

**Roots International Schools & Colleges
Harassment Bulling Policy**

The **Roots International Schools & Colleges** is determined to provide a safe and protected atmosphere for all its students and workers i.e. free from any kind of harassment.

It is the policy of RISC to ensure environment without any discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, national origin, genetic information or any other characteristics protected by law.

RISC encourages reporting of all perceived incidents of discrimination or harassment. It is the policy of RIS to promptly and thoroughly investigate such report. RIS prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment.

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The objective of this policy is to ensure an environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to have atmosphere that prohibits unlawful discriminatory practices, including harassment. Therefore, RIS expects that all relationships among persons in the institute will be free of explicit bias, prejudice and harassment.

RIS will make every reasonable effort to ensure that all concerned are familiar with these policies and aware that the complaint in violation of such policies will be investigated and resolved appropriately.

In all of our schools and colleges, we direct to follow anti-harassment and bullying strategies and intervention procedures in order to:

- To ensure all students, employees and school administration treat each other with manners and respect.
- To avoid behavior at the institute that may create an atmosphere of hostility or intimidation.
- Prevent harassment and bullying from taking place and where necessary to act upon complaints of harassment promptly and fairly.
- Reassure and support who experience harassment or bullying.
- The expectations laid out in this policy apply to all working and learning in RIS: learners, teachers (full time and visiting faculty), school administration, school leadership, and custodial staff.

1.0 HARASSMENT

Harassment on the basis of any other protected characteristics is also strictly prohibited. Under this policy, any kind of harassment that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his or her race, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, genetic information or any other characteristics protected by law, or that of his or her relatives , friends or associates has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment, has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or otherwise adversely affects an individual's personality.

This policy recognizes the need for all of us to be aware that harassment can be happened at any time. At RIS we recognize that harassment in any form might take place and so we proactively seek to guard against it. Consequently, in RIS we advocate a whole-school, proactive approach in dealing with any and all forms of harassment as soon as they become evident. This policy also sets precedents for preventing harassment from starting.

1.1 WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

Sexual harassment is an unwelcome sexual advance, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexually harassing behaviors that can interfere with one's educational opportunity range from words and gestures to unwanted physical contact. Some of the behavior may also be criminal acts, assault rape and child abuse.

Examples of conduct or behavior which constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

1.2 Physical Harassment

- Undesirable physical contact including using intimidating gestures, patting, pinching, stroking or inappropriate touching.
- Physical violence, including sexual assault.
- Physical contact, e.g. touching, pinching.
- The use of study threats or rewards to solicit sexual favors.

1.3 Verbal Harassment

- Making inappropriate jokes, remarks, teasing, or asking sexually related question.
- Sexual advances.
- Gossiping about someone and spreading lies about them.
- Asking someone to go out with you unwelcome, sexual advances and sexual favors.
- Sending sexually explicit messages by phone or by email
- Statements on student private life.
- Using abusive language and offensive name-calling.

1.4 Non-verbal Harassment

- sending pornographic videos to another person through a social website without informing the person
- Unwelcome gestures to another person
- Staring at someone else's body offensively, and making the person feel uncomfortable
- Exposing someone else offensive pictures or images without their consent

Anyone can be a victim of sexual harassment, regardless of their sex and of the sex of the harasser. RIS recognizes that sexual harassment may also occur between students/employee of

the same sex. Anyone, including students and staff members' who sexually harasses another will be reprimanded in accordance with this internal policy.

1.5 RIS HARASSMENT COMPLAINT CELL

Every student/employee has a right to be listened to and if anyone has any problem academic, non-academic or social, he/she must report to his/her Head mistress/Coordinator/Counsellor or Principal with the guarantee that they will be heard and their concerns shall be dealt with utmost confidentiality

1.6 WRITE TO US

students/staff can contact to lodge any complaints or queries regarding harassment, bully, inappropriate behavior or misconduct across the institution on **info@rootsinternational.edu.pk**. All complaints must be made from the personal email address of the learner/employee i.e. complaints cannot be made on behalf of other learners/employees, or on social media platforms, or from anonymous or third-party accounts. We would like to assure learners/employees that all complaints will be treated with utmost confidentiality and privacy.

