

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



HABITAT SCHOOL
AL JURF, AJMAN

Creation Date: 20/9/2016

Last Amendment Date: 1/3/2021

Next Review Date: April 2022

Members of the committee

- Mr. Wasim Yousuf Bhat (Dean)
- Mr. Bala Reddy Ambati (Principal)
- Mr. Suresh Sukumar (Vice Principal)
- Mr. Hamza Kollath (Administrative Officer)
- Ms. Saima Khan (Junior Section Head)
- Ms. Sasneem Sanoop (Head of the Counselling Department)

"I promise to be a buddy, NOT a bully!"

PLEDGE

We the students of the School, agree to join together to eliminate bullying in our school.

We believe that each of our classmates deserves to be treated equally in a safe and accepting environment in this school. Forms of bullying that will not be tolerated include but are not limited to: hitting, shoving, making fun of, laughing, or excluding anyone.

By taking this pledge, we agree to value and treat others with respect, report incidents of bullying to an adult if we see it, be a good role model to others, and be a good friend to others.

We will not be bullies to other students in this school and will try to help stop bullying not only in the classroom, but in the entire school as well.

Rationale

The school is committed to providing a warm, caring and safe environment for all our children so that they can learn and play in a relaxed and secure environment. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in our school. The school prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents have an important role in supporting school in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they cooperate closely together.

We expect our students to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed, but orderly, atmosphere. All students should care for and support each other. This framework endeavors to provide a set of guiding principles to promote a safe, caring and happy learning environment for all members of our school community. This policy will be made available to all staff, parents and students on our website.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is an unacceptable behavior used by an individual or a group, usually repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. In other words, bullying is considered to be, “unacceptable behavior which occurs ‘lots of times, on purpose’.” Bullying can be short-term or continuous over long periods of time.

Bullying involves a person being hurt, distressed, pressured or victimized by repeated intentional attacks by another individual or group. Bullies abuse less powerful individuals by intimidation and/or harassment. Bullying may involve physical, verbal, textual, psychological, or social behavior.

School Mission and vision

VISION

The school envisages learning as a communitarian process of imbibing education from the natural, academic, social and technological ecosystems created around the institution of school.

MISSION

We strive to provide a new model of education for the expatriate children in the UAE in a culturally inclusive, technologically effective and ecologically sensitive way in a cosmopolitan environment

CORE VALUES

INCLUSIVITY

All members of the school community, their cultures, nationalities and regions are considered and respected equally, strictly as per the UAE laws, in a way that is sensitive to the global character of the school. At Habitat School, nobody should feel excluded in any way.

JUSTICE

All members of the School should be treated according to the principles of natural and social justice, where nothing unfair happens against anybody.

DIGNITY

Everyone should be treated with dignity, without any harshness in any aspects.

TRANSPARENCY

All actions connected to the school should be transparent and all members including the managing team should be accountable.

ACCESSIBILITY

All members should be accessible to each other for the smooth and hearty functioning of the school.

PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

The school is committed to the pursuit of excellence, striving to improve itself in all educational activities all the time

CHARACTER

“School is a place of learning where violence is neither accepted nor expected. “I promise to be a buddy, not a bully.” PLEDGE

We the students of International Indian School, agree to join together to eliminate bullying in our school. We believe that each of our classmates deserves to be treated equally in a safe and accepting environment in this school. Forms of bullying that will not be tolerated include but are not limited to: hitting, shoving, making fun of, laughing, or excluding anyone.

By taking this pledge, we agree to value and treat others with respect, report incidents of bullying to an adult if we see it, be a good role model to others, and be a good friend to others.

We will not be bullies to other students in this school and will try to help stop bullying not only in the classroom but in the entire school as well.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF BULLYING AT SCHOOL PHYSICAL

- Hitting
- Pushing
- Punching
- Beating
- Tripping
- Kicking
- Shoving

VERBAL

- Excessive and malicious teasing
- Insulting remarks
- Name-calling
- embracing jokes
- Revealing intimate information
- Cursing
- Crude and inappropriate comments
- Treats and taunting

SOCIAL

- ignoring a certain person
- casting them out of a group
- making them feel left out
- Spreading rumors about them

CYBERBULLYING

- Threats and inappropriate comments and photographs via social media, texting, email, and chat rooms.
- There are many types of cyberbullying. Although there may be some of
 1. Text messages that are threatening or cause discomfort.
 2. Picture / video-clips via mobile phone cameras - images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed.
 3. Mobile phone calls: silent calls or abusive messages or stealing the victim's phone and using it to harass others, to make them believe the victim is responsible which we are unaware of, here are the more common:
 4. Emails: threatening or bullying emails, often sent using a pseudonym or somebody else's name

- 5. Chat Room bullying: menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chat room.
- 6. Instant messaging (IM): unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real time conversations online using MSN (Microsoft Messenger) or (although there are others)
- 7. Bullying via websites: use of defamatory blogs, personal websites, and social networking sites eg Whatsapp, MySpace, Facebook, Twitter

How is cyberbully different?

