

The American School of Egypt



Anti Bullying Policy

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ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying is a form of peer on peer abuse, which can lead to psychological and/or physical harm, both short and long term and as such it is unacceptable at our school.

The ASE definition of bullying is:

“Repeated action taken by one or more individuals with the deliberate intention of hurting or abusing another person.”

Bullying can take one of many forms: verbal, emotional, sexual, sexist, physical, cyber (including social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email), racial, religious, cultural and abuse against people with special educational needs and disability.

We believe that every student has a right to enjoy an education free from fear and distress and the purpose of this policy is to set out guidelines and procedures to achieve this important objective. At The ASE we have zero tolerance of all forms of bullying and have measures in place to prevent them. We do not accept any form of abuse or bullying and believe that it should never be ignored or passed off as ‘a joke’ or “an acceptable part of growing up”.

If bullying does occur, we believe that we share a collective responsibility to report it. We encourage all pupils to report incidents and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of this policy are to ensure:

- Instances of bullying are rare, but if they do occur, that early intervention takes place by staff, students and parent/carers in order to prevent recurring or serious cases.
- Interventions are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably, taking into account all the facts and circumstances of each case.
- If a serious or recurring case does arise it is addressed by a member of staff immediately according to the guidelines identified in this policy.
- This policy achieves a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur. We ensure that all those connected with the school are aware of our opposition to bullying, and we make clear each person’s responsibilities with regard to the eradication of bullying in our school.

MINIMISING THE RISK OF BULLYING

We believe that by developing a school ethos in which bullying or any form of peer on peer abuse, is regarded as unacceptable and by promoting excellent values, positive behaviour and relationships between all members of the community, we can minimise incidents of bullying.

In particular we advocate that:

- All school staff members are expected to act as positive role models, demonstrating the highest possible standards of personal conduct in their interactions with all members of the school community.
- All members of the school are expected to treat each other with consideration and respect and to support children who experience bullying, to make them feel safe again, and rebuild their confidence and self-esteem.
- The school will always react firmly and promptly to cases of bullying and educate children to understand that bullying is not acceptable and that serious bullying may lead to psychological damage and/or physical harm.

Helping children and staff to fully understand the negative impact of peer on peer abuse is crucial in minimising the risk of bullying occurring. We adopt a whole school approach that includes high quality staff training, inclusion in the school curriculum and clear communication with parents.

Supporting Staff

- All staff receive training in support of the school anti-bullying policy and procedures as part of the annual induction programme.
- Key Staff complete online training via Educare for safeguarding and anti-bullying
- Staff are alerted to higher risk areas and times when bullying might occur such as break and lunchtimes, before the start and end of the school day, in the corridors, locker areas, changing rooms and playgrounds and on bus journeys and school trips/visits
- Serious incidents are appropriately shared with staff in order to build understanding and confidence amongst the team when faced with challenging scenarios

Supporting Students

- The theme of bullying is an important theme of our PSHE & SEL programme throughout the school
- The annual cycle of school assemblies includes a focus on age appropriate issues of peer on peer abuse
- Students are taught the importance of communicating information and offered channels to do so through circle times, mentoring sessions and suggestion boxes

Supporting Parents

- School policies and procedures are clearly communicated through our school website and handbooks
- School leadership offer parent workshops on key issues such as cyber bullying and E-Safety
- When issues arise, school communication to parents is clear and supportive

PROCEDURES WHEN BULLYING DOES ARISE

While incidents may be rare, when cases do arise, the school aim is to deal with them promptly and consistently by following these steps:

1. All staff are expected to react sympathetically and promptly when an (alleged) bullying incident is reported or observed.

2. If the incident is considered anything but extremely low level it is immediately referred to a senior member of staff
3. Evidence is gathered from a range of sources including statements from those that witnessed any related incidents. The class/form teacher and senior staff will always be informed of reports of bullying.
4. Students who are alleged to be perpetrators of bullying are always interviewed formally by a senior member of staff. The version of events will be listened to and noted in writing.
5. Disciplinary action, in line with the school's established range of sanctions, is taken where necessary. Such action may include letters or meetings with parents, internal suspension or exclusion from school.
6. Where incidents of (cyber) bullying outside of school hours are reported, the school will intervene, investigate and deal with the alleged incident wherever possible, ensuring that parents are fully informed of the incidents.
7. The seriousness of the incident and required action is decided and communicated to all relevant parties using the following guidelines:

Low-Level (*An initial incident with little obvious intent. Unlikely to cause distress*)

- Teachers support students to resolve the matter peacefully.
- They monitor those involved to ensure there are no repeated incidents.
- They may report the incident to general staff to ensure that the situation is monitored.

