

# Child-on-child abuse policy

## November 2024

Approved by Local Governing Body

Chair of Governors: John Garner

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# 1. Introduction

Ruislip High School is committed to providing a caring, friendly, safe and supportive environment in which staff can work and students can receive their education. Abuse of any kind is unacceptable at Ruislip High School. If it does occur, all students should be able to tell a member of staff and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Any student in the school who becomes aware that this is happening is expected to tell a member of staff.

Child-on-child abuse left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals and their families. It can be a barrier to their learning and have serious consequences for their mental health. Such abuse which takes place at school does not only affect an individual during childhood but can have a lasting effect on their lives well into adulthood. By effectively preventing and tackling abuse, we can help to create a safe, disciplined environment where our students are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

This policy is the over-arching policy for any issue that could constitute child-on-child abuse. It should be read alongside the following policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- School Acceptable Use Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- RSE Policy
- Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy

It should also be read alongside the following Department for Education guidance and school protocols:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education - Department for Education guidance
- Searching, screening and confiscation - Department for Education guidance
- Information passed to the police school procedure
- Self harm and suicide decision making toolkit school procedure

## 1.1 Aims and objectives

The objective of this policy is to ensure that any form of child-on-child abuse or harmful behaviour is dealt with immediately and consistently. Consequently, when allegations are made and appropriate responses put in place, this will reduce the extent of harm to those involved and minimise the potential impact on emotional and mental health and well-being.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Ensure all governors, staff, students and parents have an understanding of what child-on-child abuse is.
- Acknowledge that everyone is entitled to feel safe and secure in the school environment, and that child-on-child abuse is openly acknowledged as being unacceptable.
- Ensure that students, staff, parents and governors understand the procedures to adopt in case of child-on-child abuse.
- Make sure that anyone involved in child-on-child abuse knows that they have the right to be heard and taken seriously.
- Ensure that everyone in school recognises their own responsibility in being watchful of incidents and reporting them.
- Ensure that all incidents, when they are reported, are dealt with as effectively as possible and that they are seen to be dealt with.

## **1.2 Review**

This Policy will be reviewed annually, and more often should legislation or statutory guidance change, in order to keep up to date with safeguarding issues as they emerge and evolve, including lessons learnt.

## **2. Roles and responsibilities**

### **2.1 Staff**

All staff must ensure that they:

- Are familiar with the school child-on-child abuse policy
- Recognise that the responsibility for dealing with child-on-child abuse incidents rests with all staff
- Respond to parents'/guardians' concerns regarding child-on-child abuse issues raised
- Record all incidents of child-on-child abuse on CPOMS
- Use a restorative approach towards incidents of child-on-child abuse, at least in the first instance

### **2.2 Students**

All students should:

- Act in a respectful way and supportive manner to all other students, reporting any suspected incidents which the victim may be afraid to report
- Refrain at all times from behaviour which would contribute to the abuse of other students
- Report all incidents of child-on-child abuse to the Pastoral Director, Head of Year, Form Tutor or other member of staff
- Adhere to and promote the principles of this policy

### **2.3 Parents/guardians**

The school requests that parents and guardians:

- Stress to their child the importance of social behaviour and responsible use of social media
- Report any concerns which they have concerning either victims or perpetrators
- Support actively the policy
- Recognise that the school has an impartial overview of incidents and trust that these will be investigated and actioned in a fair manner, using a restorative approach where appropriate

### **2.4 Governors**

The governing body have approved the child-on-child abuse policy, and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

### **2.5 Multi-agency working**

The school actively engages with its Local Safeguarding Partnership in relation to child-on-child abuse and works closely with the London Borough of Hillingdon Children's Services, the police and other relevant agencies in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Partnership's procedures, as well as with other schools. These are essential relationships in preventing, early identifying, and appropriately handling, child-on-child abuse. Working together with local agencies is, furthermore, crucial in supporting and helping to inform the local community about the school's response to child-on-child abuse, as well as allowing for an understanding of any underlying trends and patterns of behaviour which are emerging in this wider context. Often, child-on-child abuse cases are complex and where the incident cannot be managed by the school itself, it is imperative that effective partnership working is involved, especially when wider safeguarding concerns exist.

