

GEMS Cambridge International Private School Sharjah **Anti-Bullying Policy 2022-2023**

Last Amendment: July 2022

Policy Review Date: July 2023

This policy should be read in conjunction with the GCS Behaviour Policy, the e-safety Policy and the Ministry of Education's Policy regarding Student Behaviour Management Distance Learning 2020.

GCS takes seriously its obligation to ensure that pupils and staff enjoy a safe working environment. We believe that all people in the school community have the right to learn and teach in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of intimidation or being bullied. Every individual in school has the duty to report an incident of bullying whether it happens to themselves or to another person. GCS promotes a culture in which students are not afraid to report bullying, actively encouraging the reporting of incidents in order that interventions can be made. We strive to be a community in which everybody feels valued and safe and within which individual differences are accepted, tolerated and regarded positively. Every student has the right to enjoy school. Bullying issues form a key part of GCS' Wellbeing philosophy, along with assemblies, which are underpinned by the UK PSHE curriculum and the UAE Moral Education Programme.

Aims and Objectives

- To ensure that children learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment, without fear of being bullied.
- To promote positive attitudes in students
- To demonstrate to all that the safety and happiness of pupils and staff is paramount
- To develop their Rights and Responsibilities to create a safe and secure for environment
- To have in place established systems that will deal with incidents of bullying
- To develop confident children who will notify staff of any incident of bullying
- To inform everyone connected with the school of the school's anti-bullying policy
- To ensure that all staff are aware of their duty of care and the need to be alert to signs of bullying

Staff at GCS promote a strong community of individuals. We believe in fostering an ethos and environment that encourages individuals' characteristics based on the GCS Values: Kindness, Honesty, Integrity and Respect; the Four Pillars of Islam; the Moral Education Program:

Character and Morality - honesty, tolerant, resilience, harmonious, persevering individuals **Individual and Community** – responsible, empathetic, self-worth, critical thinkers.

Civic Studies - respectful, cultural, collaborative, Cultural Studies- Wise, diverse, consciousness, abiding citizens.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

“Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally”
(preventing and taking bullying, advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies, DfE, 2011, P4)

At GCS we recognise that all forms of bullying should be taken seriously and dealt with appropriately we understand that bullying can take place between pupils, between pupils and staff, or between staff. It can involve individuals or groups; face-to-face, indirectly or through use of a range of digital platforms. We understand that all children have disagreements with each other and friends fall out from time to time. At GCS this is not necessarily considered as bullying. We are aware that bullying can cause deep distress to individuals and in some cases prompt extreme behaviour.

The four categories of bullying are:

1. Physical - hitting, kicking, taking or hiding belongings, pulling, grabbing, touching etc
2. Verbal - name calling, teasing, insulting, writing or sending unkind notes or messages
3. Emotional - being intentionally unfriendly or unkind, excluding, tormenting looks, rude gestures and spreading rumours
4. Cyber – emails and internet chat room/app misuse, threats over text, email, calls, social media websites and apps, digital learning platforms (E.g. MS Teams)

Specific types of bullying include:

- Bullying related to race or colour, religion or belief or culture.
- Bullying related to special educational needs or disabilities (people of determination)
- Bullying related to appearance or health conditions
- Bullying based on gender
- Bullying using electronic/digital forms of contact

Different roles within bullying:

- Those relying on social power, dominating others, often with groups (ring leader)
- Others joining in and, therefore, afraid of the ring leader (associates)
- The awareness of a silent majority that bullying is taking place, but feeling unable to do anything about it (bystanders)
- Those who try to stop bullying (defenders)

Styles of bullying include:

- Causing physical pain or discomfort

- Intimidation and rude gestures.
- The 'look' – this is an example of non-verbal bullying.
- Threats and extortion.
- Malicious gossip and exclusion from the group.
- Telling tales with the express purpose of causing trouble.
- Threatening or offensive texts or messages in social media groups.
- Threatening or using offensive language in digital learning platforms.
- Using emoticons to reply or comment on others work in digital learning platforms.