1.7 FALSE ALLEGATION

Allegations of harassment made out of malice or with an intent to hurt the reputation of the staff or other student against whom the complaint is filed are to be dealt with as serious offences. Making allegation of sexual harassment knowing it to be false, whether in a formal or informal way is a serious offense under this policy and action would be taken under RIS disciplinary regulations. Any charge found to have been intentionally dishonest or made in willful disregard of the truth, and to malign or damage the reputation however, will make the complainant (student, staff or faculty) liable to severe disciplinary action.

1.8 SANCTIONS AND DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

Any member staff or learner who is found to have harassed another learner or staff under the terms of this policy is liable to any of the following sanctions:

- written warning/ explanation
- suspension
- dismissal / expulsion
- liable to criminal / legal proceedings

No learner or employee (current or former) is allowed to share any defamatory, offensive or derogatory content against the employer, campus, institution, management or its stakeholders on social and digital media platforms, microblogging, social networking, social bookmarking, and social curation, and wikis, Facebook, twitter, LinkedIn, Reddit, Pinterest, Instagram and any other social media platform.

2.0 BULLYING

Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and social behavior that intends to cause physical, social and psychological harm.

The three types of bullying are:

Physical Bullying.

- hitting, kicking, pushing, theft/ damage to property, inappropriate physical contact

Verbal Bullying.

- name calling, teasing, mocking, making offensive remarks, making inappropriate or derogatory comments about someone

Indirect Bullying.

- spreading rumors about people, gossiping, excluding someone from groups or social networking groups, sending inappropriate text/email messages or photographs, a.k.a. 'cyber-bullying')

Some behavior in school can be distressing but is not bullying:

- Mutual conflict between Students.
- This involves a disagreement between learners
- One-time acts of aggression
- Social rejection is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

2.4 CYBER BULLYING

Examples of cyberbullying include:

- Taking humiliating pictures of another learner and sharing them with others.
- Verbally abusing another learner by text message.
- Spreading rumors about a student on social media platforms.
- Repeatedly sending emails to intimidate or threaten.
- Cyber bullying needs to be monitored closely in schools since it:
 - Can be used as an extension of face-to-face bullying that might be taking place.
 - Can enter home/personal space which is normally considered 'safe'.
 - Can involve a large number of people.
 - Can take place across age groups/ genders.
 - Can include unauthorized, widespread publication of private information or images.
 - Can be used for manipulating others

2.5 PROMOTING THE POSITIVE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN SCHOOL

RIS understand the increasingly significant role that technology plays in people's lives and in education. As such, we are committed to ensuring everyone in school understands the benefits and the risks associated with technology. All RIS teachers and education managers must strive to equip our learners with the knowledge and skills to be informed and careful users of technology. Therefore, a proactive approach to preventing cyberbullying in RIS schools means:

- Teachers using technology in constructive ways in their teaching.
- Providing training to teachers in using technology to develop their practice creatively.
- Support learners' safe and responsible use of technology whilst in school.
- Ensuring all learners understand the importance of password security

3.0 WHOLE SCHOOL STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH HARASSMENT AND BULLYING

3.1 PREVENTION

School management is directed to create an environment in school where individuals feel safe, care about each other, value and respect each other.

- Assemblies/ talks about harassment / bullying can be given throughout the academic year.
- Schools should ensure, a clearly-written information for learners about who to talk to if they have concerns about harassment or bullying.
- Regular school staff training on identifying and dealing with bullying and harassment.
- Addressing bullying and cyberbullying as part of the curriculum and in early years, and looking for opportunities to address bullying through other curriculum areas.
- Target attention/ supervision by staff on key times and locations in school.