- ❖ Bullying is bullying wherever and however, it takes place. Cyberbullying is a method of bullying that uses ICT to upset, threaten or humiliate someone and has the following key characteristics:
- ❖ Cyberbullying can take place at any time, in any location; technology allows the user to bully anonymously
- ❖ Cyberbullying can occur on vast and rapid scale
- ❖ Electronic content is very hard to control; it can never be guaranteed to be removed totally from circulation
- ❖ Bullies can take actions to attempt to be anonymous and can feel 'distanced' from the incident
- ❖ 'Bystanders' can easily become perpetrators
- ❖ The 'profile' of a cyberbully or a target varies - age / size is not an issue · Cyberbullying incidents can be used as evidence
- ❖ Cyberbullying can occur unintentionally often due to a lack of awareness / empathy - 'It was only a joke'
- ❖ Cyberbullying leaves no physical scars so it is, perhaps, less evident to a parent or teacher, but it is highly intrusive and the hurt it causes can be very severe

SIGNS OF BULLYING

Changes in behavior that may indicate that a pupil is being Bullied include:

- ❖ Unwillingness to return to school;
- ❖ Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet; • Failure to produce work, or producing unusually poor work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoiled by others;
- ❖ Books, bags, money, and other belongings suddenly go "missing", or are damaged;
- ❖ Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary);
- ❖ Diminished levels of self confidence
- ❖ Frequent visits to the Medical Centre with symptoms which may relate to stress or anxiety, such as stomach pains or headaches;
- ❖ Unexplained cuts and bruises;
- ❖ Frequent absence, erratic attendance or late arrival to class;
- ❖ Choosing the company of adults rather than peers;
- ❖ Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact;
- ❖ Difficulty in sleeping or experiencing nightmares; or
- ❖ Talking of suicide or running away from home or school.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role of the School Principal

- ❖ Implement this policy through key leaders.
- ❖ Work to create a safe, secure, caring and friendly school environment for all the children.
- ❖ Monitor the effectiveness of this policy
- ❖ Provide leadership and vision in respect of equality.
- ❖ Provide guidance, support and training to all staff.

Role of school counselors/ Social worker

- ❖ Ensure that all parents and students are aware of this policy and that the school does not tolerate bullying.
- ❖ Ensure that all school personnel are aware of the policy.
- ❖ Respond and deal with all incidents of bullying.
- ❖ Raise awareness of the wrongs of bullying.
- ❖ Keep records of all incidents of bullying.
- ❖ Responsible person to deal with the incident effectively.

Role of teachers and other staff

- Be aware of the signs of bullying in order to prevent bullying taking place. • Take all forms of bullying seriously.
- Encourage pupils to report any incidents of bullying to any member of the school personnel.
- Report all incidents of bullying.
- Use preventative strategies such as circle time and buddy systems. • Report and deal with all incidents of discrimination
- All staff have a responsibility to prevent misuse of equipment and cyberbullying. Staff may ask to look at content on a student's personal device, but it is good practice to do so with 2 adults present.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Show Respect For All Members Of The School Community
- Speak Out Against Bullying And Report It When You See It
- Support Students Who Are Bullied
- Respect And Support School Rules And Regulations
- Support The Student Council And Disciplinary Committee To Assist With Anti-bullying Suggestions

To prevent Bullying students need to

- Work To Create A Happy School Environment For All
- Respect Themselves And Others
- Learn To Tolerate And Accept Individual Differences
- Stand Up Against Bullying Behavior
- Support The School Policy On Bullying

If you are Bullied YOU need to:

- Tell The Bully To Stop
- Seek Help And Talk About It To Someone You Trust
- Report It To A Teacher
- Try Not To Show You Are Upset- This Is Hard But A Bully Thrives On Someone's Fear
- Stay With A Group Of Friends/People- There Is Safety In Numbers • Don't Fight Back As It May Make Matters Worse, However, If You Decide
- To Fight Back, Talk To A Teacher Or Parent First

In cyberbullying YOU need to:

- Tell A Trusted Adult About The Bullying
- Don't Open Or Read Messages From Cyberbullies
- Tell A Teacher/Counsellor At Your School If School Related
- Don't Erase The Messages- They May Be Used To Take Action • Protect Yourself- Never Agree To Meet Face To Face With Anyone You Meet Online
- Block Bullies On 'chat Or Instant' Messaging Websites
- Always Make Sure Your Privacy Settings Are Tight
- Students should follow the school's code of conduct / behavior policy, when attending online classes. What is inappropriate in the classroom is inappropriate online.
- Should not give out personal IT details.
- Should never reply to abusive emails or messages in chat rooms or other social media.
- Should never reply to someone you do not know.

If you know someone who is being bullied YOU need to:

- Care enough to do something about it, whether it affects you personally or not Step in early and try to defuse the situation before it gets out of hand
- Report it to a teacher or parent - take a friend with you if you want
- Don't be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully
- Don't be tempted to forward cyber messages on
- Don't join a cyber-group just to find out 'what is going on'

Bullying of children with Special Educational Needs

The school provides a secure, accepting, safe and stimulating environment where everyone is valued for who they are. We have some children who have learning disabilities and/or communication difficulties. Everyone involved in the school is very aware that these children can be especially vulnerable to bullying and we are therefore particularly vigilant at all times. High attainers, gifted or talented pupils can also be affected by bullying. Staff will treat this type of bullying seriously and in the same way as any other type of bullying.