Medium-Level (*Repeated and/or likely to be with intent to cause distress*)

- The incident is referred to the line manager who contacts parents of both the victim/bully to communicate the incident and action taken.

High-Level (*recurring and/or likely to cause considerable distress. May place the victim at risk*)

- The incident is referred to a member of the Senior Leadership Team who contacts the parents to arrange a conference.
- The board is informed of high level incidents and any action is agreed with them.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS AFFECTED BY BULLYING

It is important that the victim is fully supported and feels safe and comfortable. It is also important that the (suspected or confirmed) bullies have a fair hearing and once an issue is dealt with that they are given an opportunity to atone for their actions in a positive way. In some circumstances it is likely that peers of the victim or perpetrator may also be affected by bullying incidents.

It is therefore crucial that all parties affected by any incident of peer on peer abuse are monitored closely by the teaching team and school leadership to ensure that there are no further incidents or negative impact.

If any further incidents do occur, detailed records are maintained and appropriate actions in line with this policy are taken by the school leadership.

GUIDANCE

Bullying is behaviour that:

- deliberately makes another person feel uncomfortable, distressed or threatened either physically or emotionally
- is repeated over time
- makes those being bullied feel powerless to defend themselves
- can include forms which are verbal, emotional, sexual, sexist, physical, cyber (including social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email), race and religion, cultural, homophobic, special educational needs and disability.

Bullying may take many forms, such as:

- physical: for example, hitting, pushing, kicking
- name-calling and verbal abuse: face-to-face, in writing, by phone or online
- cyberbullying: bullying via phone or online (e.g. by text message, email, social networks, instant messenger)
- making racist, sexist or gender-based comments, jokes or graffiti
- making threats
- taunting or mocking
- spreading rumours
- making jokes to make someone look 'small'
- shutting out a person
- ganging up on someone
- refusing to cooperate with someone
- hiding equipment or other possessions
- demanding money

Types of Bullying

Verbal bullying is saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes:

- Teasing
- Name-calling
- Inappropriate sexual comments
- Taunting
- Threatening to cause harm

Emotional bullying, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Social bullying includes:

- Leaving someone out on purpose
- Telling other children not to be friends with someone
- Spreading rumours about someone
- Embarrassing someone in public

Physical bullying involves hurting a person's body or possessions. Physical bullying includes:

- Hitting/kicking/pinching
- Spitting
- Tripping/pushing
- Taking or breaking someone's things
- Making mean or rude hand gestures

Sexual bullying can involve comments, gestures, actions or attention that is designed to hurt, offend or intimidate another person.

With sexual harassment the focus is on a person's physical appearance, body parts, sexual orientation or sexual activity. Sexual harassment may be verbal, like making comments about someone, be instigated via technology like inappropriate text messages, photos or videos or be physical involving unwanted touch.

Sexual bullying includes:

- Making sexual jokes, comments, or gestures to or about someone
- Spreading sexual rumours (in person, by text, or online)
- Writing sexual messages about people on bathroom walls or in other public places
- Showing someone inappropriate sexual pictures or videos
- Asking someone to send you naked pictures of herself or himself ("nudes")
- Posting sexual comments, pictures, or videos on social networks like Facebook, or sending explicit text messages
- Making sexual comments or offers while pretending to be someone else online
- Touching, grabbing, or pinching someone in a deliberately sexual way
- Pulling at someone's clothing and brushing up against them in a purposefully sexual way
- Asking someone to go out over and over again, even after the person has said no

Cyberbullying:

Includes the use of (mobile) technology as a media for any of the purposes above. Cyber bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

Bullying via social networks, emails and texts will be addressed according to the same procedures as any other form of bullying in the school.

Cyber bullying includes:

- Harassment.
- Stalking.
- Rumour Spreading.
- Disclosure (sharing of personal information of others without their consent).
- Exclusion/Ostracism.
- Heated Exchanges.
- Defaming, Belittling, or Mocking.
- Impersonating.

Racial, religious, cultural bullying is treating someone differently, making offensive remarks of being physically aggressive or offensive to somebody because of the colour of their skin, their beliefs or their race. Racist bullying includes:

- Exclusion, harassment and ostracism
- Telling jokes intended to offend or which could inadvertently offend
- Attacks on your person or your property.