Signs and Symptoms:

A child may indicate signs or behaviour that he/she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and they should investigate if a child:

- Is unwilling to go to school;
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence;
- Starts stammering;
- Attempts or threatens self-harm;
- Cries herself/himself to sleep at night or has nightmares/ bedwetting;
- Regularly feels ill in the morning;
- Change of pattern in school work or achievement;
- Comes home with clothes torn or books/equipment damaged;
- Has possessions go missing;
- Has unexplained cuts and bruises;
- Stops eating;
- Is frightened to say what is wrong; or
- Changes his/her usual routine
- Refusing to attend his/her online classes
- Refusing to participate in online lessons

All staff should be aware of these possibilities and report promptly any suspicions of bullying to the appropriate person. It is important to note that if a student presents with and/or many or some of the symptoms listed above it does not necessarily mean that they are being bullied.

STAFF, GUIDANCE AND ROLES

The Principal, Vice Principal and Heads of School has a duty to draw up procedures to prevent bullying amongst pupils.

The Principal, Vice Principal and Heads of School will:

- Ensure that all staff have an opportunity to discuss strategies; and review them regularly;
- Determine the strategies and procedures;
- Discuss development of the strategies with the Senior Leadership Team;
- Ensure appropriate training is available;
- Ensure that the procedures are brought to the attention of all staff, volunteers, parents and pupils;
- Ensure that any reports of bullying at GCS are investigated.

Senior Leadership Team. Pastoral Leaders and Heads of Year will:

- Be responsible for the day-to-day management of the policy and systems;
- Ensure that there are positive strategies and procedures in place to help both the bullied and bullies;
- Keep the Principal informed of incidents;
- Arrange relevant staff and student training, determine how best to involve parents in the solution of individual problems;
- Ensure proper record-keeping
- Be responsible for ensuring that the school's positive strategies are adhered to;
- Know the school's procedure and deal with any incidents that are reported.
- Regular checks on digital learning platforms to ensure implementation of policies.

Teachers will:

- Be responsible for liaising with the Heads of Year and SLT over all incidents involving pupils in their classes;
- Be involved in any agreed strategy to achieve a solution
- Teach the anti-bullying programme in MEP lessons
- Provide opportunity for students to discuss the importance of including others and taking a stand against unfair treatment of others

All Staff and Volunteers will:

- Know and follow all relevant policies and procedures
- Be observant and talk to pupils;
- Deal with incidents according to the policy;
- Never let any incidence of bullying go unreported, whether on-site or during an off-site activity, or during online lessons;
- Be vigilant and act to reduce the risk of bullying at all times especially in places where it is most likely;
- Inform the Senior Leadership Team if they feel that extra staff might be needed in a particular area;
- Inform the Heads of Year of any incidents occurring that need immediate action.

Role of the Pupils:

Pupils must understand and engage with Anti- Bullying procedures:

- Use their Rights and Responsibilities to help guide them towards making the correct moral choice • Be aware of and comply with this policy
- Report if they are being bullied
- Report if they see someone being bullied
- Discuss ways of preventing bullying through the school council
- Listen carefully to all instructions given by the teacher
- Ask for further help if they do not understand
- Treat others, their work and equipment with respect
- Talk to others without shouting and will use language which is neither abusive nor offensive;
- Liaise with the school council;

At GCS we do not believe that bullying is an "expected" part of school life. Please trust that any referrals or reports will be dealt with in a discreet manner. Please note that whilst staff at the School are vigilant, incidents can occur that we do not

witness, parents and students are encouraged to report incidents immediately so that they can be investigated and resolved as quickly as possible.

