

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

2026/27

This policy reflects Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, DfE Behaviour in Schools guidance, the Independent School Standards and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, updated May 2026. It should be read alongside the College's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Behaviour Policy.

1) Policy Objectives

- This policy outlines what RIC will do to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying.
- RIC is committed to developing an anti-bullying culture where the bullying of adults and students is not tolerated in any form.
- This policy is also applicable in the boarding residences.
- To ensure that we recognise the unique cohort of our students, including students living in boarding, high numbers of international students and students with SEND.

2) Links with Other college Policies and Practices

This policy links with several college policies, practices and action plans including:

- Behaviour policy
- Complaints policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- Confidentiality policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Curriculum policies, such as, RSE, PSHE, and computing
- Searching and confiscation policy.

3) Links to Legislation

There are several pieces of legislation which set out measures and actions for colleges in response to bullying, as well as criminal and civil law. These may include (but are not limited to):

- The Education and Inspection Act 2006, 2011
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children Act 1989, 2004
- The Education (Independent college Standards) Regulations
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986



4) Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of:

- The Principal to communicate this policy to the college community, to ensure that disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably, and that a member of the senior leadership team has been identified to take overall responsibility.
- Governors to take a lead role in monitoring and reviewing this policy.
- All staff, including governors, senior leadership, teaching and non-teaching staff, to support, uphold and implement this policy accordingly.
- Parents/carers to support their children and work in partnership with the college.
- Students to abide by the policy.

5) Definition of Bullying

- Bullying can be defined as *'behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally'*. DfE 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying'
- Although bullying is generally characterised by behaviour which is repeated over time, the College will respond to one-off incidents to support early intervention and prevent further harm. A one-off incident may constitute harassment, discrimination, sexual harassment, child-on-child abuse or another safeguarding or behaviour concern and does not need to meet the definition of bullying before appropriate action is taken.
- Bullying can include physical and emotional abuse such as name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, taking belongings, producing offensive graffiti, gossiping, peer isolation (e.g. excluding people from groups) and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.
- The same unacceptable behaviours can be expressed online; this is sometimes called online bullying or cyberbullying. Specifically this can include sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos.
- RIC recognises that bullying can be emotionally abusive and can cause severe and adverse effects on our students emotional development.
- Bullying is recognised by RIC as being a form of child on child abuse.
 - Abuse is abuse and it should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up".
 - We recognise that even if there are no reports of bullying, it does not mean it is not happening and it may be the case that it is just not being reported.
 - All students experiencing bullying will be taken seriously and offered appropriate support, regardless of where the abuse takes place.



Bullying may constitute child-on-child abuse and/or raise wider safeguarding concerns. Where this is the case, the College will follow its safeguarding procedures alongside, rather than instead of, its anti-bullying and behaviour procedures. The DSL or a Deputy DSL will be involved where there is a safeguarding concern.

The College will consider the safeguarding and support needs of the student who has experienced the behaviour, the student alleged to have displayed the behaviour, and any other students who may have been affected.

6) Forms and Types of Bullying Covered by this Policy

- Bullying can happen to anyone. This policy covers all types and forms of bullying including but not limited to:
 - Bullying related to physical appearance
 - Bullying of young carers, children in care or otherwise related to home circumstances
 - Bullying related to physical/mental health conditions
 - Physical bullying
 - Emotional bullying
 - Sexual and sexist bullying, sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour, including unwanted sexual comments, sexualised name-calling, sexual rumours, unwanted sexual attention or touching, and behaviour which is misogynistic or misandrist.
 - Bullying via technology, known as online bullying or cyberbullying
 - Prejudiced-based and discriminatory bullying (against people/students with protected characteristics) which may include:
 - Bullying related to race, religion, faith and belief and for those without faith
 - Bullying related to ethnicity, nationality or culture
 - Bullying related to Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND)
 - Bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic/biphobic bullying)
 - Gender based bullying, including transphobic bullying (transphobic bullying is bullying on the basis of whether someone is or is assumed to be trans)
 - Bullying against teenage parents (pregnancy and maternity under the Equality Act).

Sexual violence, sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour may constitute safeguarding concerns rather than, or in addition to, bullying. Such concerns will be managed in accordance with the College's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and KCSIE 2026.