### **3. Definition and types of child-on-child abuse**

#### **3.1 Definition of child-on-child abuse**

Child-on-child abuse is defined as any form of physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse, and/or coercive control, exercised between children and within children's relationships, both intimate and non-intimate.

Child-on-child abuse is behaviour by an individual or group of individuals which can be a one-off incident or repeated over time. Child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Child-on-child abuse can take many forms and the following list is not exhaustive:

#### **3.2 Physical abuse**

Physical abuse may include hitting, kicking, nipping, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm to another person. There may be many reasons why a child harms another and it is important to understand why they have engaged in such behaviour, including accidentally, before considering the action to take or sanctions to introduce.

#### **3.3 Bullying**

Bullying in whatever form is unwanted, aggressive behaviour that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. See Appendix 1 - Anti bullying strategy.

#### **3.4 Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience. Cyberbullying involves the use of mobile devices to harass, threaten or intimidate someone. Cyberbullying can fall into criminal behaviour under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 (Section 1) which states that a person who sends electronic communications which are "indecent or grossly offensive, convey a threat or false information or demonstrate that there is an intention to cause distress or anxiety to the victim" would be deemed to have committed an offence.

The Communications Act 2003 (Section 127) further supports this and states that a person is guilty of an offence if he/she sends by means of a public electronic communications network a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character or if for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another he/she sends a message by means of a public electronic communications network knowing that the message is false.

If the behaviour involves the taking or distributing of indecent images of young people under the age of 18 then this is also a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Outside of the immediate support students may require in these instances, the school will have no option but to involve the Police to investigate these allegations.

#### **3.5 Sharing nude and semi-nude images (formerly known as sexting)**

Sharing of nude or semi-nude images is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video via the internet or mobile device. This includes sending 'nude/semi-nude pics' or 'rude pics' or 'nude/semi-nude selfies'. Pressuring someone into sending a nude picture can happen in any relationship and to anyone, whatever their age, gender or sexual preference. Once the image is taken and sent, the sender has lost control of the image and the image could end up anywhere. By having in their possession or distributing to

others indecent images of a person under 18, many young people are not aware that they could be committing a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Any direct disclosure by a student will be taken very seriously. A student who discloses they are the subject of sexual imagery is likely to be embarrassed and worried about the consequences. It is likely that disclosure in the school is a last resort and they may have already tried to resolve the issue themselves. When an incident involving the inappropriate sharing of images via the internet or mobile device comes to the school's attention we will follow the guidance as set out in the UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) publication outlined below. The key consideration is for staff not to view or forward illegal images of a child. In some cases, it may be more appropriate to confiscate any devices to preserve any evidence and hand them to the Police for inspection.

When considering appropriate action regarding the sharing of inappropriate images, the Designated Safeguard Lead (DSL) will take the age of the child involved and the context into account. Children under 13 are given extra protection from sexual abuse. The law makes it clear that sexual activity with a child under 13 is never acceptable and that children of this age can never legally give consent to engage in sexual activity. Any situations involving students and the sharing of nude and semi-nude images will be taken seriously as potentially being indicative of a wider child protection concern or as being problematic sexual behaviour.

### **3.6 Initiation/Hazing**

Hazing is a form of initiation ceremony which is used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as a school or sports team etc. Hazing can also be used as initiation into a street or other 'gang'. There are several different forms, from relatively mild rituals to severe and sometimes violent ceremonies. The idea behind this practice is that it welcomes newcomers by subjecting them to a series of trials which promote a bond between them. After the hazing is over, the newcomers also have something in common with older or established members of the organisation or 'gang', because they have all experienced this as part of a 'rite of passage'. Many rituals involve humiliation, embarrassment, abuse and harassment.

### **3.7 Prejudiced-based and discriminatory bullying/behaviour**

The term prejudiced-based or discriminatory bullying refers to a range of hurtful behaviour which is physical, emotional or both, causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised, and which is connected with prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society – in particular, prejudices related to disabilities and special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, home life, (for example in relation to issues of care, parental occupation, poverty and social class) and sexual identity (homosexual, bisexual, transsexual).

