



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY INCLUDING CYBER-BULLYING

School update	
Responsible for review of policy	Deputy Head Pastoral
Last school update	April 2025
Governor Sub-Committee approval	
Sub Committee to review and approve	Pastoral
Review Period	Annual
Scheduled review	May 2026
Approved by Sub Committee (Meeting date)	1 May 2025
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Related policies	Behaviour and Discipline Policy Safeguarding Policy Policies on Internet Safety and Acceptable Use Sharing of nudes and semi-nude imagery Rewards and Sanctions Anti-bullying Policy: Appendix on Cyber-Bullying Digital Safety AI Policy DfE Meeting digital & technology standards in schools & colleges 2022

Uploaded to Staff Shared	May 2025
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1. POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 The RMS community is based upon the School's six shared values: Inclusivity, Courage, Ambition, Kindness, Perseverance and Integrity.

1.2 The School is committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that each pupil can develop to their full potential.

1.3 Pupils are expected to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a calm and purposeful atmosphere.

1.4 The School treats all pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the School. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions. This policy pays due regard to the DFE Guidance Preventing and Tackling Bullying (October 2017).

1.5 The School prides itself on its ethos and parents/guardians have an important role in supporting the School in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and home have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together.

1.6 Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated and any kind of bullying is unacceptable. The School recognises that bullying causes psychological damage and even suicide. Although bullying itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

1.7 If staff feel that an offence may have been committed they will seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communication Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

1.8 Where bullying involves pupils from other schools, clubs or external groups, the school will liaise as necessary with appropriate staff from these organisations. The Head will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify Herts Early Help services or, in more serious cases, the police.

1.9 The Heads of School are always informed of incidents involving bullying and delegate responsibility for anti-bullying work to the Deputy Head Pastoral and Heads of Year in the Senior School. The Pastoral Team is alert to the signs of bullying and trained to handle bullying behaviour. RMS embeds the training of The Girls on Board strategy with staff and pupils. The Heads of Ruspini, Cadogan & Sixth Form are responsible for dealing with incidents in these areas of RMS.

This policy applies to all pupils whether under or over 18 years of age.

Procedures for Ruspini House and Cadogan House reference this whole school Anti-bullying Policy.

2. DEFINITION OF BULLYING

2.1 Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally or a single act of great significance

2.2 Bullying can take many forms, for instance, cyber-bullying via social media/ internet, physical - kicking, hitting, verbal - unpleasant comments or noises or non-verbal - looks, ignoring. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or culture or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities.

- 2.3 It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences, such as differences in intellectual ability or special educational needs or physical disability.
- 2.4 The School recognises there are a number of different roles which can be involved in bullying e.g. perpetrator, victim, bystanders and reinforcers.
- 2.5 The school recognises that emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical and that this may be perpetrated directly or indirectly through cyber-technology. (See policy on Cyber-bullying)
- 2.6 A bullying incident is treated as a safeguarding concern when there is “reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer, significant harm”.
- 2.7 The school uses the Herts guidance on bullying (Appendix 1) to determine if an incident constitutes bullying.
- 2.8 The school recognises that boarders cannot ‘escape’ in person bullying as easily as day pupils as they go home less frequently.

3. AIMS

RMS:

- provides an environment where all feel respected, secure and valued
- fosters an ethos that builds pupil self-esteem
- fosters an ethos which encourages pupils to come forward if they see or hear of bullying
- enforces a zero tolerance approach to bullying
- ensure a swift, proportionate and consistent response to reported incidents, safeguarding the victim and triggering sources of support
- ensures staff act as positive role models in terms of communication and respect for each other
- minimises opportunities for bullying e.g. through appropriate supervision and vigilance of staff on duty at break and lunchtimes
- implements a structured Lifeskills programme that develops strong personal and inter-personal skills and deals specifically with the issue of bullying
- provides internet security, monitoring and filtering
- ensures pupils are aware of all the support available eg Wellbeing Prefects, Chaplain, Counsellors, Heads of Year, Deputy Head or any member of staff
- ensures pupils have easily accessible and feely advertised contact details for external agencies e.g. Childline and that boarders have access to an Independent Listener
- ensures staff are trained to recognise pupil on pupil abuse and to be particularly aware of the potential risks to boarders eg of initiation ceremonies
- applies sanctions to the bully and ensures behaviour modification strategies are in place and that lessons are learnt
- embed principles of Girls on Board. Parents, pupils and staff have access to the Wellbeing Hub which has a wealth of information and advice
- ensures pupils can report bullying via the worry form
- Anti-Bullying Ambassadors have a weekly drop-in session.

