

# Anti-Bullying Policy

Document Information			
Created by:	HOS	Reviewed by:	Principal
Created:	July 2017	Last Reviewed	June 2023
Next Review:	June 2024		
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# ANTIBULLYING POLICY

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# ANTIBULLYING POLICY

## Overview

At the American School of Creative Science, we believe that all children have the right to an educational environment where they feel safe and which is free from harassment and bullying.

This policy is implemented in partnership with the school's behavior policy and serves the entire school from KG 1 to Grade 9.

## Aims

The American School of Creative Science aims to encourage positive behavior so that anti-social behavior such as bullying is prevented. We do all we can to prevent it, by developing an ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable. Our aim is to produce a safe and secure environment where all students can learn without anxiety. This policy aims to produce a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur. This includes a procedure to follow and how to record bullying to enable patterns to be identified. We aim to make all those connected with the school aware of our opposition to bullying. Everyone's responsibilities are made clear, with regards to the controlling and containing of bullying in our school community.

The aims of this policy are as follows:

- To inform students and parents/guardians of our expectations in order to ensure a productive partnership, where each and everyone has a role to play in eradicating bullying;
- To maintain a community in which everyone feels valued and safe and where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted;
- To promote a secure and happy, caring environment where kindness and helpfulness are expected and respected;
- To teach students to respect themselves and others, promoting crucial self-esteem;
- To reduce the emotional and mental distress of any bullying enabling all students the right to enjoy their time at school.

## Definition

Bullying is any behavior which is deliberately intended to hurt, threaten, frighten or discriminate against another individual or group. It is usually unprovoked, happens again and again as part of a pattern of behavior and can continue for a long period of time. Not every act of unkindness can be classified as bullying. We recognize that sometimes students are spontaneously unkind to each other without thinking, and more often than not this is a one-off incident. Bullying is action taken by one student or more than one student with the deliberate intention of hurting another, either physically or emotionally over a sustained period of time. We recognize that this behavior has no place in our school community. We retain the right to determine what is considered bullying.

Bullying includes:

- Physical: Pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, hair-pulling and other forms of violence or threats of violence
- Verbal: Name-calling and sarcasm
- Innuendo: Spreading rumors, persistent teasing

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- Emotional: Excluding, ridicule, humiliation
- Cyberbullying: Email, text messaging, use of Facebook and other social media, designed to upset or abuse
- Racist: Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures

### Bullying Isn't:

- Accidental physical harm – A student could accidentally bump into someone
- Being bossy - It is natural that friends may want to play in a certain way and take the role of director; we have to learn to express our feelings about that
- Disagreements between people - Not everyone is going to agree with us
- Not being someone's friend - Not everyone is our friend, but we treat all classmates with respect, and we don't start rumors about them or verbally attack them.

## Strategies for Prevention

- To hold school wide awareness campaigns regarding anti-bullying and to cover the topic in form tutor time as well as at assemblies providing strategies and to deal with the situation if it should occur and communicate our collective responsibility to stop bullying
- To help students through advice and counselling, to make the right choices
- To listen to all parties involved in incidents and always take allegations from victims seriously;
- To reassure students that the school will do all in its power to protect and support all parties involved while the issues are being resolved;
- To foster, by example, the values in which we, as a school, believe;
- To investigate all incidents as fully as possible;
- To provide high levels of adult support in the playground
- To provide staff with awareness training
- To use a range of strategies which challenge bullying behavior;
- To provide a curriculum which stresses the importance of children learning tolerance, learning to take responsibility and caring for others
- To identify bullying behavior at the early stages and work towards behavior modification before the problem becomes more serious.
- To recognize and rewarding non-aggressive behavior
- To use peer group pressure actively to discourage bullying
- To help children to develop positive strategies and assertion

## The Role of the Parents

Parents are informed of the school's policy through the AntiBullying Policy. Parents who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's Head of Section immediately. Parents will always be contacted, after initial investigations have been carried out, if their child is suspected to have been involved in an instance of bullying. Parents have a responsibility to support the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school community. Where cyberbullying

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occurs, the school will provide guidance and support. When this happens outside the jurisdiction of the school, we will communicate and cooperate with parents as necessary.