### **3.8 Teenage relationship abuse**

Teenage relationship abuse is defined as a pattern of actual, or threatened acts, of physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse perpetrated by an adolescent (between the ages of 13 and 18) against a current or former partner. Abuse may include insults, coercion, social sabotage, sexual harassment, threats and/or acts of physical or sexual abuse. Abuse can occur online and offline and is never acceptable.

### **3.9 Upskirting**

'Upskirting' typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence.

### **3.10 Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Children who are

victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. Children's sexual behaviours exist on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected to highly abnormal and abusive. We recognise the importance of distinguishing between problematic and abusive sexual behaviour.

### **3.11 Verbal abuse**

Verbal abuse may include insults, name calling, gossiping, rumour-mongering, repeated teasing or making offensive remarks. There may be many reasons why a child harms another and it is important to understand why they have engaged in such behaviour, including accidentally, before considering the action to take or sanctions to introduce.

### **3.12 Racist abuse**

Racist abuse refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, both physical and psychological, that makes an individual(s) feel unwelcome, marginalised and excluded, powerless or worthless because of colour, ethnicity, culture, faith community, national origin or national status.

### **3.13 Sexist abuse**

Sexist abuse refers to a range of behaviours which demean, intimidate or harm another person.

### **3.14 Homophobic, biphobic or transphobic abuse**

This is where bullying is motivated by a prejudice against lesbian, gay or bisexual people, or towards people whose sense of their gender or gender identity is different to typical gender 'norms'

The above lists are not exhaustive, but are intended to give examples of the types of child-on-child abuse which young people may experience.

### **3.15 Extra-familial harm**

Extra-familial harm is defined as risks to the welfare of children that arise within the community or peer group, including sexual and criminal exploitation. A key element of extra-familial harm is that in general, harm does not arise from the home environment; parents may not be aware that their child is at risk or may be struggling to protect their child and the family from harm against exploiters. However, sometimes parental neglect and lack of supervision may contribute to the young person's exposure to extra-familial harm. Children who experience difficulties or instability at home may be more likely to spend more time outside of home and hence be more vulnerable to extra-familial harm.

Extra-familial harm can take the form of:

- Child sexual exploitation
- Child criminal exploitation including drug dealing both locally and through county lines
- Modern slavery and trafficking
- Gang activity and youth violence
- Radicalisation

## **4. Dealing with concerns and allegations**

All concerns and allegations of child-on-child abuse must be handled promptly, sensitively, and appropriately. These responses can have a significant impact on the environment of a school.

All responses should:



- Include a thorough investigation of the concerns and allegations in the wider context in which they occur
- Assess whether it is appropriate for the police or Children's Services to carry out this process
- Treat all students involved as at potential risk. This should also include the student who is allegedly responsible for the abuse as they may have unmet needs and be at risk themselves
- Ensure that a safeguarding response is in place for both the student who has allegedly been abused, and anyone who is alleged to be responsible for it and understand that sanctions may need to be applied for the latter.

All responses should take into account:

- The abuse may indicate wider safeguarding concerns for all those involved and address the impact of wider contexts, such as peer groups, family, school environment, local community, previous experiences of crime and victimisation and the student's online presence
- the complexity of the interplay between power, choice and consent and consider that a child cannot consent if their choices are being limited

## **4.1 Safety plans**

The school may carry out a safety plan with regard to:

- Any student who is considered to have behaved abusively or violently
- Any student who has allegedly been abused directly or affected by the alleged abusive or violent behaviour by a peer
- Any student who is deemed at risk from another student in the judgement of the DSL

If a student is considered to have behaved inappropriately, but not in a violent or abusive fashion, the DSL would apply their professional judgement in the context of the young person's individual needs and context, to ascertain whether it would be appropriate to contact Children's Services and/or carry out a safety plan. Where other young people have witnessed alleged abuse or violent behaviour, the DSL should assess the risk to them and consider whether a safety plan would be appropriate for their needs.

