion.

Child-on-child abuse goes much further than just bullying, it includes:

- sexual violence
- sexual harassment
- upskirting
- abusive initiation/hazing
- image-based abuse
- coercive control

3.3 The intimidating treatment of a person on the basis of that person's attachment to (or supposed attachment to) a particular group or sub-group or prejudice of those with a protected characteristic is unacceptable. Such groups and sub-groups can be based, for instance, on sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment (but not gender as such), race/ethnicity, age, religion/belief which are protected characteristics as well as socio-economic background, SEND, disability, or physical appearance. These groups and sub-groups may be particularly vulnerable. Staff are aware that where it comes to child-on-child abuse, boys can be targeted, but girls are more likely to be the victim and boys the perpetrators.

3.4 The list of such sub-groups is virtually limitless, however; it is the principle of ostracism by identification with sub-groupings (perhaps best understood through the concept enshrined in the Japanese language and culture of 'in-groups' and 'out-groups') that is unacceptable. Whatever form bullying takes, it is the effect on its victim, which can be devastating, leading to psychological harm and even suicide, that is the main concern. Even words, gestures or actions not intended to cause hurt sometimes can. On this point the School recognises, and tries to educate students about behaviour that another may feel is genuinely hurtful and perceive as bullying, such as initiation ceremonies that might cause pain, anxiety or humiliation. Child on Child abuse should never be accepted as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys'. Child on child abuse often meets the threshold for the recording and investigation of criminal offences by the Police. Child on child allegations that do not meet the threshold for police investigation will be subject of internal school investigation by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or senior leaders at the school. This will involve speaking to the victim and any witnesses to secure accounts of the allegation. All findings including any additional information secured, will be considered when making decisions around resolution of the allegation. Outcomes may involve application of the school behaviour policy.

3.5 Bullying becomes a safeguarding concern where child on child abuse becomes more than a behaviour management issue and a child is at potential risk of significant harm and where indicators of harm are evident within the child as would be seen in any other abusive situation, for example, where a child may be abused by an adult, and as outlined within the Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures section 3.8.

3.6 There is no 'hierarchy' of bullying - all forms of bullying should be treated seriously and dealt with appropriately. Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are laws that make it a criminal offence to assault, harass or threaten others.

4. Policy Aims

4.1 To create an environment that prevents bullying being a serious problem in the first place.

4.2 To prevent and/or deal with any behaviour that might constitute bullying by promoting an understanding and environment that activities that might be described as 'banter', 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys' are not used to excuse bad or abusive behaviour.

4.3 To promote an awareness of the need to ensure everyone is entitled to live in the school community free from intimidation.

4.4 To understand and be vigilant to the fact that boarding students, students with identified Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities are potentially more vulnerable and disproportionately impacted with regard to bullying or child on child abuse particularly where relationships can develop between students and where there may be a gender imbalance. Our aim is to build a secure framework around boarding students to ensure that they feel supported and able to speak to any staff but particularly House Staff about any concerns that they have.

4.5 To respond to any incident of bullying in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent manner.

4.6 To safeguard and provide appropriate support to any student who has been the victim of bullying, this may, with parental consent include secure external agency support where deemed appropriate

4.7 To apply measures (including disciplinary sanctions, in accordance with the School's Behaviour Policy), to any student who is found to be responsible for bullying, in addition to providing them with appropriate help and guidance and to learn how they can take steps to repair the harm they have caused. As the School's Behaviour Policy makes clear, it is unwise to equate an offence, in abstraction, with a given sanction, as each case must be considered on its own terms. None the less, it should be noted that strong sanctions, including exclusion, may be appropriate in cases of severe and persistent bullying.

5. Strategies

5.1 To create an ethos of good behaviour where students treat one another and staff with respect because they know this is the right way to behave.

5.2 To promote a climate of openness (a) in which it is widely perceived as 'right' to report any instance of anyone being treated improperly by anyone else, (b) in which bullying specifically is understood to be unacceptable, and (c) which works on the twin principles that bullying thrives on secrecy and prevention is better than cure. All staff will reassure victims that they can report matters confidentially and that their concerns are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting child on child abuse, nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

5.3 To follow the Rishworth Bullying Awareness Three Stage Procedure when any bullying is found to have taken place (see item 7).

