

Anti-Bullying Policy

2024 – 2025



POLICY INFORMATION

Last review date:	January 2025
Reviewed by:	Ms. Afna Shanavas and SLT
Next review date:	January 2026
Approved By:	Principal – Daspo Yiappos

Anti-Bullying Policy

Rationale

At The Oxford School, Dubai, the welfare of each child is the highest priority. It is a child's right to feel safe and secure as no child can flourish in an unsafe environment. It is the school's responsibility to provide such an environment. The school takes seriously its obligation to ensure that starting from Early Years students till Year 13 students, and the staff enjoy a safe working environment. The school believes 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 a duty to report an incident of bullying whether it happens to themselves or to another person. The school will always strive to keep its children safe from any form of harm or abuse. All members of the school community remain vigilant and keep themselves fully informed of the policy procedures to follow in case any such concerns arise. All members of staff, regardless of job description or status, are equally responsible for the care of our students and are responsible for acting immediately should they become concerned about any aspect of a child's safety or well-being. All references to child protection, well-being, and safety, include online safety for students.

The Oxford School embraces the advantages of modern technology in terms of the educational benefits it brings; however, the school is mindful of the potential for bullying to occur.

Central to the school's 'zero tolerance, Anti-Bullying Policy is the belief that all students have a right not to be bullied and that bullying is always unacceptable. The school also recognizes that it must take note of bullying perpetrated outside of school which spills over into the student's school life and affects their education.

Definition

Bullying is "behavior by an individual or a group, usually repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally". Bullying can be short term or continuous over long periods of time.

Types of Bullying:

Physical	Violent behaviour like pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, biting or any use of violence
Emotional	Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures),
Direct or Indirect Verbal	Taunting, mocking, name-calling, targeting members of the family, making offensive comments, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, offensive graffiti, gangs
Cyber bullying	Inappropriate text messaging and electronic messaging (including through web-sites, Social Networking sites and Instant Messenger), sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet

Bullying is not:

- **Mutual conflict** - which involves disagreement, but not an imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.
- **Single episode acts** of nastiness or physical aggression, or aggression directed towards many different people, is not bullying
- **Social rejection or dislike** is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Signs and symptoms:

- Injuries or Property Damage: repeatedly has bruises or scratches they can't explain, often "loses" personal belongings, repeatedly comes home with clothing or books damaged
- School Avoidance: making excuses to avoid going to school or suddenly refuses to go, seems afraid to go to school or nervous about riding the bus, takes a strange route when walking to and from school
- Declining Grades: loses interest in schoolwork, suddenly starts doing poorly in school
- Symptoms with No Medical Explanation: frequent headaches or stomach aches, fakes illness to get out of school, often feels sick or tired, even when otherwise well
- Changes in Sleeping and Eating Patterns loses interest in food or eats much less than before, skips meals, suddenly starts bingeing or stress eating, has trouble falling or staying asleep, experiences frequent nightmares

- (vi) Low Self-Esteem: feels like they can't do anything right or will never have friends, often comes home from school sad or teary-eyed, seems depressed or anxious in general
- (vii) Isolation: frequently irritable for no apparent reason, shuts themselves away in their room, shows little interest in spending time with peers, loses friends or says they have no friends, avoids social situations they normally would have enjoyed.

Procedure

- The student should inform the SLT, Class Teacher, School Counsellor, or any other teacher, parent or adult at home whom the child feels he can trust.
- The incident report will be taken down by the Counselors.
- Once the incident has been reported, an investigation to gather additional information and determine the severity of the situation will be conducted by the Counselors and SLT.
- If the investigation confirms that bullying has taken place, the counselors and SLT take appropriate action to intervene and stop the bullying behavior. This may involve counseling or disciplinary action for the bully, and support services for the victim. The school may also implement preventive measures to avoid any future bullying incidents.
- After the intervention, it is important to monitor the situation to ensure that the bullying behavior has stopped and that the victim is receiving the necessary support. This may involve regular check-ins with the victim, counseling, or additional disciplinary action if the bullying behavior continues.

Teacher Responsibilities

- Model friendly and approachable attitudes and behavior
- Discuss the Anti-bullying policy regularly and teach bullying prevention, stressing that bullying of any kind will not be tolerated and will be immediately reported
- Listen and respond to reports of bullying, provide support, and refer to Counselors and SLT as needed.
- Implement the school code of conduct, anti-bullying policy, and behavior policy

Parent Responsibilities

- To be observant of the signs and symptoms.
- Talk to your child's teacher/ School authority about it instead of confronting the bully's parents.

- Teach your child nonviolent ways to deal with bullies, like walking away, playing with friends, or talking it out. Fighting could lead to him or her getting hurt, getting in trouble, and beginning more serious problems with the bully.
- Help your child act with self-confidence. With him or her, practice walking upright, looking people in the eye, and speaking clearly
- Involve your child in activities outside of school. This way he or she can make friends in a different social circle.

Steps taken/ Disciplinary Action

In line with the Ministry of Education procedures and the ASD Behavior procedure for disciplining students, the bullying cases are considered to be high-level violations. Accordingly, the school applies the following behavior modification methods. The school has clear procedures to report incidents of bullying. Annexures are attached for the reference

1st Violation

- 1-day internal exclusion
- Warning Form no1
- Parents are notified (written and verbal)

2nd Violation

- 1 Day exclusion
- Warning Form no 2
- Parents are notified (written and verbal)
- Meeting with parents

3rd Violation

- 2-day exclusion
- Warning Form No. 3
- Parents are notified (written and verbal)
- Meeting with parents
- Re-registration reviewed.