4. SIGNS OF BULLYING

- 4.1 Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:
- unwillingness to return to school
 - displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
 - failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others.
 - books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged
 - change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
 - diminished levels of self-confidence
 - frequent visits to the Health Centre with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches
 - frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
 - choosing the company of adults

- displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- difficulty in sleeping, experiences of nightmares
- talking of suicide or running away
- negative responses on Smoothwall Pulse check-ins

4.2 Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying will be investigated by parents and teachers.

4.3 Certain groups of pupils may be more vulnerable to bullying such as disabled children or those with Special Educational Needs or learning differences; those from homes in challenging circumstances; ethnic/ faith minority groups; LGBTQ young people. EAL pupils and boarders.

5. SCHOOL RESPONSE IF BULLYING IS SUSPECTED

5.1 The Herts criteria list (Appendix 1), will be used to ascertain that bullying has taken place.

5.2 A child alleging bullying will be offered appropriate support, recognising that it may have been hard to come forward. The pupil will be made aware of the limits of confidentiality and will be listened to with respect.

5.3 All the facts will be recorded in response to open-ended questions and then reported to the relevant Head of Year or Deputy Head (Pastoral) or Head of School so that there is an agreed plan of action. The Head is always informed of any bullying incident

5.4 Interviews will be conducted where possible in the presence of more than one member of staff and dated and signed witness statements will be taken.

5.5 Parents will be informed as appropriate during the course of the investigation

5.6 Once all the facts have been ascertained, senior staff will agree on a way forward and this may involve a meeting with parents of both the bully and the victim. It is important to understand the motivation behind the bullying because there may be underlying issues affecting the bully that need addressing via early help. Every effort will be made to resolve the issues by discussion, so that the bully understands that their behaviour has caused distress and is unacceptable

5.7 An appropriate sanction will be imposed in a fair and proportionate manner and could involve an exclusion. The sanction is designed to underline to the perpetrator the unacceptability of their behaviour; deter others and send a signal to the wider community that bullying at RMS will not be tolerated. The sanction will be followed up to explore the moral dimension of the behaviour and how to make better choices in the future.

5.8 If appropriate, counselling will be offered to both the bully and the victim. It is important that the bully learns the need for behaviour modification.

5.9 The situation will be monitored to ensure that the interventions have been successful

5.10 The incident will be recorded on CPOMS and attention paid to any emerging patterns of behaviour. The sanction will be recorded on iSAMS.

6. INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS

6.1 The School seeks to support parents of children who are either bullying or being bullied. Problems are discussed and help and advice are offered.

6.2 Parents are invited to meetings where the motivations behind their child's behaviour are explored and appropriate professional support for the family will be discussed.

6.3 Parents of the bullied pupil will be supported and helped to promote the confidence and self-esteem of their child and professional support will be made available as appropriate, e.g. through the Counsellors and external courses such as Triple P or Wellbeing Hub.

7. RAISING AWARENESS

7.1 The School adopts the following measures to prevent bullying.

7.2 Assemblies are used to explore issues around bullying and communicate the RMS Six Core Values. National Anti-bullying Week is always given a high profile

7.3 The Lifeskills programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as members of a community, including that of never being a passive bystander or enforcer. Pupils are encouraged to develop the social skills to enable them to act assertively in the presence of behaviour that undermines RMS Values and they are made aware of confidential helplines and external agencies to which they may turn, in addition to the RMS Pastoral Team

7.4 The curriculum, particularly RS, History, English and Drama, highlights the issue of bullying and reinforces this message that bullying is unacceptable

7.5 Pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they suspect that bullying, including cyber-bullying, may be taking place. Pupils can also use the online Worry Form.

