Reading Girls' School
Succeeding Together

Name of Policy	Kindness and Respect (Anti-Bullying) Policy
Scope of Policy	This policy applies to all students at Reading Girls' School
Approved by	Assistant Principal
Date of Approval	December 2024
Review period	2 years
Review Date	December 2026

GROWING STRONGER TOGETHER

THAMES LEARNING TRUST

Ethos

The Aims of the School state that the Trustees intend that Reading Girls' School (RGS) will be a caring community in which:
- every individual is held in high esteem.
- Kindness, sensitivity, tolerance, self-discipline, respect and goodwill towards others are encouraged in all and are exemplified in the day-to-day life of the school."

Objectives

These aims could be expressed more fully as follows:

Everyone in the school is of equal value and has the right to equal opportunities. No-one should be discriminated against or bullied in any way. People should treat others as they themselves wish to be treated.

No-one should be treated with disrespect because:
- they are disabled or have an illness
- they are richer or poorer than others or have different home circumstances
- they are older or younger
- they are smaller or taller
- of the friendship groups with which they socialise.

People should not be discriminated against for any reason, e.g. because of their nationality, race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation.

People should not be judged by their appearance.

There should be no name-calling.

Everyone has the right to practise their religion at the appropriate time.

Teachers and students should respect each other, and seek to establish and build upon positive relationships.

Any policy regarding unkindness and bullying must begin with these aims, and intend to ensure their implementation. It is recognised that students will receive education surrounding positive and negative relationships including unkindness and bullying will be embedded into areas of the school life and in other policy documents, such as PSHE, ICT, Equality, Safeguarding and Child Protection.

What is Bullying?

Research shows that there is no particular age group or type of school which is free from the risk of bullying. It is clear that being bullied can have a devastating effect on the victim, resulting in a loss of self-esteem, underachievement and absenteeism, depression or sometimes even suicide.

Three factors are implicit in unkindness and bullying activities:
- It is repetitive, over a period of time.
- It involves an imbalance of power.
- It can be verbal, physical and/or psychological.

How bullies exercise their illegitimate power depends on who they are, who the victim is and the context. While all bullying is aggressive, it is a complex issue, ranging from physical violence to bullying in the form of emotional or psychological aggression, which, while less visible, can be no less painful to the victims.

The school will also seek to reduce and constantly challenge the following types of connected behaviours:

- Verbal, e.g. telling tales, name-calling, racist, sexist or homophobic comments, remarks about disabilities, threats.
- Looks, revealing lack of respect and non-co-operation with others.
- Cold shoulder, also revealing non-co-operation and lack of respect.
- Any threatening behaviour.
- Physical, e.g. kicking, scratching, biting, pushing, tripping, punching, fighting and intimidation.
- Interfering with others' schoolwork or possessions.
- Cyberbullying, or the use of modern technologies to send offensive/ hurtful messages or images
- Either carrying or claiming to carry weapons into school.

Recognising Unkindness and Bullying
"To be seen to act is as important as taking action – silence and secrecy nurture bullying" (Action Against Bullying, Scottish Council). Bullies depend on a code of silence for their success. Breaking that code can be the first step in prevention.

We cannot rely on a stereotypical portrait of bullies to help us to identify who is a bully, but bullies have certain things in common:
- bullies tend to have assertive, aggressive attitudes over which they exercise little control.
- bullies tend to lack empathy; they find it difficult to imagine what the victim feels or find ways of shutting out this awareness.
- bullies tend to lack guilt; they rationalise that the victim somehow 'deserves' the bullying
- bullies can come in 'gangs' or groups; this is more visible, but all bully 'gangs' are made up of individuals needing individual responses.

Bullies pick on vulnerable people, but vulnerability is not always visible to adults. Their "difference" may be a notional one used to justify the bullying, to claim that bullying is in some way deserved or self-inflicted. Again there is no stereotype, but victims may be students who:
- are new to the class or school.