5.4 To ensure that there is a clear and effective reporting system exists for dealing with bullying and suspected bullying of which staff, students and parents are aware and to ensure that all staff are particularly vigilant with regard to child-on-child bullying, especially within the boarding context where students are more vulnerable through the fact that they reside away from home.

5.5 To help prevent bullying by providing opportunities for discussion by students and staff within the school's PSHCE, RSE and Enhanced Curriculum and pastoral programmes, as well as through subjects' curricular openings (e.g. through empathy work in History and English) and assemblies. Particular effort is made through the PSHCE, RSE and Enhanced Curriculum programme to promote tolerance and respect towards all, but with particular attention towards prejudice of those with protected characteristics (see 3.3). The PSHCE, RSE and Enhanced Curriculum programmes are available to all staff within the Staff shared drives.

5.6 To make sure staff are well placed to administer the policy by incorporating anti-bullying as part of the induction of new staff and ensure that appropriate training is provided for all staff through the InSeT programme. All staff are trained to understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers, that are abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it. Staff are clear that whilst these may be responded to through behaviour management processes, there is also a need for this information to be shared with the DSL in order to address any underlying safeguarding concerns. School staff are particularly vigilant of students with identified Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities who may be particularly vulnerable to child-on-child abuse or whom have the potential to be disproportionately impacted.

5.7 To recognise that there are times and places in schools where bullying is most likely to occur and to implement effective procedures to combat bullying at these times and places. The School identifies the most likely times and places for bullying to occur as:

- Before school, break and lunchtime in the outdoor play area, indoor day areas and students' toilets
- additionally, for boarders, out of day-school hours in the boarding houses and the boarders' social areas
- when travelling to and from school by bus

Supervision (including patrols by staff and prefects) allows for the regular monitoring of all of these areas at the times when students use them. Students travelling by bus are monitored by sixth form students.

5.8 To ensure, through vigilance and the education of students, that there are no 'initiation ceremonies or hazing rituals'.

5.9 To ensure that students are aware of the Bullying Policy in particular through the information sheet for students (a copy of which is in every student's planner)

5.10 To ensure that students are aware of the standards and expectations set by the School's Student Acceptable ICT Use Agreement (a copy of which is in every student's planner) regarding cyber activities (as defined above).

5.11 To provide opportunities for continuing professional development to staff, via InSet and other means, regarding their roles and responsibilities in preventing and responding to bullying.

5.12 To ensure that all students have access at all times to an adult in school to whom they may talk in confidence and know that that adult will deal with the matter urgently and with discretion. It is particularly important that students who board know that they have an outlet to speak to an adult (hopefully their tutors in the first instance) as they are potentially more vulnerable to bullying or mistreatment through the nature of boarding and being away from their family.

5.13 To make students aware of helplines, and that such numbers are prominently displayed in and around the School.

5.14 To follow up every incident of bullying so as (a) to take any initial precautionary steps to ensure that a student who says (s)he has been bullied feels protected and reassured (b) to establish by investigation those facts which are knowable (c) to provide every possible support for the victim and perpetrators, where bullying has indeed taken place (d) to ensure that false allegations are identified as such and dealt with appropriately and (e) to help prevent any recurrence of bullying where it has occurred.

5.15 To make clear to students and parents that bullying is unacceptable and that the School will not tolerate such behaviour whether it has occurred within our outside of 'School' e.g. via social media. The point is that if a member of our community is being bullied by another member of our community the matter must be addressed.

5.16 To review and update (as necessary) this policy and its procedures annually and to circulate a copy of any updated version of it to staff.

5.17 To be aware that although bullying itself is not a specific criminal offence, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – can amount to a criminal offence: for instance, under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003 and the Public Order Act 1986. The School may seek assistance from the police in appropriate circumstances.

5.18 To involve parents and guardians by making a copy of this policy available via the school's website.

5.19 School recognises that perpetrators of child-on-child abuse may have identified un-met needs of their own and with parental consultation, may secure external agency support where this is deemed appropriate.

6. Procedure for dealing with bullying

6.1. Tutors must inform all new students of the staff to whom they can talk to in confidence about bullying e.g. Tutor, Head of Year, Houseparent, Matron, Pastoral Manager and Deputy Head Pastoral.