7.6 The pastoral team gives support and guidance to staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies. Staff awareness of bullying and how to reduce bullying is raised through ongoing staff training. Staff are made aware of their responsibilities to be vigilant and to take action promptly to resolve and prevent problems. Staff awareness is raised regarding particularly vulnerable groups of pupils including those with SEND and LGBTQ pupils. There's also a friendship mediator who offers sessions.

7.7 The School Counsellors have an important role to play. The Counsellors are available to give confidential advice and counselling support to pupils who can refer themselves confidentially when they have social, emotional or behavioural concerns.

7.8 In boarding houses, there are strong staff teams who support the Housemistresses who act in loco parentis. The informal house environment is important in reinforcing a pupil's standards and values, providing the opportunity for friendly, informal discussion of matters of concern to the individual pupil.

7.9 Older pupils are trained as Wellbeing Prefects and encouraged to offer advice and support to younger pupils.

7.10 Leadership training for Sixth Formers and the team of prefects/Heads of Boarding Houses specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable pupils and being vigilant regarding potential bullying behaviours.

7.11 RMS pupils, parents and staff have access to the Wellbeing Hub which offers advice for dealing with bullying both as victims and perpetrators.

7.12 Pupils and Heads of Year in Y7-9 have undertaken Girls on Board training to help them deal with friendship issues.

7.13 Pupils have been trained as Anti-Bullying Ambassadors and there is a weekly drop-in session. There is a specific email: antibullying@rmsforgirls.com.

8. CYBER BULLYING

- 8.1 RMS embraces the advantages of modern technology in terms of the educational benefits it brings, however the School is mindful of the potential for bullying to occur. Cyber-bullying must be understood as a form of bullying in the same way as the more traditionally understood forms.
- 8.2 Cyberbullying differs from other forms of bullying in several significant ways and can have far greater impact than 'traditional bullying' because of a number of factors including:
- the invasion of personal space and time.
 - the anonymity (at least initially) of the bully.
 - the ability to broadcast upsetting messages and images rapidly to a potentially huge audience and to continue to do so repeatedly over a long period of time.
 - the knowledge that the data is in the global domain, disproportionately amplifying the negative effect on the victim, even though the bully may feel their actual actions had been no worse than conventional forms of bullying
 - the fact that cyberbullying can take place between peers and across generations. Teachers can be victims and age is not important.
 - the fact that this can take place at any time in or out of school.
- 8.3 Another difference is that other pupils who would not normally take part in bullying behaviour may be drawn in as accessories or bystanders. This can happen, for example, when an image is circulated on a mobile phone by a bully and recipients extend the circulation further by passing it on. By passing on a humiliating picture or message, a bystander becomes an accessory to the bullying.
- 8.4 The School adopts exactly the same approach to cyber-bullying as to any other form of bullying and will not hesitate to call in external agencies including the police, as appropriate:
- 8.5 The School has an educative approach for all students who misuse technology
- 8.6 The School endeavours to block access to inappropriate websites, using firewalls, antivirus protection and filtering systems and up-to-date filtering technology is used to provide a safe platform within the School system. Where appropriate, the Network Manager audits online communications and tracks pupil usage of the School Network.

9. DEFINITION OF CYBER-BULLYING

- 9.1 DfE guidance offers the following definition of cyber-bullying:

The use of Information & Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else.