Homophobic bullying is when people behave or speak in a way which makes someone feel bullied because of their actual or perceived sexuality. People may be a target of this type of bullying because of their appearance, behaviour, other physical traits or because they have

friends or family who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender or just because they are seen as being different. Bullying can include:

- Exclusion, harassment and ostracism
- Threatening to “out” you or your family member
- Use of offensive language or actions
- Aggressive behaviour
- Comments or abuse via online technologies

SEND bullying is when people behave or speak in a way which makes someone feel bullied because of a minor or severe Special Educational Need or Disability. Bullying can include:

- Exclusion, harassment and ostracism
- Use of offensive language or actions
- Aggressive behaviour
- Comments or abuse via online technologies

ADVICE

Students

The school will work to combat bullying by teaching pupils about bullying and appropriate strategies to combat bullying through:

- weekly tutorial sessions and PSHE lessons
- regular whole school and class assemblies
- older children supporting younger children as playtime ‘buddies’
- displays of appropriate work
- students given opportunities to take leadership as prefects, house captains and school Council representatives
- Positive reinforcement of behaviour through praise, house points and merits for demonstrating positive social skills

Victims:

- always tell someone that you trust (an adult or friend)
- remember you are not the one who is acting incorrectly.
- inform the bully that they are acting inappropriately and you would like them to stop
- if you can, ignore the bully and do not show that you are upset
- if possible, avoid being alone in the places bullying happens
- be assertive, if you can
- walk away quickly and confidently, even if you do not feel that way inside
- your safety is more important than your possessions. If you are in danger,
- don’t hold onto them
- if you are different in some way, be proud of who you are

Friends:

- listen to your friend and talk it through
- be sensitive and understand their situation
- avoid leaving them on their own
- advise the person being bullied to talk to an adult
- in serious cases speak directly to an adult yourself on behalf of your friend.

Bystanders:

- even if you don’t take part in bullying but see it and walk away, you are ignoring your

- responsibilities
- report directly to an adult any bullying that you have observed
- give sympathy and support to the person being bullied

Parents/Carers and Academic Staff

Raising awareness in staff and parents through:

- INSET sessions for teaching and non-teaching staff
- discussion of issues arising in staff meetings
- Presentation of policy in key areas of the school and on the server for reference

Recognising the signs.

Someone who is being bullied may:

- be frightened of getting on the school bus
- insist on being driven to school
- be unwilling to go to school
- regularly have books or clothes damaged
- have possessions 'go missing'
- continually 'lose' money
- begin doing badly in schoolwork
- have unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts
- ask for money or begin stealing money
- become withdrawn or start stammering
- have noticeable and prolonged changes in mood
- become distressed
- become bad-tempered
- refuse to say what is wrong
- lose appetite, or start overeating
- cry himself/herself to sleep or have nightmares
- attempt or threaten to harm him/herself

For Parents

Any of the behaviour above may indicate other problems. But, if you become aware of and are concerned by any of this behaviour, and think your child is being bullied:

- encourage him/her to talk about the problem
- reassure him/her of your support
- listen calmly and not overreact
- attempt to find out when and where the bullying takes place. Is there a pattern?
- contact the class teacher to discuss the problem
- work with the class teacher to support your child within or outside school
- if the bullying takes place outside school, report the matter to the police

For Staff

All members of staff, teaching and non-teaching, should deal with any incident of suspected or observed bullying by:

- talking to the pupil and giving reassurance
- taking appropriate action using sanctions in line with the behaviour policy
- in serious instances producing a written statement of what has happened and the action taken
- reporting any serious or recurring incidents to their line manager

Serious or recurring bullying

The appropriate member of staff will do the following:

- arrange for support and reassurance for the pupil being bullied

- interview the person(s) accused of the bullying, always giving them an opportunity to explain their actions.
- ensure that the appropriate disciplinary action is taken in line with the Behaviour Policy of the school.
- contact parents/carers when necessary
- work with pupils, parents/carers and other teachers to support those involved
- and prevent future instances of bullying

Outcomes

1. The bully (bullies) will apologise in a genuine manner
2. Wherever possible, the pupils will be reconciled
3. In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will take place in line with the behaviour policy
4. After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.
5. All disciplinary measures in cases of bullying must be applied fairly, consistently and reasonably.