## **4.2 Signs of child-on-child abuse**

The following may be signs that a student is experiencing child-on-child abuse, although there may be other explanations:

- Emotional - losing interest in school, poor attendance or punctuality, anxiety, tearfulness, signs of depression, lack of confidence, withdrawn, lacking in confidence, unusual shows of temper, headaches and stomach aches
- Physical - unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts, missing belongings, damaged clothes or schoolwork, loss of appetite, stomach aches, headaches.
- Behavioural - asking to be taken to school, frequent requests to attend the welfare room, taking longer to get home, asking for money, using different routes to school, 'losing' more items than usual, sudden changes in behaviour and mood, concentration difficulties, truancy.

## **4.3 Students that are vulnerable**

The influence of peers is possibly the most significant factor in a child's social development and, as such, anyone can be subject to child-on-child abuse. However, there are certain groups who may be more at risk than others. For example, those with protected characteristics such as:

- Those who are socially isolated from their peer-group
- Those who are questioning their sexuality and identity

- Those with SEND needs: a school must be careful not merely to assume that indicators of possible abuse relate only to their specific learning needs and are not investigated beyond this assumption
- Those with different ethnicity, race or religious beliefs
- Young carers
- Students that identify as LGBTQ+
- Looked after children
- Students who are on a Child in Need (CIN) or Child Protection (CP) plan
- Students who have poor attendance to school
- Students who are known to the police
- Students with mental health concerns

## 5. Sexual violence and sexual harassment

At Ruislip High School we make it clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up. Any decisions on how to proceed with an allegation of sexual violence and sexual harassment will be made on a case by case basis with the DSL or deputy taking a leading role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as children's social care and the Police as required.

We have a zero tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. It is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. All staff have been made aware that even if there are no reports in our school, it does not mean it is not happening – it may be the case that it is just not being reported. If staff have any concerns regarding such abuse they must speak to the DSL or deputy as soon as possible.

School staff understand that addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) is an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future. Sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and is not tolerated; it should never be passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys".

When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school. Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- sexual "jokes" or taunting;
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes, displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature.

### 5.1 Online sexual harassment

This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:

- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos
- sexualised online bullying;
- unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media;
- sexual exploitation; coercion and threats.

All reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are thoroughly investigated, addressed and logged; victims are fully supported by staff. Along with providing support to students who are victims of sexual violence or sexual harassment, the school provides the alleged perpetrator(s) with an education, safeguarding support as appropriate and implement any disciplinary sanctions. A child abusing another child may be a sign they have been abused themselves or a sign of wider issues that require addressing within the culture of the school.

Taking disciplinary action and providing appropriate support, can, and should, occur at the same time if necessary. Educational strategies may include:

- Mentoring programme
- Counselling sessions
- Pastoral support sessions that focus on specific behaviours and attitudes
- External agency advice and support
- Risk assessments
- Behaviour contracts
- Restorative sessions

The school's response to sexual violence and sexual harassment will always be:

- Proportionate
- Considered
- Supportive
- Decided on a case-by-case basis

Parents will always be contacted and where appropriate the police.

Sanctions will be issued on a case-by-case basis and take in to account:

- The age and developmental stage of the alleged perpetrator(s)
- The nature and frequency of the alleged incident(s)
- How to balance the sanction alongside education and safeguarding support (if necessary, these should take place at the same time)

Possible sanctions include:

- A verbal informal/formal warning
- Detention
- Meeting with the Safer Schools Police Officer
- A period of internal suspension (length dependent on incident)
- Suspension (fixed-term exclusion) - length dependent on incident
- Permanent exclusion

## **5.2 The role of education in the prevention of sexual violence and sexual harassment**

The School recognises and values the importance of preventative education for all students and we follow a broad and balanced Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum.

RSE is lifelong learning about the emotional, social and cultural development of students, and involves learning about relationships, sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles, diversity and personal identity.

RSE involves acquiring information, developing skills, forming positive beliefs, values, attitudes and personal empowerment to deal with situations within relationships and the family unit. It teaches what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships. This helps students understand the positive effects that good relationships have on their mental wellbeing, identify when relationships are not right and understand how such situations can be managed.

Please see the school website to access the full RSE Policy which includes curriculum maps for each year group.

