



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Introduction

Bullying is unacceptable anti-social behaviour which affects everyone in the community. At SABIS International School UK (SIS-UK), we promote respect and care for one another; but there is always a risk that bullying will occur. The aim of the School's Anti-Bullying Policy is to foster a supportive, caring and safe environment in which students can live and learn without fear of being bullied, and be able to benefit from all the opportunities available at the School. We expect a bullying-free environment. It will be made quite clear to the whole community of students, staff and parents that bullying is unacceptable at SIS-UK and that any instance of it will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter, investigated and punished appropriately.

This policy has regard to the Education and Inspections Act (2006) and to the DfE Guidance *'Safe to Learn – embedding anti-bullying work in schools.'* The School Director has a legal duty under this legislation to draw up procedures to promote good behaviour and prevent bullying and to bring these procedures to the attention of staff, parents and students.

What is bullying?

Bullying can take many forms. Broadly, it is unkind and usually persistent behaviour intended to assert the power of one person over another, often by frightening or humiliating them. Bullying makes the lives of its victims a misery: it undermines their confidence and self-esteem, destroys their sense of security and causes psychological damage. Once a victim is sensitised, a threatening look alone may reinforce their fearfulness. Bullying – which is often fuelled by ignorance or prejudice – may take the form of verbal, physical or emotional abuse or harassment. A victim may be picked on because of gender, race, religion, culture, physical appearance or disability, sexual orientation, a special educational need, or for no obvious reason at all. Bullying has the effect of hurting, threatening or frightening another person; it is oppressive and an abuse of power. It can involve things like 'initiation ceremonies' in a boarding house. It is often planned and secret, and increasingly takes place in the form of cyber-bullying. Above all, bullying tends to be systematic rather than a one-off act: thus a student is repeatedly the target of taunts or physical attacks or, in the case of so-called indirect bullying, rumours and social exclusion.

Examples of bullying

Bullying can take many forms, but the four main types of bullying are:

- Physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, pushing, throwing items at)
- Verbal (e.g. name calling, taunting, mocking, racist remarks, also 'blanking' through not speaking to someone)

- Indirect (e.g. theft of personal belongings, spreading rumours, exclusion from groups)
- Cyber-bullying (e.g. bullying by mobile phone or the internet – email/social media)

Bullying can impact on its victims' attendance and attainment at school, marginalises those groups who may be particular targets for bullies and can have a life-long negative impact on some people's lives. Bullying can cause psychological damage and at worst has been a factor in student suicide. Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to assault, harassment and threatening behaviour, including over the internet or by text message.

How is it made clear that bullying is unacceptable at SIS-UK?

The School's zero-tolerance of bullying is embedded in the Student Booklet, which is discussed with all new students. In addition, Houseparents explain the Anti-Bullying Policy to all students, bullying is discussed at Student Life meetings, prefects monitor bullying carefully and all staff (including via Child Protection INSET) remain vigilant inside and outside the classroom at all stages of the school year. The national 'Anti-Bullying Week' is a useful additional opportunity to reinforce the message.

The SABIS Student Life Organization[®] (SABIS SLO[®]) is a fundamental part of the school function of a SABIS[®] school and the SLO[®] programme is strongly committed not only to detect and stop bullying but, most importantly, to proactively prevent bullying from happening. One of the eight departments of the SABIS SLO[®] is committed to the Discipline of the school, including an Anti-Bullying sub-department.

SABIS SLO[®] is overseen in SIS-UK by the Student Life Coordinator and the Student Management Coordinator but it is, at its heart, an organization run by students for students. Students volunteer to be part of Student Life and prefects (of any age) are chosen to fulfill particular roles, including that of being an Anti-Bullying Prefect. Details of the Anti-Bullying sub-department of SABIS SLO[®] are included at the end of this policy document.

The intention is that a culture is fostered amongst students which deters silence or by-standing in the face of bullying. On the contrary, we seek to promote a culture in which both the victim and anyone else who hears of an incident are prepared to "tell". We embed that culture by reiterating that helping one's peers and friends is a positive action.