### The parents' role in preventing bullying

The following guidelines provide further advice to parents:

- Take an active interest in your child's social life and chat about friends and their activities (including online communications)
- Watch for signs of distress in your child
- Inform the school immediately you suspect your child is being bullied. Your concerns will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow
- Advise your child not to fight back. It makes matters worse and your child could be accused of bullying.
- Make sure your child is fully aware of the school policy concerning bullying and who they can approach in the school if presented with a problem

What your child should do if bullied:

- Know it is not their fault and that they don't deserve to be bullied. It is wrong.
- Immediately report it to a member of staff
- To be proud of who they are
- Try not to show they are upset as bullies often enjoy seeing their fear
- Stay with a group of friends
- Be assertive and confidently take a stand – Leave me Alone
- Walk away confidently

What your child should do if they see someone being bullied:

- Befriend that student
- Take action by telling an adult immediately; watching and doing nothing is wrong.

**Always Take Action. Always Report.**

### Role of the Teachers

Teachers will always listen to students who need to report an incident of unacceptable behavior.

Teachers will make every effort to supervise students carefully especially the ones who were involved in bullying incidents in the past or are new to school.

Teachers will be consistent when dealing with instances of bullying and will use the school's procedures to log and deal with any incidences they are aware of.

Teachers will work with those involved in bullying, to try to find strategies for them both to use until the conflict is resolved.

Following notification of a behavioral incident (including those which may include bullying), the Supervisor will usually ask the Class teacher and social worker to help with the investigation and the



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updating of the Incident report form. Class teachers working with Head of Section and Social worker may be involved in further pastoral work with the victim and bully, after action points have been agreed by the Head of Section. The school supports both the victim and the bully, as appropriate. Class Teachers and Homeroom teachers are often best placed to identify potential patterns of bullying through time. They are expected to be vigilant and notify Heads of Section and supervisor should they suspect a pattern of behavior linked to either bullying or being a victim. Class teachers draw students' attention to the school's stance on bullying at suitable moments. If an incident occurs, pastoral leaders may decide to use an assembly as a forum in which to discuss with other students why this behavior was wrong.

### The Role of the Phase Supervisor

The phase supervisor will investigate cases of bullying and follow-up the incident with reporting to the Head of Section to ensure the appropriate consequences as outlined in the behavior policy is implemented.

### The Role of the Social Worker

The school social worker takes initiatives to prevent bullying and raise awareness. The school social worker may be involved in the investigation of any reported bullying situation and the individuals who are part of it. Some private conversations can be conducted individually with the parties involved, and their parents. Also, the school social worker may choose to conduct individual/group role playing of nonaggressive behavior with those demonstrating bullying behavior and assertive behavior with the bystanders and those suffering from bullying. Teachers and parents may consult with the school social worker in order to obtain guidelines for specific situations.

### The Role of the Head of Section

The Head of Section supports the Social Worker and Supervisor in conducting and recording investigations linked to an alleged bullying incident. The Head of Section reports to the Principal, where they discuss and agree action points from the investigation. The school supports both the victim and the bully, as appropriate. The Head of Section will follow up with parents, students, and staff as needed.

### Ways of educating about bullying through the curriculum

The curriculum of the school is a medium to raise awareness of the nature and causes of bullying and how it impacts on individuals and communities. Assemblies, personal, social and health Education, projects, stories, literature, current affairs, class or group social awareness initiatives such as campaigns, focus days/weeks and specialist lessons can also have a focus on anti-bullying. The class representatives may also raise anti-bullying issues/concerns at the student council. It is important that bullying is addressed directly in the school and proactively throughout the school's curriculum. All class teachers and specialists need to work on this area of pastoral care. A buddy system and the use of buddies in the playground is a proactive way of ensuring that there is a positive climate in the school and that bullying issues are minimized. All new children have access to a buddy support system in the school as part of our pastoral care provision.