6.2. Any incident of possible bullying must ALWAYS be acted on by the member of staff who has witnessed it or to whom it is reported. Incidents may be reported from a variety of sources, parents, prefects, students and teaching, administrative or ancillary staff.

6.3. Administrative and ancillary staff who receive a report of suspected bullying from a student or a parent must ALWAYS inform the Deputy Head Pastoral immediately, or, in their absence the Head or other member of SLT.

6.4. In every case involving an incident of possible bullying, (a) consideration should be given to what immediate, precautionary steps might be taken to help the student feel safe and secure (b) the student's tutor must be informed, and (c) the Tutor must inform the Head of Year and, in the case of a boarder, his or her Houseparent. Staff are clear that whilst these may be responded to through behaviour management processes, there is also a need for this information to be shared with the DSL in order to address any underlying safeguarding concerns.

6.5. Following a report of possible bullying a suitable member of staff, such as the Tutor and/or the Head of Year (and the Houseparent and/or Assistant Houseparent in the case of a boarder) will investigate the incident in order to check the facts and assess its seriousness. If the incident constitutes bullying or child on child abuse, the member of staff will decide how best to proceed: different solutions are needed for different students. Consideration will be given, amongst others, to the following issues:

- whether or not to contact parents, and at what stage
- if punishment is necessary, what sanction should be imposed (please see bullying awareness procedure below)
- if the victim or perpetrator needs guidance, what advice will be appropriate (e.g. for the victim, tips for reducing hypersensitivity, for controlling overreaction, for avoiding potentially fraught situations, for managing verbal exchanges, for avoiding escalation etc; for the perpetrator, tips for understanding others' feelings and viewpoints, for increasing self-awareness of motivation, for behaving within stipulated guidelines etc)
- what, if any, follow-up work is required, and by whom it will be undertaken

6.6. Written records of every investigation and any communication with parents should be kept in the student's file and where child on child abuse is identified also logged within CPOMS.

6.7. The school keeps a central log on iSAMS of allegations and/or incidents of bullying to help any patterns to be identified and for internal review purposes and inspection, as required by the Head and Chair of Governors as well as a copy within CPOMS of safeguarding concerns and follow up.

7. Bullying Awareness Procedure

7.1 A system of three levels of bullying awareness stages will be used when dealing with instances of bullying. This involves students acknowledging their awareness of the seriousness of their behaviour.

7.2 Stage 1: Bullying Awareness Verbal Advice

A member of staff has a conversation with a student about their behaviour. Following this discussion, the student and the member of staff will sign the slip. The student acknowledges that they are aware that **their actions have been inappropriate** and could be seen as bullying, and that they will not repeat them. A sanction may be applied at this stage if appropriate; this would typically be a detention level 1 – 2.

A Stage One record goes on their file. A student would be offered support to improve their behaviour at this point and may also enter the restorative approaches process to support repair of the relationship with the person towards whom their behaviour has been directed.

7.3 Stage 2: Bullying Awareness Verbal Warning

Should a further incident occur where a student has already received a Stage One Bullying Awareness Verbal Advice at some point in their school career or if their actions are considered to be more serious than Stage 1, the Head of Year (Preparatory Deputy Head) will meet with the student to discuss their behaviour. An appropriate sanction will be applied at this stage. The student must acknowledge that their actions **are a form of bullying** and commits not to repeat them in any circumstance or against any student.

This Stage Two Bullying Verbal Warning goes on their file. A student would be offered support to improve their behaviour at this stage and may also enter the restorative approaches process to support repair of the relationship with the person towards whom their behaviour has been directed. Sanctions at this stage would typically be Level 3, 4, isolation or even suspension, depending on the severity of the incident or series of incidents.

7.4 Stage 3: Bullying Awareness Written Warning

Should a further incident occur where a student has already received a Bullying Awareness Verbal Warning Slip at any point in their school career or if their actions are considered to be more serious than Stage Two, a formal written warning will be issued.

The student and their parent(s) will meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team, to discuss their behaviour. A sanction will be applied at this stage; this would typically be a suspension.
The student, staff and parent(s) will sign to acknowledge that the student's actions are a form of bullying and will commit not to repeat them in any circumstance or against any student.
This Stage Three Formal Warning goes on their file. If the student is permitted to stay in the school, they will be put on a behaviour contract for up to a term.