7) College Ethos

- RIC community recognises that all forms of bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals; it can create a barrier to learning and have serious consequences for mental wellbeing.
- By effectively preventing and tackling bullying our college can help to create a safe environment, where students are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

Our Community:

- Understands the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers.
- Monitors and reviews our anti-bullying policy and practice on a regular basis.
- Supports staff to promote positive relationships to help prevent bullying.
- Recognises that some members of our community may be more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others; this may include students with SEND. Appropriate reasonable adjustments will be made to reporting, investigation and support arrangements, and an absence of verbal disclosure will not be taken to mean that bullying has not occurred.
- Staff will also be alert to the particular vulnerabilities of students who are new to the UK or College, who speak English as an additional language, or whose cultural or linguistic differences may make them more vulnerable to isolation, prejudice or bullying.
- Will intervene by identifying and tackling bullying behaviour appropriately and promptly.
- Ensures our students are aware that bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that everyone should feel safe to learn and abide by the anti-bullying policy.
- Requires all members of the community to work with the college to uphold the anti-bullying policy.
- Recognises the potential impact of bullying on the wider family of those affected so will work in partnership with parents/carers regarding all reported bullying concerns and will seek to keep them informed at all stages.
- Will deal promptly with grievances regarding the college response to bullying in line with our complaints policy.
- Seeks to learn from good anti-bullying practice elsewhere.
- Utilises support from the Local Authority and other relevant organisations when appropriate.
- The College recognises the additional impact bullying may have in boarding, where students live alongside those involved and cannot readily remove themselves from the situation. Where bullying involves boarders, the College will consider whether immediate changes to supervision, routines, activities, bedrooms or boarding accommodation are required to safeguard and support those involved.

- Boarding staff will share relevant concerns with the DSL and appropriate pastoral and academic staff so that patterns of behaviour across the school day, boarding environment and online activity can be identified and addressed.
- A boarder will not be disadvantaged or sanctioned for making a bullying complaint in good faith and will have access to confidential routes for raising concerns, including the Independent Listener.
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8) Responding to Bullying Concerns

- The following steps will be taken when dealing with any incidents of bullying reported to the college:
- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached or witnessed the concern.
- The college will provide appropriate support for the person being bullied – making sure they are not at risk of immediate harm and will involve them in any decision-making, as appropriate.
- The College will take reasonable steps to protect students who report bullying, and students who provide information or act as witnesses, from retaliation, intimidation or further bullying. Any retaliatory behaviour will be treated seriously and may itself result in safeguarding and/or disciplinary action.
- All incidents of bullying, particularly those that involve sexualised language, online abuse, or prejudice, will be reviewed with a safeguarding lens. Staff will refer to the safeguarding team whenever there is a concern that a student is at risk of harm in line with KCSIE 2026.
- An appropriate member of staff will establish the facts and speak with those involved, where appropriate. Where the matter raises a safeguarding concern, the DSL or a Deputy DSL will determine how information should be gathered and whether advice from children's social care, the police or another safeguarding partner is required before further enquiries are made.
- A clear and precise account of bullying incidents will be recorded by the college, this will include recording appropriate details regarding decisions and action taken.
- The college will speak with and inform other staff members, where appropriate.
- The college will ensure parents/carers are kept informed about the concern and action taken, as appropriate and in line with child protection and confidentiality policies.
- Appropriate sanctions and support, for example as identified within the college behaviour policy and safeguarding and child protection policy, will be implemented in consultation with all parties concerned.
- If necessary, other agencies may be consulted or involved, for example the police if a criminal offence has been committed, or the local authority if a child is felt to be at risk of significant harm.



- Where the bullying of or by students takes place off college site or outside of normal college hours (including cyberbullying), the college will ensure that the concern is fully investigated and responded to in line with this policy and the college behaviour policy. If required, the DSL will collaborate with DSLs at other settings.

