MNS

Distinction in Diversity

BAHRAIN

Anti-Bullying Policy

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1. Definitions

Bullying behaviour can be defined as an action, or a 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, psychological or both.

A paper for the Office of the Children's Commissions UK (2006) outlined four key characteristics:

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

The categories of bullying identified by the school include:

- Race, religion and culture
- SEN or disabilities
- Appearance or health conditions
- Sexual orientation (including homophobia, biphobia and transphobia)
- Being a young carer or looked-after child
- Sexism
- The bullying of staff by students, parents or other staff.
- Cyber bullying (the use of ICT and modern technology for bullying purposes)
  [See ANNEX A. Cyber bullying is also cross referenced in the 'Acceptable use of the
  Internet Policy'].

The Human Rights Act (1998) states that no one shall be subject to degrading treatment and we must ensure that this does not happen in our school. This policy reflects the Education and Inspections Act 2008, and the Equality Duty (2011), the Equality Act (2011), the policy 'Preventing and Tackling bullying' – Advice for Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies (2012) (All UK)

We recognise that the emotional distress caused by bullying in whatever form can prejudice achievement, seriously damage self-esteem and affect punctuality and attendance.

2. Aims

One of the main aims of our school is to encourage every student to reach his or her full potential. Central to this is the recognition of the worth of every individual and the raising of everyone's self-esteem no matter what their gender, race, religion, age, sexual orientation or disability. We encourage the values of tolerance, sympathy and the acceptance of differences.

It is important that everyone working within our school, students, staff and parents, understands what bullying is and how it can be prevented. Our Anti-Bullying Policy encourages students not to suffer in silence. Bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. It is the responsibility of all of us to make sure that bullying has no place in our school. The school also recognises that bullying outside of its premises, especially through the use of social media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, etc), can affect a student within the school setting. Due to the effect caused within the school, these are dealt with in the same way (ref: Internet use section of 'Acceptable use of the Internet Policy' and Annex A – Cyber bullying).

3. How do we recognise bullying?

Any child can be bullied and although none of these characteristics can excuse it, certain factors can make bullying more likely:

- Lacking close friends in the school
- Being shy
- An over protective family environment
- Being from a different racial or ethnic group to the majority (In racist bullying, a child is targeted for representing a group, and attacking the individual sends a message to that group. Racist bullying can be defined as "any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person" Macpherson Report 1999, UK)
- Being different in some obvious respect, this can also include bullying related to sexual orientation. Just being perceived to be different is enough.
- Behaving inappropriately, intruding or being a 'nuisance'
- Possessing desirable material objects or conversely, not possessing such objects.

4. Signs and Symptoms
A victim may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. These may include:

- Avoiding certain students / peer groups
- Reluctance to attend school
- Unwillingness to travel on the school bus / public transport
- Truancy from specific lessons/on specific days
- Damage to clothing or possessions
- 'Losing' more items than usual
- Unexplained bruises/swellings
- Deterioration of school work / academic performance
- Being afraid to use the internet (cyber bullying)
- Becoming jittery about receiving text messages
- Unkempt uniform
- Bullying towards siblings
- Theft

Symptoms may also include:

- Loss of appetite
- Headaches
- Stomach aches
- Stammering
- Sudden changes in behaviour
- Lack of confidence
- Nervous/edginess
- Concentration difficulties
- Lack of motivation

These are only some examples and this list is not exhaustive. Being bullied can manifest itself in many other ways.

5. Strategies for dealing with bullying

When a teacher or other adult is aware that bullying is taking place he or she should intervene or respond immediately. The appropriate Counsellor or Class/Homeroom Teacher should be informed as soon as possible.

Key points

- Never ignore suspected bullying
- Do not make premature assumptions
- Listen carefully to all accounts (several people saying the same does not necessarily mean that they are telling the truth)
- Adopt a problem solving approach which moves pupils on from justifying themselves
- Follow up repeatedly, checking bullying has not resumed
- If a serious incident it must be escalated to the Lead Safeguarding Officer

6. Other strategies

- Befriending involves assigning selected student volunteers to befriend peers
- Mediation by adults – the aim is to establish ground rules that enable those who have bullied and victims to co-exist
- Assertiveness training for particular individuals or groups
- Pro-active intervention (identifying students at risk using guidance above)

Where students do not respond to preventative strategies to combat bullying we will take tougher action to deal with persistent and violent bullying.

Sanctions available to us in our Behaviour Policy include:

- Warning
- Detention
- Monitoring and reporting procedures
- Individual Learning Plan activated
- Referral to Behaviour Committee
- Exclusion

7. Involving parents

By means of:

- Regular consultation and communication
- Providing information about the nature and effects of bullying
- Advising parent of possible consequences of bullying and appropriate procedures to follow

8. What happens when a parent reports a bullying incident?

Good practice includes:

- Recognising that the parent may be angry or upset
- Keeping an open mind – bullying can be difficult to detect, so a lack of staff awareness does not mean no bullying occurs
- Remaining calm and trying to understand each viewpoint
- Emphasising that the school does care and something will be done
- Explaining the school policy, making sure procedures are followed
- Keeping parents informed of each action taken as a consequence of a bullying incident

When a case is referred to the school by a student or parent, the appropriate Counsellor or Homeroom Teacher must be sought immediately. If they are absent or unavailable, it should be dealt with by the Head of School or Vice-Principal.

Prompt communication with parents is essential and parents should be invited in to discuss the issue at the earliest possible opportunity.

Parents of the bullying child should be invited in to discuss their child's alleged behaviour. It is better to involve parents constructively at an early stage and for a thorough investigation into the matter to be instituted by the school to ascertain the facts. Once the facts of the matter have been established for appropriate steps to be taken to address the situation in a manner which seeks to apply the principles of fairness and reconciliation.

If a parent/carer is not satisfied with the way a bullying issue has been addressed, the appropriate Head of School should be contacted to discuss this matter. However, if the appropriate Head of School has already become involved, but the parent/carer is still dissatisfied, then the Vice Principal and then Principal should be approached.

9. Monitoring
This will be done by the Counsellor or Homeroom/Class Teacher using the school referral process. All staff are required to record incidents of bullying as soon as they become aware of this.

10. Evaluation
The efficacy of the policy will be evaluated via interviews, questionnaires, analysis of reported incidents of bullying etc. The policy will be reviewed regularly by the school management in consultation with the Board.

Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying is the use of technology to harm a person, group of people and can happen both inside or outside of the school.

The use of ICT for bullying purposes is an increasing trend. In order to combat cyber bullying the Principal will utilise their designated power to regulate the conduct of students off-site. The school has an Internet Use Policy which students sign up to.

Cyber bullying does differ from other forms of bullying in that there is usually evidence left behind in the form of text messages and e-mails. Messages may also be left on social networking sites. There are also a number of methods of reporting and restricting this form of bullying through alerting mobile phone companies, internet service providers and social networking sites. Normal sanctions will apply but an additional strategy is to place restrictions on the use of ICT. If necessary and appropriate, the police will be consulted.

Issues relating to Cyber bullying should be considered in conjunction with the 'Network, Internet use and personal device' section of the 'Acceptable use of the Internet Policy'. Any sanctions imposed for breaking the clear expectations should be considered in conjunction with the 'sanctions' section of the Acceptable use of the Internet Policy.