- are different in appearance, speech or background from other students.
- suffer from low self-esteem (but it's not clear whether this is a cause or effect of bullying).
- when bullied, demonstrate reactions which the bullies find 'entertaining', e.g. tantrums, loss of control.
- are more nervous or anxious than others (but witnesses who are not bullied are found to be just as anxious).
- have belonged to former friendship groups who have moved on or "split up".
- have learning difficulties or other kinds of special needs.

Staff also need to recognise that the victims of bullying may not fit neatly into these categories. Students who are withdrawn or exhibit behaviours such as reluctance to work in groups, are late to school or lessons, get quickly upset or whose behaviour is suddenly changeable - all of these may be potential victims. If staff have any suspicions then they are to use their judgment and either tackle the issue themselves or report it to Pastoral Leaders.

With the increased use of social media and technologies such as smartphones it is likely that bullying will increasingly move towards 'cyber-bullying'; all staff need to acknowledge the challenges this causes and that there is an increased potential for images and words to be sent, received or spread to a wider circle of students.

While this document concentrates on approaches taken regarding students in our care, it is recognised that bullying can involve adults, too. This could involve:
- Staff, including colleagues from external agencies
- Parents
- Members of the local community

Bullying involving adults potentially has the same range of causes and expressions as that involving students; any examples of this should be dealt with in a confidential but documented manner by the appropriate line manager of the complainant in the first instance and then, if judged necessary, be quickly referred to the Headteacher for guidance or action.

Prevention

Staff, as professionals, are expected to work proactively to prevent the occurrence of unkindness and bullying and to limit the potential for incidents as part of their ongoing professional conduct and expectations. Staff behaviours which will assist in maintaining a positive ethos and a vigilant but friendly atmosphere are:
- modelling positive behaviours in how we speak to and manage our relationships with others
- maintaining and praising successful positive student interactions
- when on duty, actively monitoring student interactions and intervening and challenging where necessary
- monitoring areas of high student movement such as corridors at lesson changeover
- being actively on duty at break and lunchtimes, and before and after school at various points around the school site and the school gates
- confiscating mobile devices if they are seen or heard

- being vigilant at all times within classrooms, using carefully considered seating plans and being a mobile presence in classrooms.

E-safety

It is recognised that a large proportion of bullying occurrences may be the results of messages and images sent through social media. This 'cyber-bullying' can affect students both inside school and outside school. This is dealt with in the same way as any other kind of bullying, as detailed below; however, e-safety is an increasingly important facet of education and as such e-safety will be covered in detail as part of the anti-bullying content of the pastoral programme and will be given specific whole-school time and assemblies during each school year.

We respond to all the challenges of cyber-bullying quickly and decisively. Students are encouraged to report and keep all evidence of any cyber-bullying, and to ensure that they are aware of the need for vigilance regarding their privacy on social networking sites. As a school we are proactive, and reactive (e.g. by restricting access to ICT areas) if we suspect cyber-bullying has taken place.

Taking Action (See phases in Appendix 1)

Dealing with all instances of bullying is vitally important to the whole-school ethos, and to the individual students involved. The three-tiered unkindness and bullying phases are the mechanisms by which unkindness and bullying incidents will be managed. All students and staff are aware of the phases which were launched through Assemblies and Academic mentoring time. Heads of Year and SLT have also received training and will use the language within the phases whilst dealing with incidents and through communication with students and parents. All students and staff have a responsibility to both inform, and deal with, incidents which may arise.

Any incidents of unkindness and bullying which take place in a classroom are the responsibility of the class teacher. They may choose to deal with the incident through the behaviour system and refer it to the pastoral team. Either way, it must be documented as a unkindness and bullying incident on SIMS levels 1-4, allowing for a unkindness and bullying log to be kept.

Any incidents of unkindness and bullying which take place in communal areas - e.g. tennis courts, corridors or dining rooms - are the responsibility of teachers on duty, or any nearby teacher. Students have been informed to report any incidents to the duty staff within that area and for the staff to deal with the matter and hand and refer to the Head of Year. Students have been told to inform of their next lesson if they have experienced unkindness bullied while moving between lessons. Again, referrals to the pastoral team may be made by the teacher, student or parent.