Cyberbullying

- When responding to cyberbullying concerns, the college will:
- Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified.
- Provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied, and work with the person who displayed bullying behaviour to ensure that it does not happen again.
- Encourage the person being bullied to preserve appropriate evidence, such as messages or screenshots, where it is safe and lawful to do so. Students and staff must not save, copy, forward or take screenshots of nude or semi-nude images of a child. Such incidents must be referred immediately to the DSL or a Deputy DSL.
- Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. This may include:
 - looking at use of the college systems
 - identifying and interviewing possible witnesses
 - Contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary.
- Work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation. This may include:
 - Support reports to a service provider to remove content if those involved are unable to be identified or if those involved refuse to or are unable to delete content.
 - Confiscating and searching students' electronic devices, such as mobile phones, in accordance with the law and the college searching and confiscation policy.
 - Requesting the deletion of locally-held content and content posted online if they contravene college behavioural policies.
- Where an individual can be identified, the college will ensure that appropriate sanctions are implemented to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully, as well as ensuring access to any additional help or support they may need.
- Inform the police if a criminal offence has been committed.
- Provide information to staff and students regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online. This may include:
 - advising those targeted not to retaliate or reply.
 - providing advice on blocking or removing people from contact lists.
 - helping those involved to consider and manage any private information they may have in the public domain.

- Online bullying may include the creation, alteration or sharing of abusive, humiliating or sexualised content using artificial intelligence or other digital tools, including deepfakes and digitally manipulated images.
- Any incident involving the creation or sharing of nude or semi-nude images of a child, including AI-generated or digitally manipulated sexual images, will be treated as a safeguarding matter and referred promptly to the DSL or a Deputy DSL.

Supporting students

students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Reassuring the pupil and providing immediate pastoral support.
- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their form tutor, Director of Studies, the DSL, or a member of staff of their choice.
- Being advised to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to any further concerns.
- Working towards restoring self-esteem and confidence.
- Providing ongoing support. This may include working and speaking with staff, offering formal counselling, engaging with parents and carers.
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance.
- Boarding students will be supported in the boarding environment by their houseparents. This can include observations, dedicated spaces to ensure the students involved have time out / a break or reviewing boarding accommodation.
- *students who have displayed bullying behaviour will be helped by:*
 - Discussing what happened, establishing the concern and the need to change.
 - Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude and behaviour of their child.
 - Providing appropriate education and support regarding their behaviour or actions.
 - If online, requesting that content be removed and reporting accounts/content to service providers.
 - Sanctioning, in line with college behaviour policy.
 - Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance.

Supporting Adults

Our college takes measures to prevent and tackle bullying among students; however, it is equally important to recognise that bullying of adults, including staff and parents, whether by students, parents or other staff members, is unacceptable. Where concerns are raised about bullying of or by staff members, this may fall under the school's Staff Code of Conduct or Whistleblowing Policy. Staff are supported to raise such concerns safely and confidentially.



Adults who have been bullied or affected will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the concern with the designated safeguarding lead, a senior member of staff and/or the Principal.
- Advising them to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to future concerns.
- Where the bullying takes place off college site or outside of normal college hours (including online), the college will still investigate the concern and ensure that appropriate action is taken in accordance with the colleges' behaviour and discipline policy.
- Reporting offensive or upsetting content and/or accounts to the service provider, where the bullying has occurred online.
- Reassuring and offering appropriate support.
- Working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance.

Adults who have displayed bullying behaviour will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened with a senior member of staff and/or the Principal to establish the concern.
- Establishing whether a legitimate grievance or concern has been raised and signposting to the college's official complaints procedures.
- If online, requesting that content be removed.
- Instigating disciplinary, civil or legal action as appropriate or required.

9) Preventing Bullying

Environment

The whole college community will:

- Create and support an inclusive environment which promotes a culture of mutual respect, consideration and care for others, which will be upheld by all.
- Recognise that bullying can be perpetrated or experienced by any member of the community.
- Recognise the potential for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to be disproportionately impacted by bullying and will implement additional pastoral support as required.
- Recognise that bullying may be affected and influenced by gender, age, ability and culture of those involved.
- Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as: children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with

caring responsibilities, religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference.