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## Procedures

### Students

- Students commit to following the school's code of conduct and Anti-bullying pledge, which support an anti-bullying ethos.
- Students are given a clear understanding of the school's expectations on behavior through assemblies, social emotional learning, and wellbeing sessions and through the school's Virtues in Practice program.
- Students are made aware of the harm that bullying causes and of the range of sanctions that the school is obliged to use, including the involvement of outside agencies.
- Students are given a clear understanding of the definition, impact and seriousness of bullying through the curriculum
- Students know what to do and who to turn to if they are being bullied.
- Students know what to do if they witness others being bullied.
- Students have a duty to report bullying whether it is happening to themselves or others and have access to "Report a Concern" form to report any instances electronically.

### Reporting Bullying

As a school we will:

- Encourage victims and witnesses to speak up;
- Treat incidents seriously however trivial they might seem at first;
- Be alert, as a whole staff, to changes in behavior, attitude and well-being, reporting these immediately to the school social worker.

### Responding to Bullying

As a school, we will endeavor to:

- Take all bullying problems seriously;
- Record incident in our tracker to ensure all documentation is in place allowing for comprehensive safeguarding reviews.
- Deal with each incident individually and to access the needs of each student separately;
- Regard all incidents as potentially serious and investigate them thoroughly;
- Ensure that bullies and victims are interviewed separately;
- Obtain witness information;
- Keep a written record of the incident, investigation and outcomes which should be recorded and copied to the relevant staff;
- Ensure that action is taken to prevent further incidents. Such action may include: Imposition of sanctions such as detention and removal of privileges;
- Obtaining a sincere apology;
- Informing parents of both bully and bullied;
- Provide support for both victim and bully.

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## Action taken when bullying is suspected

If bullying is suspected we talk to the suspected victim, the suspect bully and any witnesses. If any degree of bullying is identified, the following action will be taken:

- Help, support and counselling will be given as is appropriate to both the victims and the bullies:
- We support the victims in the following ways:
  - By offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about their experiences.
  - informing the victims' parents/guardians
  - By offering continuing support when they feel they need it.
  - By arranging for special supervision in the playground
  - By taking steps to prevent more bullying.
- We also discipline, yet try to help the bullies in the following ways by:
  - talking about what happened, to discover why they became involved
  - involving the bullies' parents/guardians
  - continuing to work with the bullies in order to change their behavior
  - requesting help from support services
  - taking one or more of the disciplinary steps below, to prevent more bullying:
- Incident report is filled out. Bullies will be officially warned to stop bullying by the leadership team in a counselling meeting with the student at which time the parents will also be called.
- The bully's parents/guardians will be informed verbally and asked to discuss the matter; call is to be logged.
- If bullying continues, another incident report is to be filled out and then the bully's parents/guardians will receive an official warning in writing and called to a meeting to sign this official warning.
- If bullying continues, another incident report is filled out and a behavioral support committee meeting will be held and the bully may be temporarily excluded.
- If such behavior does not end, then a follow-up behavioral support committee meeting will be held and there may be a recommendation for permanent exclusion.

## Assessment and Record Keeping

Records relating to individual cases, for both perpetrator and victim, are kept in confidential student folders. Record keeping allows opportunities to retrieve and analyze incident reports chronologically and by student(s), which can be of particular value in identifying patterns of victim and/or bullying behavior.

## Sanctions

Sanctions for bullying are in line with the school's Behavior Policy. Strong sanctions, such as suspension and exclusions, may be necessary and imposed in cases of severe and persistent bullying.



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### Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

In the first instance, the phase supervisor and the school social worker will be responsible for the monitoring and review of this policy on an annual basis, though; any deficiencies or weaknesses in the policy will be remedied without delay. Throughout the year in Board, SLT, Whole Staff, Section Meetings and INSET, Child Protection and Anti-Bullying Policies and Procedures are discussed and reviewed.