- 9.2 Cyberbullying can take a number of different forms: threats and intimidation, harassment or 'cyberstalking' (e.g. repeatedly sending unwanted texts or instant messages), vilification/defamation, exclusion/peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorised publication of private information/images and 'trolling' (abusing the internet to provoke or offend others online). It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing the bully with another route to harass their target. It can include sharing of nudes and semi-nudes.
- 9.3 Examples include:
- Threatening behaviour
 - Trolling
 - Blackmailing, including revenge porn
 - Grooming on-line
 - Fake profiles
 - Hacking accounts
 - Tagging photos with defamatory or negative comments

10. RAISING AWARENESS OF CYBER-BULLYING

- 10.1 The School educates pupils both in the proper and responsible use of e-communications and about the serious consequences of cyber-bullying and will, through Lifeskills, in computing lessons and assemblies, continue to build resilience in students to protect themselves and their peers online. Parents are educated through Lifeskills evenings and through resources from the Wellbeing Hub.
- 10.2 The School also recognises that it must 'take note of bullying perpetrated outside School which spills over into the School'. Under powers granted by the EIA 2006, the School is able to respond to cyberbullying carried out by pupils beyond the confines of the School. If staff discover that a child or young person is at risk as a consequence of online activity, this will be dealt with as a child protection issue and a referral may be made to external agencies including the police and Child Exploitation and Online Protection Unit (CEOP).
- 10.3 The School provides safeguarding training, of which e-safety is a part, so that all staff know how to respond effectively to reports of cyber- bullying or harassment and offers more specialised training for key staff (see school document GUIDANCE FOR STAFF ON RESPONDING TO A SHARING OF NUDES AND SEMI-NUDES images or videos).
- 10.4 In instances where alleged bullying involves pupils from other schools, clubs or external groups, the School will liaise as necessary with appropriate staff from these organisations.

11. CYBERBULLYING AND THE LAW

- 11.1 The School fully recognises its duty to protect all of its members and to provide a safe, healthy environment for everyone.
- 11.2 Pupils are entitled to freedom of expression and respect for their private lives, provided they do not infringe the rights of others. Infringement includes libel and slander (defamation), bullying, harassment and victimisation, inciting hatred on racial, religious or homophobic grounds (hate crimes), breach of confidentiality, breach of copyright or the School's trade mark, child pornography and a wide range of other criminal offences. There are a number of offences (both civil and criminal) that may be committed in the course of cyber-bullying. Some may be covered by more than one piece of legislation:
- 11.3 The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006) outlines powers which relate more directly to cyberbullying. Headteachers have the power 'to such an extent as is reasonable' to regulate the conduct of pupils when they are off the school site. The Act also provides a defence in confiscating items such as mobile phones from pupils.
- 11.4 There is not a specific law which makes cyberbullying illegal but it can be considered a criminal offence under several different acts including Protection from Harassment Act (1997), Malicious Communications Act (1988), Communications Act (2003) Obscene Publications Act (1959) and Computer Misuse Act (1990). (See Appendix 4)
- 11.5 The consequences of being prosecuted for such offences may be far-reaching. Convictions for some of these offences may also affect the ability of the offender to enter a career working with children or "vulnerable adults".
- 11.6 The law of defamation is also relevant. Someone who publishes material which is damaging to the reputation of an individual or a company may be sued for compensation.
- 11.7 Young people who use their mobile phones or other devices to record physical attacks can be prosecuted as accessories to serious criminal offences.