- Challenge practice and language (including 'banter') which does not uphold the college values of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect towards others.
- Be taught to use technology and online services safely, respectfully and responsibly. The use of mobile phones and other personal smart technology must comply with the College's Mobile Phone Policy and Acceptable Use Policy.
- Work with staff, the wider community and outside agencies to prevent and tackle concerns including all forms of prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying.
- Actively create "safe spaces" for vulnerable children and young people.
- Celebrate success and achievements to promote and build a positive college ethos.

Policy and Support

The whole college community will:

- Provide a range of approaches for students, staff and parents/carers to access support and report concerns.
- Regularly update and evaluate our practice to consider the developments of technology and provide up-to-date advice and education to all members of the community regarding positive online behaviour.
- Take appropriate, proportionate and reasonable action, in line with existing college policies, for any bullying brought to the colleges' attention, which involves or affects students, even when they are not on college premises; for example, when using transport, or online, etc.
- Implement appropriate consequences that reflect the seriousness of the incident, so that others see that bullying is unacceptable.
- Use a variety of techniques to resolve the issues between those who show bullying behaviour, and those who have been bullied.

Education and Training

The college community will:

- Train all staff, including teaching staff, support staff and pastoral staff, to identify all forms of bullying and take appropriate action, following the college's policy and procedures, including recording and reporting incidents.
- Consider a range of opportunities and approaches for addressing bullying throughout the curriculum and other activities, such as: assemblies, peer support and student voice.
- Collaborate with other local educational settings as appropriate, and during key times of the year, for example during transition.



- Provide systematic opportunities to develop students' social and emotional skills, including building self-esteem.

10) Involvement of students

We will:

- Involve students in conversations to ensure that they understand the college's approach and are clear about the part they play in preventing bullying.
- Regularly canvas students' views on the extent and nature of bullying.
- Ensure that all students know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying. Particular care is taken to ensure boarders know how to raise concerns confidently and confidentially, including through direct access to the Independent Listener, DSL, or Houseparents. Information is displayed in boarding houses and included in the Boarding Handbook.
- Ensure that all students are aware of the range of consequences which may be applied against those engaging in bullying.
- Student voice, including the views and experiences of boarders and students with SEND, will be used alongside incident data to assess whether students feel safe, understand how to report bullying and have confidence that concerns will be acted upon.
- Publicise the details of internal support, as well as external helplines and websites.
- Offer support to students who have been bullied and to those who are bullying to address the problems they have.

11) Involvement and Liaison with Parents and Carers

We will:

- Make sure that key information about prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying (including policies and named points of contact) is available to parents/carers via the college website.
- Ensure all parents/carers know who to contact if they are worried about bullying and where to access independent advice.
- Work with all parents/carers and the local community to address issues beyond the college gates that give rise to bullying.
- Ensure that parents work with the college to role model positive behaviour for students, both on and offline.
- Ensure all parents/carers know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively, to raise concerns in an appropriate manner.

12) Monitoring and Review: Putting Policy into Practice

- The college will ensure that all bullying incidents are logged centrally and they are regularly monitored and reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team to ensure the policy is being consistently applied.
- Records will be regularly analysed by senior leaders to identify patterns and trends, including repeated behaviour involving particular students or groups, protected characteristics, SEND, boarding houses or accommodation, locations, times of day and online activity. Leaders will use this analysis to inform preventative action, pastoral support, supervision, staff training and curriculum provision.
- Any issues identified will be incorporated into the college's action planning.
- The Principal will be informed of bullying concerns, as appropriate.
- Incidents of bullying will be recorded and communicated with Governors via termly reports or weekly if they are of a safeguarding nature.

13) Useful Links and Supporting Organisations

Useful sources of information and support include:

- Department for Education
- NSPCC
- Childline
- Anti-Bullying Alliance
- Childnet
- UK Safer Internet Centre
- Internet Watch Foundation
- Report Harmful Content

Current contact details and additional sources of specialist support are available through the College's safeguarding and pastoral teams.

Reviewed/Updated	Author	Approved by	Date
September 2019	ME	AB	September 2019
August 2020	ME	AB	August 2020
August 2021	BG	AB	August 2021
August 2022	KS	KF	August 2022
August 2023	KS	KF	August 2023
September 2024	KS	KF	September 2024
September 2025	KS	KF	September 2025
November 2025	KS	KF	November 2025
September 2026	KS	KF	September 2026