# **Appendix 1 - Ruislip High School anti-bullying strategy**

## **Introduction**

Providing a safe and happy learning environment is integral to achieving the wider objectives of school improvement: raising attainment, improving school attendance; promoting equality and diversity; and ensuring the well-being of all members of the school community. All students have a collective responsibility to ensure that they promote the values of kindness and respect amongst their peers and others in the school and wider community. Students are made aware of the schools anti bullying strategy and the procedures that can arise from cases of bullying.

## **1. Definitions of bullying**

Bullying behaviour can be defined as an action, or number of repeated actions, causing harm to people or relationships. This behaviour could be intentional or unintentional and may be on-going. The definition equally encompasses physical or non-physical actions, therefore the harm could be physical, emotional, or both.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner (2006) outlined four key characteristics of bullying:

- Repetitive and persistent
- Intentionally harmful
- Involving an imbalance of power
- Causing feelings of distress, fear, loneliness or lack of confidence

Bullying behaviour can be direct or indirect;

Direct bullying can include physical threats, verbal insults or taunts and directly contacting a person with obscene or insulting messages by using, for example, a mobile phone.

Indirect bullying can include persistently ignoring a student so that they feel socially isolated, spreading malicious rumours, or insults, often via social network sites on the Internet, or writing offensive graffiti.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Ruislip High School. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to tell a member of staff and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Any student in the school who becomes aware that bullying is happening is expected to tell a member of staff.

## **2. Strategies for the prevention and reduction of bullying**

2.1 Raise awareness of the nature of bullying through Cultural Studies, tutor time, assemblies and subject areas to develop students' assertiveness in order that they may feel better able to deal with bullying situations

2.2 Ensure that students are aware of all avenues for reporting bullying

2.3 Encourage staff to be proactive in combating bullying by observing behaviour and reporting concerns to the Pastoral Director / Head of Year and to serve as a good role model to students

2.4 Implement the Positive Behaviour Policy to ensure that behaviour is good so that bullying incidents are apparent

2.5 Reinforce positively the school ethos through the use of the RHS values and reward system

2.6 Co-operating closely with parents and guardians

### **3. Procedures for monitoring, reporting and responding to bullying**

3.1 All allegations of bullying should be logged so that a record of all bullying incidents can be kept

3.2 Allegations of bullying must be reported to the pastoral team, form tutor or other member of staff

3.3 All allegations of bullying will be discussed and/or investigated further. A member of the pastoral team will take statements to determine the appropriate course of action

3.4 The school will take a restorative approach in the first instance

3.5 Parents/guardians will be notified

3.6 If necessary and appropriate, the Safer Schools Police Officer will be invited to speak to students.

### **4. Help and support**

Students who have been bullied will be supported by the pastoral team and/or a member of staff of their choice. Students will be given the opportunity to take part in a restorative meeting and will be given support and reassurance throughout the process. Where appropriate, students will be signposted or referred to other support agencies.

Students who have perpetrated an act of bullying will be helped in the first instance by discussing the incident and trying to engage empathy, establishing the cause(s) and effect(s) of the wrongdoing and the need to change. Should further incidents occur, the support of parents/guardians will be sought and concerns will be discussed in a school meeting. Students will be encouraged to take part in a restorative meeting, or may be asked to apologise either verbally or in writing.

A referral to partner agencies, eg. the Educational Psychologist may be contacted where deemed appropriate. The Safer Schools Police Officer may be invited to meet with the student and parents/guardians.

### **5. Anti-bullying protocol and escalation of sanctions**

Incidents of bullying will be dealt with in line with the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy.

All incidents of bullying will be investigated and logged. Where appropriate, and inline with the school's Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy, a sanction may be given. In cases of bullying that result in malicious damage or physical assault the school will take action to ensure that appropriate sanctions (including a Fixed Term suspension or permanent removal of the student(s) from the school) are put in place to address the nature of the bullying incident; this will include temporary withdrawal from circulation of a student(s) while an investigation takes place. In cases of serious physical assault or damage to school property this may also lead to a police referral.

### **6. Groups who are particularly vulnerable to bullying**

The school recognises that bullying can be a bigger problem for children who are vulnerable or in some way different, such as those with learning difficulties or disabilities, differing ethnic and sexual orientations, less privileged family backgrounds or those recognised as gifted and talented.