What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend himself/herself.

By cyber-bullying, we mean bullying by electronic media:

- Bullying by text or messages or calls on mobile phones
- The use of mobile phone cameras to cause distress, fear or humiliation
- Posting threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating material on websites, to include blogs, personal websites and social networking sites
- Using emails to message others
- Hijacking/cloning e mail accounts
- Making threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating remarks in chat rooms

The particular forms of cyberbullying can include any of the following:

- Harassment or cyberstalking
- Defamation or vilification
- Impersonation
- Unauthorized publication of private images
- Manipulation
- Peer rejection

Technology allows the user to bully anonymously or from an unknown location, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Cyberbullying leaves no physical scars so it is less evident to a parent or teacher, but it is nevertheless highly intrusive and the hurt it causes can be very severe.

Legal issues

Cyberbullying is generally criminal in nature, and legislation in countries such as the USA, UK, Europe, and Australia are beginning to change so that prosecutions can be made. In the UK, although there is no specific criminal law pertaining to cyber-bullying, it is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information in any media including internet sites



People are now being prosecuted under existing laws such as:

- Protection from Harassment Act
- Malicious Communications Act
- Public Order Act

According to cybercrime laws in UAE, a suspect who blackmails or threatens [commits any form of bullying or intimidation] to dishonor or shame a victim using the telecommunication system [social media tools or internet] could face up to 10 years in jail and/or a fine ranging between Dh250,000 and Dh500,000.

With constant increases in young people developing mental health issues and in worse case scenarios, taking their own lives there is increasing pressure on governments and service providers to make cyberbullying illegal and identify all perpetrators of abuse.

The School's Expectations

Cyberbullying throws up many challenges for schools in a world which is increasingly digital. The school has clear expectations in respect of the use of information and communication technology and will tackle incidents of cyberbullying in order to prevent them escalating and causing serious damage to an individual, the broader school community and the school's reputation. All pupils are expected to adhere to the following expectations.

1. Pupils must not use information and communication technology, both inside and outside school, to engage in any activity that is intended deliberately to upset another person, to bully or defame.
2. Pupils should not participate in activities as 'bystanders' or accessories such as taking part in online polls or discussion groups where individuals are the object of defamation or vilification. Pupils are actively encouraged to communicate all incidents to a staff member.
3. Any pupil engaging in cyberbullying in any of its forms, whether or not the behavior takes place on the school premises, can expect to be subject to the school's full range of disciplinary sanctions. This may include permanent exclusion from the school.
4. All pupils are expected to collaborate fully in any inquiry the school may need to conduct relating to a pupil's use of ICT both in and out of school, including permission for data disclosure from third parties such as telephone and internet



service providers, where there is a reasonable belief that cyberbullying has taken place and that this will assist in bringing an end to such activity.

GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

If you suspect or are told about a cyber-bullying incident, follow the protocol outlined below:

Mobile Phones

- Ask the pupil to show you the mobile phone.
- Note clearly everything on the screen relating to an inappropriate text message or image, including the date, time, and names.
- Make a transcript of a spoken message, again record the date, times, and names.
- Tell the pupil to save the message/image.
- Go with the pupil and see the Head, or in his absence, a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Computers

- Ask the pupil to get up on-screen the material in question
- Ask the pupil to save the material
- Print off the offending material straight away
- Make sure you have got all pages in the right order and that there are no omissions
- Accompany the pupil, taking the offending material, to see the Head
- Normal procedures to interview pupils and to make statements will then be followed, particularly if a child protection issue is presented.

GUIDANCE FOR PUPILS

- If you believe you or someone else is the victim of cyberbullying, you must speak to an adult as soon as possible.
- This person could be a parent/guardian, your teacher, Counsellor, or SLT members of the school.
- Do not answer abusive messages but log and report them.
- Do not delete anything until it has been shown to your Class Teacher, Counsellor, or the Head (even if it is upsetting, the material is important evidence that may need to be used later as proof of cyber-bullying)
- Do not give out personal IT details
- Never reply to abusive e-mails
- Never reply to someone you do not know
- Stay in public areas in chat rooms



GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

It is vital that parents and the schoolwork together to ensure that all pupils are aware of the serious consequences of getting involved in anything that might be seen to be cyber-bullying. Ambassador School informs parents of the cyber-bullying policy and the procedures in place to deal with cyber-bullying.

- Parents can help by making sure their child understands the school's policy and, above all, how seriously The Oxford School, Dubai takes incidents of cyber-bullying
- Parents should also explain to their sons or daughter's legal issues relating to cyber bullying
- 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 Principal/Vice Principal as soon as possible. A meeting can then be arranged, which may involve other relevant members of staff

INCIDENT REPORT

Incident Information	
Name	
Grade & Section	
Referred by	
Date and Time of Incident	
Location	
Reported Medium	
Counselled by	

Incident Description
Case Incident

Details of the Incident



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Initial Investigation

Meeting



Corrective Measures and Preventive Steps

Disciplinary Actions

Actions for Staff:

Parental Accountability

Training/Awareness Session

Signatures:

Principal	Section Head	Head of Inclusion
Ms. Daspo Yiannos		Ms. Afna Shanavas