12. STRATEGIES TO PREVENT CYBER-BULLYING

- 12.1 The Head is always informed of incidents involving cyber-bullying (as any bullying incident) and delegates responsibility for anti-bullying work to the Deputy Head Pastoral (DSL and Heads of Year). The Head of Computing is also the RMS e-safety Coordinator. The Head of Cadogan House deals with incidents of cyberbullying in the Prep Department.
- 12.2 The Deputy Pastoral Head (DSL) will take overall responsibility for the co-ordination and implementation of cyberbullying prevention and response strategies by ensuring:
- that all incidents of cyberbullying both inside and outside school are dealt with effectively and will be managed and/or escalated in line with the procedures set out in the School's Anti-bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding Policy.
 - that all policies relating to safeguarding, including cyberbullying are reviewed in partnership with the Head of Senior School and updated regularly.
 - that all staff know that they need to report any safeguarding issues including cyberbullying to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Formal safeguarding training occurs each September with regular updates as appropriate. Staff receive weekly safeguarding updates via the NSPCC CASPAR bulletin. Staff are required to undertake differentiated safeguarding courses according to their roles at RMS.
 - that training is given (Prevent Duty) so that staff feel confident to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism, to challenge extremist ideas and to know how to make a referral when a child is at risk.
 - that parents/carers are informed and attention is drawn to the cyberbullying policy so that they are fully aware of the School's responsibility relating to safeguarding pupils and their welfare.
 - that all staff are aware of their responsibilities by providing clear guidance for staff on the use of technology within school and beyond.
- 12.3 The Deputy Head Pastoral will:
- ensure that all pupils are given clear guidance on the safe and positive use of technology, both in school and beyond, including how to manage their personal data and how to report abuse and bullying online.
 - Monitor that Heads of Year are following up with daily smoothwall notifications.
 - provide annual training, with the Head of Lifeskills, for parents/carers on online safety and the positive use of technology.
 - ensure the pupils are aware of and have signed School's Digital user and iPad/laptop home school agreements
 - provide additional training for staff and pupils on online safety and the above policies and procedures where required.
 - plan and deliver a curriculum on online safety in computing lessons which builds resilience in pupils to protect themselves and others online.
- The e-safety coordinator will plan a curriculum and work with the Head of Lifeskills and tutors in delivering a curriculum on online safety which builds resilience in pupils to protect themselves and others online.
- 12.4 Technical staff play a key role in maintaining a safe technical infrastructure at the School and in keeping abreast with the rapid succession of technical developments. RMS trains its staff to respond effectively to reports of cyber-bullying or harassment and has procedures in place to respond (Appendix 3). IT staff have completed additional online safety courses and all staff undertake additional training as required.
- 12.5 The Network Manager will:
- ensure adequate safeguards are in place to filter and monitor inappropriate content and alert the Designated Safeguarding Lead to safeguarding issues. The School uses Smoothwall to filter all internet access. Smoothwall records access to prohibited sites which enables the Network Manager to report issues to DSL
 - ensure that visitors to the School are given clear guidance on the use of technology in school. Visitors may be given highly restricted guest accounts which will not allow any

access to personal data and any misuse of the system will result in access to the system being withdrawn.

12.6 The Director of Finance & Operations will:

- ensure the School manages personal data in line with statutory requirements. The School is aware of its duties under the Data Protection Act (1998) and the 2018 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) . Careful consideration will be given when processing personal information so that the individual's privacy is respected where it needs protection. Access to the personal information will only be given to those who need it. The principles of the Data Protection Act and GDPR will be applied when processing, collecting, disclosing, retaining or disposing of information relating to a pupil or member of staff.

12.7 The School Governors will:

- appoint a governor in charge of digital safety who will work with the DSL to ensure the policies and practices relating to safeguarding including the prevention of cyberbullying are being implemented effectively. The current governor for digital safety is Ms Sharron Shackell.

13. PREVENTION STRATEGIES FOR PUPILS

13.1 Any pupil who has reason to believe that they or another pupil may be the victim of cyberbullying should speak to any member of staff without delay. (See Appendix 4)

13.2 In building resilience within its students RMS:

- expects all pupils to adhere to its acceptable use policies for the safe use technologies. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department monitors pupils' use.
- supports anti-bullying week.
- imposes both disciplinary and restorative sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet which may include specially prepared, mandatory support sessions and pupils are made aware of the serious sanctions at stake.
- issues all pupils with their own personal school email address. [Access to sites such as "hotmail" is not allowed].
- supports the European Commission's Safer Internet Programme and in particular their 'Web We Want' initiative.
- offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in Lifeskills lessons.
- offers guidance on keeping, names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- does not permit the use of mobile phones by pupils below Sixth Form during the school day by pupils having Yondr pouches.
- Sixth form can use their phones in Hind House.