DEALING WITH INCIDENTS

1. If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be investigated and dealt with promptly by the teacher who has witnessed or been approached.
2. If a more serious and/or dangerous element to the bullying is suspected, the Pastoral Leader, SLT/Heads of School must be informed immediately.
3. The teacher will record the details of the incident on Phoenix and inform the relevant Head of Year and Class Teacher (but in their absence an SLT or Head of School must be informed).
4. The Head of Year will then lead and direct the handling and recording of the incident(s). All parties will be interviewed and a record made using statement sheets.
5. Staff teaching the bullied pupil will be informed. They will monitor the student and report any further concerns to the Head of Year.
6. The appropriate strategy and plan of action to combat the bullying will be decided upon using the behaviour policy.
7. The Head of Year will also decide upon the level of Parental involvement.
8. The follow up and after-care will be co-ordinated by the Head of Year/Pastoral Leader. This might include a 'watching brief', where staff are asked to report anything of concern from the student(s) highlighted, a call to parents to check the wellbeing of their child.

Parents will be kept informed by the relevant staff appointed by the Head of Year/Pastoral Leader/SLT or Heads of School.

Any sanctions will be determined by the Head of Year/Pastoral Leader/SLT or Heads of School.

In any incident of bullying, staff must be aware of the following principles:

- It is important that students who experience bullying are heard.
- It is important to note that people react differently to bullying and it is often very difficult to tell if someone is upset and/or hurt.
- If a student feels upset, they are encouraged to speak to their teacher or a responsible adult at an appropriate time.
- It must be emphasised to the students that they should NEVER take the law into their own hands and should remember that physical aggression is not acceptable.
- They should be reassured that the adult will try to sort out the problem as calmly as possible.
- The most serious incidents are referred to the SLT or the HT.
- Parents may be requested to meet staff members to discuss the incident.
- The incident is recorded on Phoenix.
- Pupils will be encouraged to be vigilant and to report incidents of bullying to the relevant member of Staff.

REPORTING AND RECORDING

- All incidents must be reported and recorded in full on Phoenix.
- The incident should be dealt with instantly, by the member of staff who has witnessed the behaviour

THE CURRICULUM: HOW WE PREVENT AND TACKLE BULLYING THROUGH OUR CURRICULUM

Anti-bullying Education in the Curriculum:

- The school will raise the awareness of the anti-social nature of bullying through our Moral Education Program - MEP, as well as in school assemblies, through the Heads of House, whole school events and gatherings and in the curriculum as appropriate.
- The Head of MEP, is responsible for initiating and developing a series of Anti-bullying sessions as part of the MEP course.
- Changing the attitudes and behaviour of bullies will play a major part in the strategies used by the school.
- Anti-bullying week, Health and Wellbeing Week as well as many other whole school events that will be organised to educate students and staff on the importance of promoting inclusion and tolerance. There is also a positive emphasis on preventing and dealing with incidents of bullying at GCS.

SANCTIONS

Where pupils do not respond to preventative strategies to combat bullying, tougher action will be taken to deal with persistent and violent bullying. Sanctions are determined by the nature of the bullying on a case to case basis, as each individual case will have different circumstances.

Sanctions in line with the GCS Behaviour Policy might include:

- Writing a letter of apology
- Removal from the group (in class);
- Withdrawal of break and lunchtime privileges;
- Withholding participation in a school trip or sports event(s) that are not an essential part of the curriculum.

GUIDANCE, ADVICE AND THE ROLE OF PARENTS

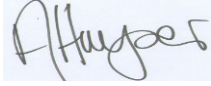
Parents should know that the School will not tolerate bullying, and take a positive, active approach to educating pupils in effort to eliminate incidents. be aware of and support this policy;

- report to the school any concerns they have of their child being bullied;
- be assured that the school will deal with all incidents of bullying;
- be assured that they will be informed of incidents and will be involved in discussions;
- Understand the meaning of bullying, not being a 'one off occasion'

MONITORING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR APPROACH

The Principal, Heads of School and the Senior Leadership Team together with the Pastoral Leader and Heads of Year will consider case studies to determine what can be learned from the incidents and how they were handled, with a view to improving the school's strategies. These case study reports will also enable patterns to be identified.

Our pastoral team will ensure regular checks on the digital learning platform to monitor and report any incidents to Heads of School and Principal.



Signed.....

Date: 30/08/2022

CEO/Principal