Staff should use their professional judgment as to whether they deal with incidents themselves and take appropriate action, or whether incidents are passed on to the pastoral team, senior leadership team or the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Serious incidents, or

repeated issues, should always be referred to the pastoral team as these colleagues are more likely to be able to choose from a range of options (such as parental involvement, restorative justice etc).

Students at RGS take the lead within cultivating a positive culture at the school within the school via various mechanics including leading assemblies, events and through the Community and Student Voice committees.

Bullying incidents and the resulting actions must be logged on SIMS and context on Provision Map. The school's bullying log is printed from SIMS; paper copies of incidents and student statements are filed. As part of the bullying log, incidents of a racist or homophobic nature are recorded, not only on SIMS but also with Reading Borough Council.

Keep careful records of all incidents to build up accurate pictures of unkindness and bullying. This is done through the collation of data through SIMS, which has been developed to recognise the many differing types of bullying and interventions which staff can take. This data is then shared and used by:

- School Leadership team to inform new practice, raise concerns and note successes
- Pastoral Team and Heads of Year in order to address issues
- The RGS SSLT Team, identifying key areas within their work
- Students themselves through assemblies and lessons, to instil positive values and challenge negative ones
- LA if requests are made for data, e.g. racist incidents
- Parents, where such data is deemed appropriate to share

Whole-School Strategic Approach

All schools need to revisit bullying issues regularly. As such, RGS is committed to continuously:
- Raising awareness amongst staff and students of this policy statement, and of its thrust that bullying is not acceptable behaviour since it goes against the RGS Way. We will look to constantly encourage positive social values and relationships at all times, and provide the opportunities and rewards to encourage these positive behaviours in our students.
- Removing silence and secrecy from the unkindness and bullying agenda. The most effective deterrent to bullying is other children – the victim needs to be allowed to help herself, and helped to become more assertive; all students should be encouraged to demonstrate leadership in this area.

The aim must also be to instil in students values which result in bullying being seen as increasingly worthless and antisocial, and for the body of students themselves to underline that they will not accept bullying.

We continue to use PD Days, PSHE, Drama, assemblies, academic mentoring and subject activities as part of the Personal Development programme. Co-operative work and good behaviour can be praised. Empathy can be created through role-play or exposure to relevant stories and scenarios. Language work and social education can pick up the theme of how other people feel. The whole curriculum should support the school's aims and support the anti-bullying message where possible.

APPENDIX 1- Unkindness and Bullying Phases

	Context	**Related Sanction**
Level 1 Unkindness	First instance of unkindness towards others through actions/comments resulting in causing others upset. First instance of passing on information not relating directly to themselves to others and/or has not been witnessed directly leading to the escalation of situations involving others.	Meeting with HOY, restorative justice where appropriate Clear message of how to interact with others appropriately and behaviours not to repeat. Logged on Provision map
Level 2 Persistent Unkindness	Second instance of unkindness towards others through actions/comments resulting in causing others upset. Second instance of passing on information not relating directly to themselves to others and/or has not been witnessed directly leading to the escalation of situations involving others.	Meeting HOY, phone call home, Referral to IER Clear message of how to interact with others appropriately and behaviours not to repeat. Parents and students aware of the escalated sanction if behaviour continues. Call followed with email to parents. Email and context logged on Provision map
Level 3 Persistent and Targeted Unkindness	Third instance of unkindness towards others through actions/comments resulting in causing others upset.	Meeting with Parents and HOY, same day detention and IER referral.

	Third instance of passing on information not relating directly to themselves to others and/or has not been witnessed directly leading to the escalation of situations involving others.	Made clear to students and parents if behaviour continues, the next stage will result in sanction. Meeting followed up with email to parents. Meeting followed with email to parents. Email and context logged on Provision map
Level 4 Bullying	Forth+ instance of making unkind comments/actions towards the same student or another Forth+ instances of passing on information not relating directly to themselves to others and/or has not been witnessed directly leading to the escalation of situations involving others.	Suspension - reintegration meeting with parents, report to HOY. Actions outlined on home school contact. Recorded on Provision map Student recorded on school bullying log. Repeated instances would result in progressing through the Antibullying charter and could leading to permanent exclusion.