13.3 RMS pupils are taught to protect themselves when using the internet in Computing lessons and as part of their Lifeskills programme. The UKCCIS has produced a digital code as an easy way to remember: **Zip it, Block it, Flag it.**

13.4 Pupils are advised to:

- Zip it: keep your personal stuff private and think about what you say and do online
- Block it: block people who send nasty messages and don't open unknown links and attachments
- Flag it: flag up with someone you trust if anything upsets you or if someone asks to meet you offline.

14. STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

14.1 The School seeks to work closely with parents and carers in promoting a culture of e-safety.

- 14.2 The School will always contact parents/carers with any worries about a pupil's online behaviour, and parents and carers are encouraged to share any worries about this issue with the School.
- 14.3 The School recognises that not all parents and guardians may feel equipped to protect their child/ward when they use electronic equipment at home. The School therefore, arranges discussion evenings for parents/guardians when external specialists advise about the potential benefits and hazards of this exploding technology, and the practical steps that parents/guardians can take to minimise the potential dangers to their children/wards. Parents have access to the Wellbeing Hub and there are information links on the Parent Portal. Both of these offer a wealth of information. Parents are also encouraged to use the Vodafone Parent Magazine.

Factors to help determine if incident constitutes bullying:

- Incident was bullying:
 1. Hurt has been deliberately/knowingly caused (physically or emotionally).
 2. It is a repeated incident or experience e.g. multiple incidents, cyberbullying or the involvement of a group.
 3. Involves an imbalance of power:
 - a. Target feels they cannot defend themselves, or
 - b. Perpetrator/s exploiting their power (size, age, popularity, coolness, abusive language, labelling/name calling, etc)
- Incident was not bullying* on this occasion because it was:
 1. The first hurtful incident between these children
 2. Teasing/banter between friends without intention to cause hurt (should not happen again)
 3. Falling out between friends after a quarrel, disagreement or misunderstanding
 4. Conflict that got out of hand (should not happen again)
 5. Activities that all parties have consented to and enjoyed (check for subtle coercion)
 - a. Got out of hand
 - b. Parental concern
 6. Other

* Knowing repetition of these behaviours would be indicative of bullying behaviour.

How To Stop Bullying

Encouragement to Tell

Tell someone in school as soon as possible – you will be listened to.

You can talk to any member of staff, an older pupil or the Counsellor or use the Worry Form

Not telling protects the bully or bullies and allows them to continue, perhaps bullying others too.

If you see anyone else being made unhappy by the behaviour or words of another pupil, tell the bully to stop and tell an adult or Sixth Former; don't be a passive bystander.

Do not reinforce bullies' behaviour through actions such as laughing.

Most difficulties can be sorted out quickly if they are reported promptly.

It is everyone's responsibility to make sure that RMS is a no-go zone for bullies

Look at the Wellbeing Hub for advice

To Parents

If you think your child may be being bullied, or tells you that they are, please let us know right away

Please reassure them that we will deal with the information sensitively but firmly.

Our approach to working with bullies is based on the belief that it is possible to counter bullying by treating the bully in such a way that they understand the unhappiness of the victim.

The aim is to involve the bully in a constructive solution. Sanctions will be enforced as appropriate that hold the bully to account and make clear distress they have caused.

Look at the Wellbeing Hub for advice on how to support

Please appreciate that informing us but asking us not to take any action will not resolve bullying behaviours.

Guidance for all members of RMS

Appendix 3 - GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

If you suspect or are told about a cyber-bullying incident, follow the protocol outlined below.

If the incident is of a sexualised nature, please follow the Nude and Semi-nude Policy and speak to DSL/DDSL as soon as possible; as outlined in that policy staff are not to take a screenshot of any nude or semi-nude of a child, nor should they share it to any device.

