

Gulf English School Anti-Bullying Policy

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Created By: Sandra Harris

Reviewed By: Stacey Myers

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Anti-Bullying Policy

Rationale:

Every member of Gulf English School has the right to learn and realise their true potential in all aspects of school life, free from humiliation, intimidation and abuse. The school does not tolerate bullying and all incidents are taken seriously.

Bullying is defined as repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others.

The teachers in this school are committed to the realisation of these aims.

The parents of the children in the school have been strongly supportive of these aims.

The role of the school is to provide the highest possible standard of education for all its pupils.

A stable, secure learning environment is an essential requirement to achieve this goal. Therefore bullying behaviour by its very nature undermines and dilutes the quality of education and imposes psychological damage. As such it is an issue which must be positively and firmly addressed through a range of school-based measures and strategies through which all members of the school community are enabled to act effectively in dealing with this behaviour.

The ethos of our school is a major factor in establishing and maintaining high standards of behaviour and discipline. This means a strong sense of community within our school and a high level of co-operation among teaching staff and between staff, pupils, parents, and other staff. A high degree of collective vigilance is needed though if bullying behaviour is to be identified and dealt with in a fair and equitable manner.

Types of Bullying

Physical Aggression:

This behaviour is more common among boys than girls. It includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people up. It may also take the form of severe, physical assault. While boys commonly engage in 'mess fights', they can often be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

Damage to Property:

Personal property can be the focus of attention for the bully; this may result in damage to clothing, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's school bag or property. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

Extortion:

Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out) in the event of the victim not promptly 'paying up'. Victims may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to the bully. Sometimes this tactic is used with the sole purpose of incriminating the victim.

Abusive Telephone Calls:

The abusive anonymous telephone call is a form of verbal intimidation or bullying. The anonymous phone call is very prevalent where teachers are the victims of bullying.

Isolation:

This form of bullying behaviour seems to be more prevalent among girls. A certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or the entire class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the victim on walls or in public places, by passing around notes or drawings of the victim or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard.

Bullying of School Personnel

Bullying of school personnel by means of physical assault, damage to property, verbal abuse, threats to people's families etc.

Teacher Behaviour

A teacher may, unwittingly or otherwise, engage in, instigate or reinforce bullying behaviour in a number of ways:

- Using sarcasm or other insulting or demeaning forms of language when addressing pupils; making negative comments about a pupil's appearance or background.
- Humiliating directly or indirectly, a pupil who is particularly academically weak or outstanding or vulnerable in other ways.
- Using any gesture or expression of a threatening or intimidatory nature or any form of degrading physical contact or exercise.

Effects of Bullying

Pupils who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity, anxiety, vulnerability and self-confidence is damaged. Self-esteem will be at low ebb and they probably will not talk about what is happening. Therefore it is vital that those involved in their education, especially teachers, be vigilant and alert to the signs and symptoms of bullying.

Signs & Symptoms of Bullying

The following signs/symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school – requesting parents to drive or collect them, changing route of travel, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school.
- Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, playing truant:
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school;
- Pattern of physical illness e.g. headaches, stomach aches;
- Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour; it may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays.
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress - stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting.
- Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers
- Possessions missing or damaged.
- Increased requests for money or stealing money.
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing.
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

While those signs individually may not necessarily mean a child is being bullied but if they are repeated or occur in combinations those signs warrant investigation. Any pupil through no fault of their own may be bullied. However as a general guide those who are different, vulnerable and distressed or those who behave in a very provocative manner which attracts bullying behaviour.

The Bully

It is generally accepted that bullying is a learned behaviour. The bully often displays aggressive attitudes, low self-esteem, lacks any sense of remorse, and seeks attention at any given opportunity. They can be totally unaware of their victim's feelings and may seem even to enjoy inflicting pain. It is not uncommon to find that pupils who engage in bullying behaviour are also bullied.

Where does bullying happen?

Most frequently bullying takes place in the playground. Toilets, cloakrooms and even the classroom are also areas where bullying is prevalent. The route to and from school, the neighbourhood, play areas and meeting places are also centres of potential bullying.

Prevention

The prevention of bullying in our school is an integral part of our Code of Discipline and is supported by the Gulf English School, parents, teachers and pupils. The following aims were set as to our policy on bullying:

- To create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians
- To ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.

- To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of school policy on anti-bullying behaviour

School Ethos

A positive and healthy school climate, which focuses on the value and respect for the individual, is paramount in dealing with bullying. It is vital that pupils are encouraged to report incidents of bullying without fear. Prevention of bullying is much better than just control of bullying. While it is important to discipline the bully and comfort the victim this is not enough. A climate must exist in our school where bullying is totally unacceptable to everyone.

Raising Awareness of Bullying as Unacceptable Behaviour

We must strive, at every opportunity, to alert and warn the whole community as to the harmful effects bullying can have on children. The senior leadership team, teachers, parents and children are involved in this. The school has adopted an anti-bullying code and all the partners must see it is adhered to.

