



# Swiss International Scientific School in Dubai

## Anti-Bullying Policy Whole School



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## Vision

The Swiss International Scientific School in Dubai (SISD) is a leading international school where future generations are inspired to become **confident** and **enthusiastic** lifelong learners, ready to embrace the opportunities and challenges of a global world.

## Together

In our international community, we know that we are at our best when we all work **together**. We view **active participation in the community**, from the most local to the most global, as the **foundation of a valuable life**.

## Introduction

Our community has a shared responsibility to provide a safe, secure, caring, and friendly school environment for all its members. This policy outlines the school's approaches to preventing bullying in all its forms and the procedures in place to manage any occurrences of bullying.

## Definition

Bullying in any form will not be tolerated. Bullying is defined as a form of aggressive behavior that occurs in an intentional and repeated manner causing another child to feel hurt. Bullying can take multiple forms, including spreading rumours, threatening, physical or verbal assault, engaging in insidious practices such as excluding a child from a group to hurt him/her, or any other gestures or actions that occur in a less visible manner. Forms of bullying include:

- Physical
- Verbal
- Cyber
- Bystander
- Relational aggression
- Prejudicial

Some of the most common are listed below:

- Picking on somebody
- Physical violence; punching, hitting, and pushing
- Mocking, ridiculing, or tormenting somebody
- Offensive, discriminatory comments as well as obviously hurtful names
- Gossiping and spreading rumours
- Exclusion, deliberately ignoring someone and encouraging others to do the same
- Insulting someone
- Threatening behaviour
- Taking and damaging property
- Offensive calls, school emails and text messages to others
- Inappropriate use of social networking and messaging websites where harm is intended to others – this is a criminal offence and should be reported to the Police as we do not condone the use of WhatsApp and social media in school
- Certain social media sites have a legal age requirement therefore in our Bring your Own Device Policy we clearly state that no student needs to

create a WhatsApp group other than the school email address.

### **Cyberbullying (Refer to Digital Safety Policy)**

It is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. It can also include harassment or cyberstalking, defamation or vilification, impersonation, unauthorized publication of private images, manipulation, or peer rejection.

Bullying is not:

- single episodes of social rejection or dislike
- single episode acts of malice or spite
- random acts of aggression or intimidation
- mutual arguments, disagreements, or fights

The above actions can cause great distress. However, they do not constitute bullying unless they reflect sustained or repeated behaviour.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of the student**

It is the shared responsibility of students to report any incidences of bullying to an adult. Students must:

- Understand what bullying is (including its different forms)
- Be aware of and follow this policy
- Understand that reporting bullying is a positive action supported by all staff
- Report if they are being bullied
- Report if they see someone being bullied (bystander)
- Discuss ways of preventing bullying through the Pastoral Care Team
- Work collaboratively with teachers to prevent bullying
- Ask for further help if they do not understand

Who can you turn to if you are bullied?

- Your parents
- Your close friends
- Your class teacher or homeroom teacher
- The Deputy Heads, Head of School, Head of Pastoral
- Any teacher whom you feel you have a relationship of trust
- School counsellor or the safeguarding team

- The school Nurse and office staff

What can you yourself do if you are bullied?

- Tell the bully to stop both clearly and firmly. Make it clear that the behaviour is unwelcome and hurtful
- Seek help
- Talk to someone you trust
- Report it. SISD does not tolerate bullying. Trust the school to deal with any incident in the appropriate manner

What should you do if you know someone else is being bullied?

- Care enough to act, whether you are personally involved or not intervene at an early stage so that the problem is dealt with before it gets out of hand
- Have the courage to report it

### **Role of the Parent(s)**

The school works collaboratively with parents so students receive consistent messages about bullying. Parents must:

- Be aware of and support this policy
- Report to the school any concerns they have of their child being bullied
- Co-operate with the school
- Be assured that the school will deal with all incidents of bullying
- Support the school's decision when applying consequences to deal with any specific incident/ issue
- Be assured that they will be informed of incidents and will be involved in discussions