The role of parents

➤ **Parents must:**

- Teach children to amicably resolve conflicts without violence.
- Build their self-esteem and confidence to stand up for what they believe in.
- Spend quality time with children, talking about school, social events, their classmates and any concerns they have.
- Take bullying seriously. Many children are embarrassed to reveal that they have been bullied.
- Parents should also explain to their children legal issues relating to cyberbullying.
- If parents believe their child is the victim of cyber-bullying, they should save the offending material (if need be by saving an offensive text on their or their child's mobile phone) and make sure they have all relevant information before deleting anything. Parents should contact the school as soon as possible.
- Encourage their child to help others.
- Support anti-bullying programs of the school.
- 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.
- Be asked to take part in periodic surveys conducted by the school.
 - Support the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure smooth running of the school

REPORTING BULLYING: PROCEDURE

- Teacher
 - Class Teacher
 - Supervisor
 - Principal
 - Counsellor/ Social worker
- The class teacher, supervisor and counsellor should maintain a file for the student who bullies others and clearly mentions the observation and actions undertaken with the date. In case of Cyberbullying, students can directly contact the online safety leader (OSL) /Social worker :(Sasneem Sanoop
Email ID :Sasneems@ajm.habitatschool.org)

PROCEDURE FOR TAKING ACTION AGAINST BULLYING

Teachers will respond to all episodes of bullying in order to send a clear message that it is unacceptable. Different responses may be appropriate depending on the nature and degree of the bullying. The questions identified below will be used initially to determine if the incident is primarily bullying or if it falls into another sanctions category.

The teacher will ask the student the following

types of questions:

- Was there teasing or aggressive words
- said or actions?
- Was the bullying unprovoked?
- Did the bullying intend to hurt, harm, or frighten?

If the answer is yes to all of the above, then it is bullying and the sanction steps will be followed.

Response Procedures

- All bullying incidents should be reported immediately to the class teacher.
- Bullying is a grievous offence. The student identified as perpetrator will have his 12 marks deducted from his behavior score in conformity with the Behavior Management Policy and decision by the SBMC.
- The class teacher will record all reported bullying incidents and may share them with the supervisor and counselors/social worker, further to vice-principal, and principal depending upon the severity of the incident.
- Parents of both victim and perpetrator may be informed and summoned to the school for a meeting about the problem.
- The bullying behavior or threats will be investigated quickly and fully, with both victim and perpetrator informed that the behavior will/must stop immediately.
- The bullying perpetrator may meet with the school counselors/social worker, discipline head and his/her parents to understand the seriousness of his/her actions (to include placing themselves in the victim's shoes to appreciate the undesirable effects of the behavior), and to learn appropriate means of changing behavior.
- The bully may be asked to genuinely apologize to the victim and sign the MOE disciplinary form which should be filed by the counselor/ social worker. 7. After the incident has been thoroughly investigated and dealt with, the class teacher and counselor/social worker will monitor and evaluate both students (including regular "check-ins") to ensure that bullying does not resume or reoccur.
- There may be a range of punitive responses up to suspension/dismissal for the perpetrator in very serious cases, after a thorough investigation by a team. The final decision is made by the Principal in consultation with the School Behavioral Management Committee (SBMC) members. In case of cyber bullying the final decision will be taken by the online safety leader in consultation with online safety Group (OSG).

Strategies for the prevention and reduction of bullying

Whole school initiatives and proactive teaching strategies will be used throughout the school to develop a positive learning environment with the aim of reducing the opportunities for bullying to occur.

These can include:

- Involving the whole school community in writing and reviewing the policy
- Undertaking regular questionnaires and surveys to monitor the extent of bullying in the school and the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy
- Implementing the “Problem Solving Box” in school where children can write and post their concerns and ideas.
- Each class agreeing on their own set of class rules
- Awareness-raising through regular anti-bullying assemblies
- Setting up a circle of friends support network where a small group of children volunteers to help and support individuals experiencing difficulties.
- The school will conduct awareness programs/campaigns initiated by the student council against bullying and also organize special assemblies.
- Creation of an anti-bullying school notice board in the school library.
- Prominently displaying anti-bullying posters produced by the children around the school
- Using praise and rewards to reinforce good behavior.

Monitoring and evaluation of the policy

To ensure this policy is effective, it will be regularly monitored and evaluated. Questionnaires completed by the whole school community, together with surveys, focus groups, children’s and parents’/guardians’ comments posted in the “problem solving” box and bullying incident forms will be used to gauge the effectiveness of the policy. Following an annual review, any amendments made in the policy will be informed to all stakeholders.

If you have any queries or concerns regarding this policy, then please contact (principal@ajm.habitatschool.org)

Complaint Procedure

Parents and pupils may bring issues to the notice of the Principal and school team as described.

This policy is linked with all the other policies of the School.