Parents in particular, must be made aware of their major responsibility in changing their child's behaviour. Teachers also must try to influence their children's attitudes to bullying in a most positive manner.

A cross-curricular approach may be utilised to this. In English there is a wide range of literature available for presentation and discussion. In Geography and History references to colonisation and exploitation are infinite. The many dictators, past and present, are evident of this. Art and Drama can also be used to highlight the responsibility for positive behaviour by all. Physical Education is particularly suitable for this work. Sporting activities can provide excellent opportunities for channeling and learning how to control aggression. In Science, domination and reliance can be highlighted.

Supervision and Monitoring

It is the responsibility of the school in conjunction with teachers and pupils to develop a system of proper supervision and monitoring measures to deal with incidents of bullying behaviour. A rota system exists in the school for playground supervision at lunch and break times. Children are at all other times to be supervised by suitable

people when they are in school. All pupils, in particular, senior pupils can be seen as a resource to assist in countering bullying.

Procedures for Noting and Reporting

There is a formal procedure for noting and reporting an incident of Bullying Behaviour in our school. Early detection of signs of indiscipline and/or significant change in mood or behaviour of pupils plays a major role in this procedure.

- All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial, should be noted, investigated and dealt with by the teacher involved. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance.
- Serious cases of bullying behaviour by pupils should be referred immediately to the deputy head or head of year. Children are taken off the playground if the behaviour persists.
- Parents and bullies must be informed by the deputy head/head of primary or secondary /head of year of a serious case of bullying behaviour. They are then in a position to help and support their children if another incident arises. Their response is to be noted.
- Parents of the school are informed to report any incidents of bullying behaviour which they suspect or which come to their attention through their children or by any other means, to the teachers in the school.

Children who are bullies or are victims of bullies are referred to the school counsellor who will seek consent to counsel the child from the parents.

- School children should also report incidents of bullying to their teachers. In doing so, a climate must exist by which they are not telling tales but are behaving responsibly.

•Individual teachers should record and take appropriate measures regarding these reports in accordance with the schools code of Behaviour and Discipline.

•All staff should also be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them to the deputy / head teachers in the school.

•In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member, this should normally in the first instance, be raised with the staff member in question and if necessary with the SLT.

•Where cases relating to either a pupil or a teacher remain unresolved at school level, the matter should be referred to the director. The code of discipline may then apply.

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

Teachers are advised to take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents. These are best investigated outside the classroom situation to avoid the public humiliation of the victim or the pupil engaged in bullying behaviour. In any incident of bullying, the teacher should speak separately to the pupils involved, in an attempt to get both sides of the story. This interview should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.

The first measure to protect the victim is that the bully or bullies are not allowed on the playground. The bully is expressly informed that the reason for this action is that they are engaged in bullying behaviour. The bully is not to be kept off the playground for any other reason and must know and understand why this action is being enforced. Parents are informed. The bully is referred to the school counsellor with the parents' consent. The parents are continually involved. If the behaviour persists after counselling, or there is no visible support from home, then the code of behaviour is enacted.

Arrangements should be made for follow-up meetings with the two parties involved separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the victim is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.

Programme for Work with Victims, Bullies and their Peers

Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those low in self-esteem, opportunities should be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. They may need counseling to control and channel their aggression or inadequacies without violating the rights of others.

There is a comprehensive network of support in the school to counteract bullying...classroom teaching, assemblies, senior leadership team, class teachers, year leaders, heads of year, teaching assistants, school counsellors, learning support team.

Victims may need counselling and opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise self-esteem and to develop their friendship and social skills whenever this is needed.

As research indicates that many of those involved in bullying are low achievers academically, learning strategies should be applied within the school to allow for the enhancement of the pupils self-worth. All the pupils' talents and abilities must be recognised and rewarded.

Bullying as an Anti-social Behaviour

As previously stated there should be a community approach to the problem of bullying. Incidents of bullying behaviour extend beyond the school. It can occur to and from school, near shops, play areas, buses, etc.

A positive community attitude and involvement can, therefore, assist considerably in countering bullying behaviour in schools. The promotion of good home/school links is very important in promoting positive behaviour and is encouraged as a normal part of the school's effective operation.

Evaluation of Effectiveness of School Policy on Bullying Behaviour

Random surveys, formal and informal, should be conducted by teachers to ascertain the level and type of bullying behaviour in school. It is also essential to monitor and if needed modify the programme of support for those involved in bullying behaviour. The school's anti-bullying code should be subject to continuous review in the light of incidents encountered in the school and wider community.

Conclusion

Our policy is directed mainly at preventing bullying behaviour rather than controlling it. Vigilance by everybody involved in education i.e.: Teaching staff, parents, pupils and administration staff is crucial to prevent and control this behaviour.