Bullying of vulnerable groups often comprises the negative use of language. There are two simple rules that can be used to tackle prejudiced-based language, eg. homophobic language:

- Words that individuals use or would use to describe themselves (eg. *gay, lesbian, bisexual, girl, black*) are acceptable.
- Words or phrases that wrongly imply an individual's membership of a group and/or refer to that particular group in a derogatory way are wrong (eg. *faggot, that's so gay, you're so gay*).

The school endorses the work of campaigning websites in this area, and uses some of their resources, for example Show Racism the Red Card [www.theredcard.org](http://www.theredcard.org)

## **6.1 Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying**

Students who are, or are perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender can be victims of homophobic, biphobic, transphobic or gender-based bullying. This abuse can be either verbal or physical. Ruislip High School will not tolerate bullying on the basis of sexual orientation. Students are taught to accept one another for their differences.

All incidents of a homophobic biphobic or transphobic nature will be logged. A school detention may be given in the first instance. Parents/guardians will be notified of the incident and may be asked to attend a meeting together with their child, which may also include the presence of the Safer Schools Officer.

More serious incidents or repeat incidents will attract higher sanctions.

## **6.2 Racist bullying**

Students from various backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures, religions can be the victim of racist bullying. This abuse can be either verbal or physical. Ruislip High School will not tolerate bullying on the basis of religion, ethnicity or background. Students are taught to accept one another for their differences.

All incidents of a homophobic biphobic or transphobic nature will be logged. A school detention may be given in the first instance. Parents/guardians will be notified of the incident and may be asked to attend a meeting together with their child, which may also include the presence of the Safer Schools Officer.

More serious incidents or repeat incidents will attract higher sanctions.

## **7. Cyber bullying**

Cyber-bullying usually happens through calls or texts on mobile phones as well as through Internet chat rooms and emails. Bullying of this kind can be a criminal offence, if the perpetrator is aged ten or over. Making offensive calls is a criminal offence.

The advice to a young person being bullied through mobile phones or via the Internet is not to be afraid to report it to the police. The law can help protect young people from being repeatedly upset by unpleasant pictures or messages.

Because this kind of bullying usually takes place outside school, the school's reach and influence may be more limited than in other cases of bullying. However, staff will always work with students who experience this type of bullying, especially if the behaviour impacts on relationships in school. This will include working with parents to ensure they are enabled to tackle the problem.

Students are warned in assemblies that screenshots of abusive or inappropriate messages are very likely to be passed to the school and may be shown to parents/guardians.

## 8. Internet and e-safety

The school network is protected by filters and protocols common to many schools. The school is aware, however, that many young people experience problems when they go online elsewhere. Parents and guardians should be aware of the potential for misuse of social media and monitor their child's usage, ensuring that students are only accessing age appropriate web and social media sites and that inappropriate content is not being transmitted by mobile phone or internet.

### 8.1 Mobile phones

Many students own a mobile phone which is used to stay in contact with friends when they are not in proximity. However, the school recognises that there are potential problems inherent in the use of mobiles and smartphones, eg. bullying by text-message, Snapchat/similar applications, using the camera facility and access to harmful websites. Detailed advice on how to deal with cyber-bullying can be found at:

[www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying](http://www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying)

Mobile phones offer bullies a number of ways to frighten, embarrass, upset and intimidate others. This can be done in the following ways:

- *Abusive text messages*: Text messages that upset, embarrass, humiliate, intimidate or frighten others are abusive and unacceptable. Sometimes phones, where the phone number will not be recognised, are used to ensure the person at the other end answers and sees the message.
- *Frightening phone calls*: Calls that frighten others may include silence (causing confusion and worry), verbal abuse, threats of physical violence, and intimidation. Sometimes phones, where the phone number will not be recognised, are used to ensure the person at the other end answers and hears the message.
- *Picture messages*: Picture messages that are intended in any way to upset, embarrass or humiliate are unacceptable. Sometimes there are photos that an individual did not know had been taken, or there may be photos that an individual may not wish to share because they are upsetting or embarrassing. Individuals should understand that videos or pictures which are taken on mobile phones can be very quickly distributed to the Internet. Pictures that were taken in the afternoon can be on the Internet before someone gets home from school. Images might be sent to the victim, or they might be sent to many people but not the victim.