Staff must always be prepared to check bad behaviour, as this can lead to bullying, and report patterns of behaviour, as this may indicate bullying. Teachers are expected to arrive in good time for class and other activities; to be a vigilant presence around School; and to report anything they feel concerned about to the Student Life Coordinator. Houseparents or other members of staff are in the Houses at appropriate times in the daytime and evening, including when the students are going to bed. The School additionally operates a system of supervisory teachers and prefects to ensure that key areas of the campus are properly supervised at key times of the day and evening.

How does a victim (or parent) find help?

Students who feel worried are encouraged to talk to someone, whether it be a friend, a prefect, a teacher, the School Nurse, a parent, a houseparent or the Student Life Coordinator. This message is reiterated in the notices on House noticeboards and outside the Medical Clinic, along with advice about Cyber-Bullying. The School Nurse is also alert to signs and symptoms of bullying.

Parents who have concerns about their child should always contact the Houseparents, the Student Life Coordinator or other administrative staff at the earliest opportunity, so the matter can be promptly investigated.

What should a member of staff do if informed of potential bullying?

- Offer an immediate opportunity to the student to discuss things in a calm, supportive atmosphere in which their concerns are taken seriously, being careful to follow school guidelines about meeting with students if in private.
- Listen carefully to the student's account, and write a brief record of the conversation at the time or immediately afterwards. The top copy of this should be given to the Student Life Coordinator who will maintain records of all bullying incidents.
- Encourage the victim to talk (or gain consent to talk on their behalf) to their Houseparents and/or the Student Life Coordinator. Do not promise confidentiality and explain that little can be achieved if the matter is kept secret. Ask if their parents know of the bullying.
- The Designated Person (School Director) must be informed immediately in cases of suspected abuse.

What is the procedure for tackling bullying where it is discovered?

The member of staff with the information should discuss the matter with the Student Life Coordinator in the first instance, or the Student Life Coordinator with the Houseparents. There is then no fixed or absolute course of action; it will depend on the circumstances, but will always be fair and proportionate. Parents of both victim and bully will usually be informed and involved via the Houseparent(s) (though the victim's views regarding this must be taken into account).

Some actions might be:

- a) To monitor the situation closely (by Houseparents in consultation with the Student Life Coordinator) and see if anything further occurs. (This action is usually only if the incident appears to be one-off, or a genuine mistake, or if the victim strongly wishes it.)
- b) To get the victim and the bully together to talk. The bully may be totally unaware that s/he is bullying. The situation will then be closely monitored.
- c) To punish the bully, making it clear that this must never happen again, and encourage the bully to see the victim's point of view. Punishment will be judged on a case-by-case basis and in consultation with all parties concerned. It may range from a warning,

through a detention or period of grounding, to temporary or permanent exclusion, depending on the specific circumstances and on previous history.

- d) In cases of group bullying the group needs to understand the victim's point of view. The Houseparent or (typically) the Student Life Coordinator will talk to the group. Those mainly responsible need to be addressed individually.

It is important to note that, where a case of bullying comes to light, attention will also be given to the bully, with whom the incident must be discussed, and, where appropriate, parents also informed, in order to find out the cause of the behaviour and to seek to change it. Both the victim and the bully (and the wider peer group) may need follow-up support for some time. The School Nurse and Student Life Coordinator and others are able to help in this respect.

Record-keeping and reporting

The Student Life Coordinator will usually coordinate all actions in cases of bullying. A record is made on the student files of all those significantly involved in an incident, including those who may have helped to highlight or reduce a case of bullying. A central written record of each incident is kept and how it is resolved; this record is used to monitor any possible patterns. All incidents of bullying which come to light are reported to the School Director, usually by the Student Life Coordinator. At present, the School Director is the Designated Teacher for Student Protection but this will likely transfer to the Student Life Coordinator as the school grows.

Bullying by/of a member of staff, or by/of a parent, will be regarded as a very serious matter and dealt with by the School Director (usually with the assistance of the Student Life Coordinator or the Proprietor).

Monitoring, evaluation and review

The School will review this policy annually, with the assistance of students, and evaluate its effectiveness.

**SABIS International School UK Anti-Bullying Policy
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