There are several tell-tale signs that may indicate bullying

- Unwillingness to go to school
- Frequent illnesses such as headaches and sore throats
- Damaged uniform and regular loss of personal items
- Loss of confidence and sudden, unexpected mood swings
- Sudden, prolonged periods of quietness
- Anonymous telephone calls
- Night terrors and bed wetting
- Loss of appetite
- Unwillingness to socialize, tendency to want to be alone

### **Role of the Teacher and Support Staff**

- Understand and comply with this policy
  - Be aware of the signs of bullying to prevent bullying taking place
  - Take all forms of bullying seriously

- Co-construct essential behaviour agreements and related consequences with students that support the prevention of bullying in all its forms
- Be consistent, treating each student with the same respect and understanding
- Be a positive role-model, demonstrating positive relationships with community members
- Follow procedure when repeated behaviour is demonstrated, seeking support of Grade coordinator or
- Deputy Head Pastoral Care as appropriate
- Encourage pupils to report any incidents of bullying to any member of the school community
- Report all incidents of bullying on ISAMS
- Raise awareness of the wrongs of bullying, particularly through Moral Education lessons
- Use preventative strategies such as circle time and buddy systems
- Report and deal with all incidents of discrimination
- Attend appropriate training sessions

### **Role of the Pastoral Care team**

- Implement and support this policy consistently throughout the school
- Ensure that all community members are aware of the policy
- Work to create a safe, secure, caring, and friendly school environment for all community members
- Ensure that all pupils understand that bullying is unacceptable through the delivery of our Moral
- Education curriculum and school assemblies
- Ensure that all parents aware of this policy and that we do not tolerate bullying
- Respond and deal with all incidents of bullying in an appropriate timeframe
- Maintain records of bullying through ISAMS
- Provide guidance, support, and training to all staff
- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy
- Bi-annually report on the success and development of this policy to senior leaders and governing body
- Ensure appropriate consequences are issued for fixed-term internal and/or external suspensions to individual students for serious acts of bullying

### **Systems (to manage bullying)**

The school has in place specific systems and procedures for preventing and managing instances of bullying in the primary and secondary schools, and these are outlined below. These systems and procedures are tailored to the sections of the school for maximum efficacy and to match best practices for separate age groups. SISD recognizes that the school has a responsibility to provide for the safety and wellbeing of students while they are at school or are involved in a school activity.

Satisfying this duty of care involves:

- Providing a safe environment for students and staff
- Providing supervision of students
- Implementing anti-bullying strategies
- Caring for harmed students (harm can be psychological or physical)
- Taking reasonable precautions to prevent a foreseeable and significant risk
- Taking precautions to avoid the risk of harm

This policy covers behaviour during the school timings as well as during extra-curricular activities, on school buses, during school trips and students' online behaviour that directly affects school life.

### Case reporting

It is the duty of all members of the community to understand the school definition of bullying detailed above. It is therefore required of any member of the community who suspects bullying to report the matter to a member of the teaching, counselling, or leadership staff.

Students who feel they are being bullied or who feel they have witnessed bullying have a responsibility to speak up and report what they have experienced. Through continual education, both explicit in curricular lessons (including but not limited to Moral Education), implicit in the school's spirit of togetherness and embedded in the IB Learner Profile, students are taught the importance of showing empathy and respect for others. An important component of this is recognizing when these values are being compromised and reporting such to a member of staff.

## Documentation

The Deputy Heads- Pastoral will maintain documentation of:

- Written reports received during the investigation process (below)
- Communication between parents, staff and students concerning reports of bullying
- Corrective actions taken on the school's part because of student behaviour
- Individual instances of inappropriate behaviour

All documentation is kept confidential and shared only with the parties immediately responsible for the handling of behaviour and student wellbeing.

## Investigation

When an allegation of bullying is reported to a member of the school staff, it will be investigated by the Deputy Head- Pastoral of the relevant school section, often in conjunction with the counsellors and/or other members of the leadership team. This investigation will include, but is not limited to:

- Interviewing and taking a statement from the purported victim/s
- Interviewing teachers and other members of staff who may have been witness to a behaviour or can provide background information



- Interviewing students who may have witnessed a behaviour or can provide pertinent information to the situation
- Interviewing the individual/s accused of bullying
- Review of any potential past incidences that could show a pattern of behaviour

When necessary, written statements will be taken from individuals interviewed. The statements made in interviews and in the written reports will be reviewed by more than one member of the pastoral and/or leadership team and using the definition above, a decision will be made as to whether the application of the term “bullying” can be applied.