All UK mobile phone operators have nuisance call centres set up and/or procedures in place to deal with such issues. They may be able to change the number of the person being bullied. Mobile operators cannot bar a particular number from contacting a phone, but some phone handsets do have this capacity. Action can be taken against the perpetrator's phone account (eg. blocking their account) only with police involvement.

### 8.2 Social networking sites (eg. Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook)

It is good practice for social network providers to make reporting incidents of cyber bullying easy, and thus have clear, accessible and prominent reporting features. Many of these reporting features will be within the profiles themselves, so they are "handy" for the user. If social networking sites do receive reports about cyber bullying, they will investigate and can remove content that is illegal or breaks their term and condition in other ways. They can delete the accounts of those who have broken the rules.

<http://www.thinkyouknow.co.uk> provides more information, help and resources for children in age groups 11-13, 14+ and also for teachers and trainers. This is an initiative of the UK's national centre for protecting

students, the Child Exploitation and Online Protection centre (CEOP) .This encourages social networking providers to adopt a one click button for students to get immediate police help. Students can also contact CEOP at [www.CEOP.gov.uk](http://www.CEOP.gov.uk)

### 8.3 Advice for parents/guardians

Parents/guardians should:

- Be aware that technology is constantly changing and young people are continually learning – keep up to date on latest developments so they know about the risks.
- Be aware that online safety applies to all types of devices – PCs, laptops, tablets, smartphones, e-readers and online gaming.
- As technology becomes more portable, set guidelines for where their child could/should use their device.
- Treat online safety in the same way as they would offline safety, such as stranger danger, crossing the road etc.
- Set up internet security so children can't access websites with adult and inappropriate content.
- Not write anything online that they wouldn't say in person. Comments made on social media and/or public web pages/forums could reflect badly on their child.
- Treat Cyber bullying in the same way as other forms of bullying; contact their child's school to agree a plan for dealing with it.
- Be aware that 'sexting' increasingly involves younger children, some as young as 10.
- Try to establish a system which allows their child to talk to them about anything they feel uncomfortable about online.

Things to discuss with your child:

- Where is it acceptable to use your portable device? Bedroom? School?
- Who should you talk to if you feel uncomfortable about something you have seen online? eg. parent, teacher or other responsible adult.
- Don't spend too long online; make sure you get some physical exercise every day.
- Keep passwords safe – don't write them down and change them regularly.
- What personal information is it appropriate to post online?
- How do you report cyberbullying? Take a screen grab of any posts so these can be seen at a later date if needed.
- How do you know the people you are talking to online, are who you think they are?
- What is the difference between a 'real life' friend and an 'online friend'.
- When is it sensible to meet up with an online friend?

### 8.4 Social media information for parents:

[www.internetmatters.org](http://www.internetmatters.org)

[www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk) - parents' guide to the latest social media and internet messaging apps

Reporting cyberbullying advice and help:

[Childline – Bullying on Social Networks](#)

[BBC Webwise](#)



Twitter: report an abusive user by visiting: <https://support.twitter.com/forms/abusiveuser>

Facebook: Click on 'report' which can be found near all posted content (a small 'cog' symbol)

[Instagram](#): Shows information and safety tips for parents.

Parents/guardians can find additional information on reporting internet abuse by visiting:  
[www.stopcyberbullying.org](http://www.stopcyberbullying.org)

## **9. Who can parents contact if they believe their child is being bullied?**

Parents can contact the school to discuss bullying concerns by telephone (01895 464064), email to [office@ruisliphigh.org.uk](mailto:office@ruisliphigh.org.uk) or by letter (Ruislip High School, Sidmouth Drive, Ruislip, Middx HA4 0BY). In addition, parents and guardians can make an appointment to speak to a member of the pastoral team. In most cases a meeting can be arranged within 24 hours.

## **10. Bullying which occurs outside the school premises**

We will follow the procedures outlined in the School's Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy. This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises. We will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the Police if we believe an offence has taken place.

## **11. Procedures for monitoring, evaluation and review**

The school will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness.  
The number of recorded incidents of bullying will be reviewed termly.