Mobile Phones/Devices

- Ask the pupil to show you the mobile phone/devices
- Where possible ask the pupil to save the material
- Where possible print off the offending material straight away
- Note clearly everything, on the screen relating to an inappropriate text message or image, to include the date, time and names - You may take a screen shot on an iPad or device (but not if the image is a nude or semi-nude)
- Make a transcript of a spoken message, again record date, times and names
- Tell the pupil to save the message/image
- Follow the protocol of any bullying incident and log the incident on CPOMS.
- Make sure there are no omissions
- Follow the protocol for any bullying incident
- Guidance can be found:

[NSPCC online abuse and bullying prevention guide 3.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/671122/NSPCC_online_abuse_and_bullying_prevention_guide_3.pdf)

Key messages

- Your online world will follow you offline. What you say or do online can be seen forever
- How you behave, upload or share may be seen by your parents, friends, teachers, lecturers or future employers and you can lose control of how its shared and by whom very quickly
- Some behaviours are illegal, make sure you know the facts or you could end up breaking the law
- Your behaviour online and your behaviour offline should be the same. Your online behaviour should reflect your offline behaviour – you shouldn't behave differently simply because you're online
- If you are worried about anything you have seen or done online you can speak to ChildLine on 0800 1111 or [www. childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

If you believe you or someone else is the victim of cyber-bullying, you must speak to an adult as soon as possible. This person could be a parent/guardian, your tutor, your housemistress, your Head of Year or the Deputy Head Pastoral but can be any member of staff. You could also report via the Worry Form or use antibullying@rmsforgirls.com

- Do not answer abusive messages but log and report them
- Do not delete anything until it has been shown to your Form Teacher, parents/guardian, Head of Year (even if it is upsetting, the material is important evidence which may need to be used later as proof of cyber-bullying)
- Do not give out personal details
- Never reply to abusive emails or messages
- Never reply to someone you do not know

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

It is vital that parents and the school work together to ensure that all pupils are aware of the serious consequences of getting involved in anything that might be seen to be cyber-bullying. RMS informs parents of the cyber-bullying policy and the procedures in place to deal with cyber-bullying.

- Parents can help by making sure their child understands the School's policy and, above all, how seriously RMS takes incidents of cyber-bullying
- Parents should also explain to their child legal issues relating to cyber-bullying
- If parents believe their child is the victim of cyber-bullying, they should save the offending material (if need be by saving an offensive text on their or their child's mobile phone) and make sure they have all relevant information before deleting anything
- Parents should contact the School as soon as possible. If the incident falls in the holidays RMS reserves the right to take action against bullying perpetrated outside the school which spills over into the school and/or including pupils at other schools.

Parents will find any of our Lifeskills parental information evenings beneficial.

ONLINE AT HOME

There is a wealth of information and advice for parents; important and useful information can be found on the following sites:

[NSPCC online abuse and bullying prevention guide 3.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-parents-and-carers>

<https://www.vodafone.co.uk/newscentre/app/uploads/2022/01/Digital-Parenting-Magazine-10th-Edition.pdf>

Relevant Laws

Obscene Publications Act 1959 makes it an offence to "publish" an obscene article (which can include written material, photographs or films). Publishing includes circulating, showing or transmitting the article.

Protection of Children Act 1978 makes it an offence to take an indecent photograph (or film) of a child. A "child" is anyone under 18. The definition of "photograph" includes images on a mobile phone or stored on a computer and also includes "pseudo-photographs" where images have been manipulated. It is also an offence for someone to distribute or show such images or to have them in their possession with the intention of showing them to others.

Public Order Act 1986 makes it an offence to use threatening, abusive or insulting words, behaviour and images with the intention to cause harassment, alarm or distress. This can apply where a mobile phone is used as a camera or video.

Malicious Communications Act 1988 makes it an offence to send an indecent, grossly offensive or threatening letter, electronic communication or other article to another person with the intention that it should cause them distress or anxiety.

Computer Misuse Act 1990 makes hacking into computers an offence.

Protection from Harassment Act 1997 creates both civil and criminal offences of harassment. Harassment is defined as a course of conduct which causes alarm or distress on more than one occasion. It is also an offence to cause another person to fear, on at least two occasions, that violence will be used against them.

Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send a grossly offensive, obscene, indecent or menacing communication. There is also an offence of sending a message that is known to be false for the purposes of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety.

Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019 makes it an offence to take an image beneath someone's clothing.