See also:

Rishworth School Safeguarding Policy & Child Protection Procedures
Appendix A: Bullying information sheet for students
Appendix B: Our own Bullying poster derived from our Policy

References:

DfE Preventing and tackling bullying Advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies (July 2017)
The Education Independent School Standards (England) Regulations (2014)
Boarding Schools: National Minimum Standards (April 2015) (Standard 12)

The Equality Act 2010
The Children Act 1989

Appendix A: Bullying information sheet for students (Years 6 -13)

Is **it bullying?**
It is bullying if you feel hurt because of things said about your ethnic background, religious faith, gender, sexuality, disability, special educational need, appearance or issues in your family. It is bullying if you feel hurt because individuals or groups are:

- calling you names
- threatening you
- pressuring you to give someone money or possessions
- hitting you
- damaging your possessions
- spreading rumours about you or your family
- *using text, email or web space to write or say hurtful things (cyberbullying).*

We do not tolerate bullying at Rishworth School. This is what we do about bullying:

- *train teaching staff, non-teaching staff and prefects to identify and deal with incidents of bullying*
- *through lessons and assemblies, make students aware of what is acceptable and what is unacceptable behaviour*
- *make sure that any person being bullied is safe*
- *work to stop the bullying happening again*
- *provide support to the person being bullied.*

What should you do?
Talk to someone you trust and get them to help you take the right steps to stop the bullying. If you feel you are being bullied:

- try to stay calm and look as confident as you can
- be firm and clear— look them in the eye and tell them to stop
- get away from the situation as quickly as possible
- *tell an adult what has happened straight away or, if you do not feel comfortable telling* an *adult, tell another student.*

If you have been bullied:

- tell a teacher, another adult or a prefect in School
- tell your family
- *if you are scared to tell a teacher or an adult on your own, ask* a *friend to go with you*
- *keep on speaking until someone listens and does something to stop the bullying*
- *don't blame yourself for what has happened.*

When you are talking to an adult about bullying be clear about:

- what has happened to you
- how often it has happened
- who was involved
- who saw what was happening
- where it happened
- what you have done about it already.

Bullying thrives in a climate of secrecy

- ***Tell someone if ever you feel you have been subjected to hurtful treatment or words.***
- ***Tell someone if ever you witness someone else being subjected* to *hurtful treatment or words.***
- ***This is not 'sneaking'. It is not 'grassing'. It's being a responsible member of a caring community.***
- ***If you do not tell someone who is in a position to help, the problem is unlikely to go away.***
- ***If you do tell someone, you put the School in a position* to *do something to help.***

.., Also, the bully's cover is blown - they are exposed and have nowhere to hide. So you help stop recurrences of bullying - in your own regard and generally.

If you find it difficult to talk to anyone at school or at home, ring ChildLine on **freephone 0800 1111.** This is a confidential helpline.



STOP BULLYING

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It is bullying if you feel hurt because of things said about your ethnic background, religious faith, gender, sexuality, disability, special educational need, appearance or issues in your family. It is bullying if you feel hurt because individuals or groups are:

calling you names
threatening you
pressuring you to give someone money or possessions
hitting you
damaging your possessions
spreading rumours about you or your family
using text, email or web space to write or say hurtful things (cyberbullying).

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make sure that any person being bullied is safe
work to stop the bullying happening again
provide support to the person being bullied.

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be firm and clear — look them in the eye and tell them to stop
get away from the situation as quickly as possible
tell an adult what has happened straight away or, if you do not feel comfortable telling an adult, tell another pupil.

If you have been bullied:

tell a teacher, another adult or a prefect in School
tell your family
if you are scared to tell a teacher or an adult on your own, ask a friend to go with you
keep on speaking until someone listens and does something to stop the bullying
don't blame yourself for what has happened.



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Tell someone if ever you feel you have been subjected to hurtful treatment or words.
Tell someone if ever you witness someone else being subjected to hurtful treatment or words.
This is not 'sneaking'. It's not 'grassing'. It's being a responsible member of a caring community.
If you do not tell someone who is in a position to help, the problem is unlikely to go away.
If you do tell someone, you put the School in a position to do something to help.

... Also, the bully's cover is blown - they are exposed and have nowhere to hide. So you help stop recurrences of bullying - in your own regard and generally.