### **Corrective actions**

Effective corrective actions for instances of bullying involve a multi-faceted approach involving individual students, the larger peer group, parents, teachers, counselling, and school leadership. One aspect of this will include a reference to the behavioural consequences of the respective sections’ handbooks. Continued or repeated behaviours will subsequently result in the escalation of the consequence.

Punitive actions alone will not serve to fully correct bullying behaviour. Discussion and reflection, on the part of all parties involved, are essential.

#### Parent communication

Members of the school’s pastoral care team will communicate directly with parents when it is found that their child has been a victim of bullying or demonstrated bullying behaviour. The school is not at liberty to release information to parents about students who are not their own.

Supportive and respectful communication between parents and the school is required to effectively resolve the issues surrounding bullying. Parents are urged to liaise directly with members of the school’s staff to ensure a consistent message.

### **Social/Emotional counselling**

The counsellor provides various techniques for individuals who are looking for additional support after difficult situations arise. Counsellors focus on solution-based approaches to help shape the individual and guide them towards confident and healthy wellbeing. Some of the approaches are as follows:

- The importance of supporting each other
- Raising awareness of the consequences of being a bully/victim or a bystander
- Raising awareness of the forms and consequences of peer-on-peer abuse
- Raising the importance of self-confidence & self-awareness

Self-reflection is key to the resolution of bullying occurrences. The counsellors will take part in the mediation of the social issues surrounding bullying. This includes one-on-one conversations as well as group talks. Counsellors also work with the Deputy Heads, grade coordinators, homeroom teachers and Moral Education

classes to instill a communal sense of responsibility for the wellbeing of all; teach individuals to report when they feel they have been bullied, speak up against bullying they see and having a firm understanding of the causes, effects, and definition of bullying.

## **Anti-Bullying Procedure in the Secondary School**

Bullying, in any form, is not tolerated at SISD. If the school determines, through the reporting, documentation and investigating procedures detailed above, that a student has participated in bullying behaviour the following measures will take place:

- A written reprimand will be issued (may be accompanied by suspension) in line with SISD Behaviour Policy
- Parents and student will attend a meeting with the Head of Secondary, Deputy Head Pastoral, Grade Level Coordinator, and counsellor. In this meeting further measures will be agreed upon, including, but not limited to: regular counselling sessions, letter(s) of apology and a signed agreement stating the student's and parents' acknowledgement of the behaviour demonstrated and an assurance it will not recur

Students who feel they are being bullied or who feel they have witnessed bullying have a responsibility to speak up and report what they have experienced. Through continual education, both explicit in curricular lessons (including but not limited to Moral Education), implicit in the school's spirit of togetherness and embedded in the IB Learner Profile, students are taught the importance of showing empathy and respect for others. An important component of this is recognizing when these values are being compromised and reporting such to a member of staff.

## **Peer-on-Peer abuse**

Allegations of abuse made against other students

We recognize that children can abuse their peers. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up'. We also recognize the gendered nature of peer-on-peer abuse. However, all peer-on-peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Most cases of students hurting other students will be dealt with under our school's Behaviour Policy, and the Safeguarding Policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns.

This might include where the alleged behaviour:

- Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- Could put students in the school at risk
- Is violent
- Involves students being forced to use drugs or alcohol

Involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, upskirting, or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including sexting)

If a student makes an allegation of abuse against another student:

Staff must record the allegation and tell the DSL, but do not investigate it further

- The DSL will contact the Safeguarding Team (if necessary) and follow their advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence
- The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved (including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed

We will minimize the risk of peer-on-peer abuse by:

- Challenging any form of derogatory or sexualized language or behaviour, including requesting or sending sexual images
- Being vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualized or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female students, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys
- Ensuring our curriculum helps to educate students about appropriate behaviour and consent
- Ensuring students know they can talk to staff confidentially by reiterating this during tutor time, pastoral support, and other appropriate means of communication
- Ensuring staff are trained to understand that a student harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy

